

# Translating Culture



CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION

UK BRANCH



Highlights from the Literature in Translation  
and Multilingualism programme

*“Translators are bridges into understanding other cultures.”*

Rose Fenton,  
Free Word Centre

Language is the cultural expression that most directly connects or divides us. The UK is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse countries in the world. But we have been slow to celebrate the many languages spoken here or to support the literary traditions and languages of other countries.

The UK Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation developed this programme to help people explore their own and other cultures through the mirror of language. Such dialogue helps improve our perceptions and understanding of each other – and of ourselves. We believe this can only enrich lives, enhancing our individual, cultural and social wellbeing in the long term.

Acting as brokers and conveners as much as funders, we worked closely with the leading organisations in the fields of literary translation and multilingualism – this enabled the emergence of a vibrant sector that helps to celebrate other cultures through literature and language.

The case studies in this publication showcase new approaches and models, some of which include toolkits and learning resources developed to enable replication. As a body of work they portray a holistic intervention that has proved transformational to individual organisations and system alike.

With the impact of the programme being maximised, our limited resources mean that we need to move on and prioritise other areas in need of attention. But as our focus shifts, the legacy of the Literature in Translation and Multilingualism strand lives on through a number of initiatives and networks developed as part of the programme and the thriving sector they collectively helped to form.

Andrew Barnett  
Director, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  
UK Branch



Left: Animated films by children and families based on traditional stories from minority ethnic communities, organised by Pop Up, Fusion.  
Photo: Patrick Boyd.

Front cover: *Scruffy Kitty*, one of If:book/WingedChariot's multilingual digital stories for children.

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# Summary

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The UK is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. But English dominates our written and spoken language. The proportion of translated literature available in the UK is extremely low compared with other countries. Many children are out of touch with their rich cultural heritage. The study of languages in our schools has, until recently, been in rapid decline. This linguistic monoculture limits dialogue between cultures and diminishes minority languages and cultures.

This programme sought to promote both literature in translation and multilingualism in the UK as a way of deepening understanding between cultures.

Projects took innovative approaches including:

- professional development for emerging literary translators, encouraging and supporting them to work in new directions
- establishing new connections around the book industry
- creative writing workshops for children and young people with multilingual backgrounds
- new teaching methods, working in partnership with schools and in the classroom.

By the end of the programme in 2014, there is evidence of:

- the foundations of **an evidence base for literature in translation**
- a **thriving community of practice**, with a real appetite for sharing ideas and for continuing to take progress forward
- a **re-energised literary translation sector**, exploring exciting new ways to take translation “off the page” through work with schools and communities
- raised **appreciation of translated literature** from the book industry and literary festivals
- **enthusiastic responses from young people, families and teachers taking part** in the projects, with clear benefits for individuals
- multilingual creative writing **boosting social, cultural and educational engagement**, especially for young people from minority ethnic communities
- a considerable **bank of replicable models**, teaching resources and shared experience.

*“There are big things in little words, deep feelings that we have, powerful, in these small words in our language we have a lot to say.”*

Student,  
Arvon (M)Other Tongues project



# About the programme

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation UK Branch developed this programme as part of its (then) strategic aim to develop cultural understanding. (The Foundation revised its priorities in 2014.)

The programme's overall purpose was to:

- help improve people's perceptions of each other by providing opportunities for interaction through culture and between cultures.

The programme sought to contribute to this through:

- raising the profile of foreign literature in translation in the UK, and
- encouraging multilingualism in the UK

The full programme ran from 2011–2014. The UK Branch's then International Officer, Isabel Lucena, spent a year scoping the field prior to the programme's formal launch. Some initiatives were already preparing the ground, such as the work of the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) and the Arts Council's work on international literature. The Foundation also supported some pilot programmes in 2009–10 (for example, Arvon's (M)Other Tongues).

After a mid-term review in 2012, the programme sharpened its focus on the two strands:

- supporting the conditions needed to increase the quantity, quality and diversity of literature in translation in the UK, and
- promoting multilingualism, focusing on children and young people.

The programme sought to influence:

- professional literary translators
- the UK book industry
- the general public, and
- children and young people.

In all, the programme supported 14 organisations to develop 16 projects. Around half looked at literary translation and half at multilingualism. However, a notable feature – and strength – of the programme is the considerable cross-pollination between many projects.

Josephine Burns and Linda Weichlein carried out an independent evaluation of the programme in November 2014.

The Foundation is working with a number of organisations across 2014–15 to secure the achievements and momentum of the programme.



if:book/WingedChariot's multilingual digital stories for children.

# The programme at a glance

**Timescale:** 2011–2013, with some pilot programmes supported 2009–10 and exit strategy/legacy work in 2014–2015

**Support:** £550,000 overall, plus a dedicated programme manager, Isabel Lucena

## The projects

Read a case study of each project on the page shown.

### LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

#### **And Other Stories** (page 12)

Reading group and website promoting Portuguese books for translation into English

#### **British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT)** (page 13)

Mentoring and professional development for emerging translators; Public events to promote translated literature

#### **Free Word Centre** (page 14)

Translators in Residence programme, engaging with local communities

#### **Literature Across Frontiers** (page 15)

Support for the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair; Research into data on translated literature in the UK

#### **Outside in World** (page 16)

Website promoting foreign children's literature

#### **Writers' Centre Norwich** (page 17)

Support to take forward the legacy of the programme.

### MULTILINGUALISM

#### **Arvon, (M)Other Tongues** (page 18)

Residential creative writing courses for multilingual pupils, and workshops for teaching staff

#### **English PEN, Brave New Voices** (page 19)

Creative writing workshops for young people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds

#### **if:books/WingedChariot** (page 20)

Multilingual digital stories for teaching foreign languages in primary schools

#### **Norwood School, The Londonwordscape Project** (page 21)

Bilingual creative writing courses for pupils, training staff and producing teaching materials

#### **Pop Up, Fusion video project** (page 22)

Animated films by children and families based on traditional stories from minority ethnic communities

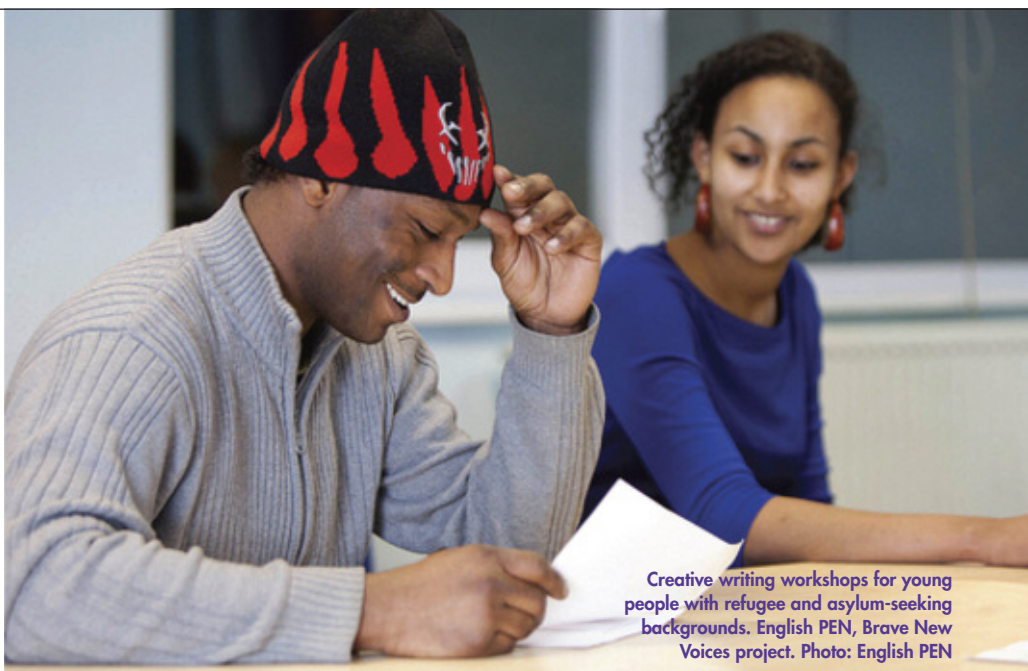
#### **Stephen Spender Trust, Translators in Schools** (page 23)

Professional development for translators to run workshops in schools

# Promoting literature in translation

Different languages and their respective literatures reflect different views of the world. This makes translated literature an effective way to help understanding between cultures. But only 4.5 per cent of fiction, poetry and drama published in the UK and Ireland between 2000 and 2008 was in translation (Donahaye, 2012).

This strand of the programme sought to raise the profile, awareness and understanding of translated literature. The literary translation sector is small and close-knit. Its strong community of practice is a marked feature of this strand. It was easier for these projects to build and sustain networks than it was for the multilingualism projects.



Creative writing workshops for young people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. English PEN, Brave New Voices project. Photo: English PEN

## WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

### Knowledge is sparse

There is a lack of background data to help the sector build its case, develop strategy and understand challenges. The programme has produced some significant research (for example, that by Literature Across Frontiers, which is continuing to develop this area).

### How to promote translated literature?

There are different arguments about how to promote translated literature. Should it be specifically as translation or broadly as good books, for example? Large publishing houses tend to segment books by genre, so Scandinavian crime is ‘crime’ rather than contemporary literature in translation.

### London can dominate

Translation is very orientated towards London, with its high levels of multilingualism and concentration of publishing houses. Many of the project organisations are aware of this and are taking steps to address it. For example, the Writers’ Centre Norwich intends to work across the regions. Translators in Schools also has ambitions to extend its pool of graduates across the country.

## WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

The evaluation notes the difficulty of pinning specific developments to projects. However, programme participants interviewed for the evaluation were unanimous that the Foundation’s support has led to the growth and empowerment of this sector. “It feels like a sector now!” said one (Burns and Weichlein, 2014).

### The translation community is stronger

Those involved with literature in translation have developed a powerful sense of community over the five years that the programme broadly spans. Connections and collaborations are strong. The programme “inspired and galvanised projects, and organisations had a story to tell about translation” (interviewee in Burns and Weichlein, 2014). Building this continuing community of practice is integral to several projects. For example, the Translators in Schools website includes a hub for sharing workshop plans and activities. The long-term ambition of the Writers’ Centre Norwich is to see a national network of practitioners supporting each other through collaborations and peer-to-peer training.

*“There is a lot of excitement and a growing understanding that a translator’s skills are not just language-specific.”*

Chris Gribble,  
Writers’ Centre Norwich

*“The low number of books in translation in the UK is at odds with the multicultural nature of British society”*

Alexandra Büchler,  
Literature Across Frontiers

### **Translation moves “off the page”**

A number of projects focus on training and development for translators. The evaluation notes that it is still difficult to make a living as a translator. But it finds both established and emerging translators feeling more confident and part of a more active community. There is a common aim to take translation “off the page” in new directions and into new environments. This sense of common purpose is reflected in the Emerging Translators Network, which arose from the BCLT mentoring programme. This online forum offers peer support for early-career literary translators.

Translators in Schools, Translators in Residence and the BCLT mentees all mark a new generation of translators coming through who are entrepreneurial in spirit. There is “a palpable sense of excitement”, says Chris Gribble, Director of the Writers’ Centre Norwich.

### **Industry views are changing**

All those interviewed for the evaluation reported seeing a real change in the publishing and book industries. There is both greater awareness of and a more receptive attitude to literature in translation. “They now regularly participate in events and welcome contact,” said one interviewee.

The programme has supported events that harness the combined strengths of project organisations and others. These include the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair and International Translation Day. Such events have increased the visibility of both individual organisations and literary translation as a whole, raising awareness among funders and publishers. BCLT also hosts industry days for emerging translators as part of its mentoring programme.

Other factors are also at play here, for instance increasing globalisation and the success of individual writers (like Stieg Larsson from Sweden). But there have been some clear wins. For example, the enthusiasm of the And Other Stories reading group for one Portuguese title attracted interest from several publishers, with eventual publication in translation by Harvill Secker. Small publishers like And Other Stories are becoming increasingly important and can inspire big houses.

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the higher profile of literary translators and a broader range of languages on offer have been instrumental in changing publishers’ perceptions of translated literature.

### **More funders support translation**

Collectively, the organisations taking part felt that the programme – and the Foundation’s support – has been critical in changing the perception and policies of other funders. Research suggests that previously two trusts and foundations funded translation; this has now risen to seven (Burns and Weichlein, 2014). The Arts Council now recognises literary translation as an art form in its own right.

### **Festivals showcase translated literature**

Literary festivals are dedicating more time to translated literature. This follows targeted work by the BCLT, in particular, to influence their programming. A major change in public attitudes was beyond the scope of these projects. However, the increased exposure at festivals clearly reflects considerable and growing interest among certain sections of the public.

### **New models are reshaping practice**

These projects are inspiring new ways of working, both within and outside the programme. For example:

- Literature Across Frontiers’ pioneering work collecting and analysing data provides a baseline of information on translated literature for all.
- And Other Stories’ reading groups showcase a new way of exposing untranslated literature to publishers. Beginning with Portuguese, this approach has now spread to many other languages.
- Inspired by the BCLT mentorship programme, And Other Stories is developing an editorial training programme for emerging translators.
- The Translators in Schools website includes a hub for translators to share workshop plans and activities.
- Translated literature now appears on many book festival programmes, following BCLT’s work championing sessions at various festivals.



# Encouraging multilingualism

More than one million children and teenagers in the UK use languages other than English in their daily lives, often in hybrid and innovative ways (Holmes, 2015). But young people can see these languages as an embarrassment not an asset. They opt to speak the dominant language, English.

This strand of the programme sought to encourage multilingualism among children and young people. Broadly, these projects aim to help them “see the point of learning languages and value the languages they have” (Robina Pelham Burn, Stephen Spender Trust). But they also encourage young people to develop their own voice, tell their own stories and share their experiences with others. They help young people explore what may be difficult issues through various forms of creative writing.

These groundbreaking initiatives worked mostly in partnership with schools. The organisations involved work across several fields. But they share an ambition to gain recognition for multilingualism and to create greater social fairness and empowerment by giving people a voice.

*“Our schools are seeing a steady stream of multilingual children; we should be responding to that.”*

Robina Pelham Burn,  
Stephen Spender Trust



Residential writing course for multilingual pupils. Arvon, (M)Other Tongues project.  
Photo: Daniel Hahn.

## WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

### Multilingualism is hard to define

The relationships young people have with the languages they speak can be complex, dynamic and multi-faceted. Many projects highlighted the number of languages children and young people speak, going beyond ‘bilingualism’. Sometimes schools themselves were unaware of how many and which languages these were (Translators in Schools notes this). Some languages are spoken, but not written or read. One teacher explained:

“In some cases ... it is not the first or second language, it may be the third language, the fourth language. So, for example, their mother tongue may be Mirpuri ... but then when you look at the national picture, Urdu is their mother tongue. So Urdu is the national mother tongue, but their own mother tongue is different. Then they have to go to mosque to learn Arabic, ... so Arabic becomes another mother language. Then they come to school and they have to learn everything in English.”  
*(Teacher, quoted in Murphy 2013)*

Mahad Osman (writing in Somali and English), from the (M)Other Tongues anthology, *Beautiful like a traffic light*.

Terms like ‘mother tongue’ or ‘home...’, ‘first...’, ‘family...’ or ‘community language’ are also complex. The projects in this programme use different terms. However, they share a belief that all languages should be on an equal footing. What matters is young people developing their own voice – and having the confidence to use it.

### Poem for My Mother

Hooyo hadii aad ilaatoo oo ilka lagudhigo  
ku macuno abooray ubad iyo badhaadhiyo  
ubax kurkooda lagugudhalay.

Intaa dunida jooqtoo nolal aayatiin wacan  
aqirat fartoowsaa anbiyada agtoodanah  
aqalbiga la gugudhigay.

Mother if you were to die, if you were to  
be folded into the earth. The termites  
would not eat you, like those you birthed;  
they would place flowers by your feet.

But while you roam the earth, live hopeful  
and look forward to a perfect after life, a  
dwelling complete with saints.



*“It’s important for these young people to know that their voices are heard.”*

Louise Swan, English PEN

### Changing perceptions takes time

These projects often challenged existing ways in which languages are taught in schools. Language teaching remains largely wedded to Modern Foreign Languages, with other (mostly non-European) languages still under-explored, for example. There is limited time available within the school day and budgets are tight. This can make establishing collaborations with schools and local authorities on new ways of working difficult. Projects needed time to do this.

Projects also needed to win the trust of different minority ethnic communities, especially where young people were involved in residential courses. Projects searched for champions within both individual schools and communities. Doing this paid considerable dividends, but could not be hurried.

### There is no single sector

Projects like these span a range of fields, including formal and non-formal education, issues around race and ethnicity, human rights, creative writing, publishing and translation. Organisations involved share many values, but there is no obvious, coherent sector. This makes it harder to establish a community of practice and spread ideas.

## WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

In their independent evaluation of the programme, Josephine Burns and Linda Weichlein point out the shortage of existing research in this field. Without this, it can be hard to attribute direct educational benefits. But they highlight a number of positive effects.

### Skills improved

Young people taking part in various projects said their skills had improved – and not only in English and writing. For example, 93 per cent of those taking part in Brave New Voices (English PEN’s creative writing workshops for young people with a refugee background) said their writing, reading and speaking skills had greatly improved. Teachers across projects also reported seeing better attainment in both English and overall academic performance in their pupils.

Teachers also welcomed the opportunity to develop their own skills, through direct involvement, specialist training days or teaching resources.

“This was one of those professional opportunities that changes you. It opened up a whole new realm of possibilities in the classroom.”

*Mike Flowers, Hillcross Primary School, quoted on Translators in Schools website*

### Self-confidence grew

Projects enhanced young people’s confidence. For example, over 90 per cent of participants in Brave New Voices felt more confident after the course.

Sharing stories and experiences is central to this. One pupil on Arvon’s (M)Other Tongues commented:

“I never believed that we would be able to do this, to make a play together of our story with our language. It makes me proud of everyone.”

*Student, Arvon (M)Other Tongues (Murphy, 2013)*

Some children have considerable language abilities but these may be hidden, perhaps only used at home. Workshops spotlighted these skills, allowing these children to shine and flourish. Translators in Schools, if:book and Arvon all notice this effect:

“She stood up in front of our end of year assemblies, about 800 children, and teachers were saying to me after, who’s that, is that the same quiet shy little girl? Whoa! She was commanding.”

*Teacher participant, Arvon (M)Other Tongues (Murphy, 2013)*

Courses had a long-lasting impact:

“Now I appreciate what I do for my school, athletics, everything I put effort into ... every other day I take 20 minutes to sit back and appreciate whatever I did ... bring that bit from [Arvon Centre in] Devon inside, that calm.”

*Student, Arvon (M)Other Tongues (Murphy, 2013)*

### Cultural understanding deepened

Projects ignited young people’s interest in the languages they speak. For example, several pupils were considering GCSE Urdu after attending Arvon’s (M)Other Tongues; none had been interested before the course.

This interest spread through families. Families from the Pop Up Fusion project intended to do more reading together in their home language. One teacher said of Translators in Schools:

“Some of the children rushed at me first thing in the playground today to tell me that they had taken home copies of the translated books and shared them with their families.

The activity has renewed my determination to run some child/parent workshops to translate more of our school library as it is clear our children really gained a lot from it.”

*Sophy Silverstein,*

*EAL and EMA Coordinator, Granton Primary School (quoted on Translators in Schools website)*

Projects also enhanced children's appreciation of other languages and cultures. Research by Outside In World (2009) had highlighted this enthusiasm. In the classroom, digital books produced by if:books and WingedChariot in different languages piqued children's curiosity. Sharing in a common story through multilingual storytelling was especially helpful for newly arrived migrant children.

### Perceptions of minority communities shifted

Sharing work more widely didn't just show individuals in a new light. It helped young people explain their own cultures and experiences to peers, teachers and families. This also presents multilingualism not as problematic but as a creative skill.

All the groups taking part in (M)Other Tongues had opportunities to show families and peers their work at celebration events, assemblies and performances. A group of

Roma girls shared poems they had written together explaining Roma culture, why they don't dance for example. Londonwordscape, (M)Other Tongues and Brave New Voices all produce anthologies from each course, often with an event suitable for that group.

Teaching staff felt these presentations made explicit how multilingual learners are able to cope with often significant challenges. This shows them not as pupils who need additional help, but as pupils who have additional strengths:

"I think when people have seen what they've done, they get past their preconceptions and start to see what's truly there."

*(Teaching Assistant, quoted in Murphy, 2013).*

Highlighting the *ability* of people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds in speaking more than one language – and celebrating this as a special skill – is central to Brave New Voices.

### Valuable teaching resources emerged

Changing perceptions of language education takes time. The evaluation identifies teachers as the key constituency here. Providing education packs is crucial if individual teachers are to integrate multilingualism into their lessons.

The projects are building up a considerable and inspiring bank of teaching resources, freely available for others to use. Some are providing direct professional development; others are showcasing imaginative ways of working. For example:

- Arvon's learning resource booklet details creative writing exercises for bilingual and multilingual young people and encourages teachers to develop their own lesson plans.
- Translators in Schools is establishing an online database of shared lesson plans and case studies. Like Arvon, it also offers teachers professional development workshops.
- Pop Up demonstrates how working creatively with home languages could help schools engage families with their children's literacy.

The academic and educational sectors have shown a lot of interest in these projects. Arvon has participated in a range of conferences and professional development events; the Norwood School project has established links with Goldsmith's College Education Faculty; and Sam Holmes and others are looking into educational training with the King's College Cultural Institute. Sam Holmes is also exploring new ways of supporting language teaching, such as training bilingual teaching assistants. He is now Researcher in Residence at the Free Word Centre.

#### Scene Six

##### Girl's story

(Salma arrives home)

**Mum:** Kutey gaiysay mey itnee kabraai sa

**Salma:** I'm sorry Mum

**Auntie:** (sarcastically) Aie gii ye.

**Mum:** Ey aay gii ye tusa hoon jawh.

(Snobby Auntie and family leave with insulted faces)

**Salma:** Mum.... Dad....

(Mum and Dad thinking OH MY GOD!)

**Salma:** Do you wanna cuppa tea?

Closing scene from *Sacrifice or Qurani*, A play in Mirpuri and English by pupils from The Co-operative Academy, Leeds, From the (M)Other Tongues anthology, *Beautiful like a traffic light*.

# Lessons from across the programme

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Taken together, the projects highlight a number of more general lessons.

## Groundwork pays dividends

The initial scoping and research by the Foundation proved extremely useful in building both internal expertise and relationships with key stakeholders. Learning to understand both sectors was important in shaping the overall programme and appears to have been critical to its success.

## Committed leadership counts

The programme benefitted hugely from a committed and able group of organisations and individuals. Two people, in particular, emerged – Daniel Hahn on literature in translation and Sam Holmes on multilingualism. The evaluation concludes that their close cooperation and shared commitment to all aspects of the programme have been crucial to its overall success. They continue to play an influential role.

## Shared values drive common purpose

Although translation and multilingualism are different, they can be combined to great effect. These projects demonstrate a great deal of crossover and synergy – translators are generally advocates for multilingualism, for example. Many projects established contacts across related sectors, creating new partnerships between cultural organisations and educational institutions, local authorities and the book industry. For example:

- BCLT public events series established lasting collaborations with a variety of book and literature festivals across the country;
- And Other Stories and BCLT created platforms where translators and the book industry come together.

- Schools were involved in projects such as if:books and (M)Other Tongues; (M)Other Tongues worked with the International New Arrivals, Travellers and Supplementary Schools Team, Manchester City Council, and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service at Leeds City Council, and Lambeth Council;

## There is strength in numbers

The strength of key cultural organisations has powered the sector's growth. Most, such as Free Word, BCLT, English PEN and Writers' Centre Norwich, have Arts Council funding and a strong organisational base. This coherent and robust framework has clearly been central to building success. Many interviewees also commented on the physical importance of the Free Word Centre as a formal and informal space for sharing ideas and making connections. Several projects are collaborations. A number of networks and platforms have been created and strengthened. For example:

- Free Word Centre's Translators in Residence project has linked with the Translators' Association, BCLT, English PEN, and Arvon;
- The Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair is supported by 10 organisations.

## Pilots improve new ideas

Many of the projects piloted innovative approaches. An important aspect of Foundation support was that it allowed time and flexibility to learn by doing. For example:

- Londonwordscape has trialled various models of multilingual creative writing in different schools.
- The Translators in Schools programme has evolved over time. Both the Translators in Residence and emerging translators mentoring scheme have adapted their programmes in the light of each year's experience.

- English PEN's Brave New Voices has learnt very practical lessons about what does and doesn't work for young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.
- Arvon's tutors adapted their teaching methods in response to some pupils' low literacy levels, using music and songwriting, for example. Arvon is now considering developing a songwriting course.

As a result, the projects provide more robust models for practice.

## Innovation creates practical resources

The case studies show how sharing ideas and testing new models of working have been central to both strands of the programme. Many of the projects build on ideas shared through the programme. They have created a growing bank of resources for others both to use directly and to develop further, such as Arvon's teaching materials and Translators in Schools' hub for sharing practice. They are influencing professional practice: Free Word Centre, Translators in Schools and BCLT, for example, are all redefining what it means to be a translator, and inspiring a new generation to take this forward. These innovative projects have also influenced broader practice through, for example, BCLT's work at book festivals, And Other Stories' changing relationships with publishers using reading groups, and the success of the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair.



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## **Creativity fosters personal development**

Creativity, and creative writing in particular, emerges as a significant tool in the personal, social and cultural development of young people. This was the case even for those whose literacy was low. Sharing in creative writing activities that explored both language and culture enabled participants to develop strong social bonds and acquire new knowledge of themselves, each other, and the world around them. The Arvon project evaluation describes creative writing as acting on three levels: as a space for reflection, as self expression; and as a reciprocal act (Murphy, 2013).

## **But turning small successes into big ones is difficult**

Projects were generally working with small groups of young people and teachers. The challenges of scaling up and disseminating good ideas are considerable, especially for those working with schools and for stretched voluntary sector organisations.

## **The right support catalyses progress**

The Foundation's support gave organisations the confidence to go further and to try new things. In the words of one evaluation interviewee, "It was a catalyser" (Burns and Weichlein, 2014). It changed the perceptions of funders and (directly and indirectly) other players, such as publishers and festivals, about the validity and importance of this work. The programme inspired and spawned other important initiatives, such as the Emerging Translators' Network and the Independent Foreign Fiction Readers' Prize.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The case studies show how individual projects have provided both resources and inspiration for others to use. Many projects are taking these achievements forward, often working in collaboration. The main organisations directing progress are the Free Word Centre and the Writers' Centre Norwich. For both, translation is now a major strategic commitment.

The Foundation is supporting the Writers' Centre Norwich to strengthen the newly emerged community of practice in translated literature and develop its sustainability. WCN is already increasing the range and breadth of the programme and creating strong links with other funders (including the Arts Council and British Council) and with partner organisations including Free Word.

For multilingualism, the main focus is developing professional skills and classroom practice. In combination, projects provide a considerable and growing bank of teaching methods, tools and professional training for translators and teaching staff. These include the Translators in Schools website, the Writers' Database and Learning Resource produced by Arvon, Free Word's Translators in Residence programme, and the Outside in World website. There are plans for a large event in 2015 to share learning and strengthen the links forged between the arts and education sectors.

## **CONCLUSION**

These projects have raised the profile, awareness and understanding of these related sectors. They are sharing learning and new ideas between themselves. Many have created a considerable bank of detailed resources and new models of working. They are also influencing other related sectors, such as education, the book industry and funders. The opportunities to trial innovative initiatives have had, and continue to have, a significant impact.

Sustaining these achievements will require a lot of hard work and new sources of funding. But the programme's evaluation concludes "... perhaps the greatest testament is the wholehearted assertion from all involved that the programme has been transformational" (Burns and Weichlein, 2014).

## ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

This summary is principally based on the independent evaluation carried out by Josephine Burns and Linda Weichlein, and evaluations and closing reports by various projects. It also draws on separate telephone interviews carried out for the case studies.

The paper was written by freelance writer, Sharon Telfer, who also carried out the case study interviews.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Chris Gribble introduces WCN's 'National Conversation' event on living translation, chaired by Daniel Hahn with Ali Smith, Xiaolu Guo and Margaret Jull Costa on the panel. Image courtesy of Writers' Centre Norwich. Photo: Belinda Lawley.



# And Other Stories

## Reading group and website promoting Portuguese books for translation into English

Publisher and translator Stefan Tobler founded And Other Stories out of frustration. “There was no lack of publishers bringing out crime in translation,” he says. “What we lacked in the English-speaking world were enough publishers of extraordinary, surprising writing.”

*And Other Stories* is a Community Interest Company publishing literature in translation. It believes great new books find readers thanks to the combined intelligence of editors, readers, translators, critics, literary promoters and academics. Sections of its website promote literature translated from specific languages.

Foundation support went towards developing a section on literature from Portuguese-speaking countries. An advisory board of established translators selects books. These are discussed on the website, with And Other Stories commissioning translated extracts. Wider community reading groups recommend which books should be published in English. Targeted at general readers, publishers and translators, groups aim to stimulate interest around certain books. In 2013, the buzz created by the Portuguese group led to Harvill Secker publishing a book by José Eduardo Agualusa and Dedalus Books publishing *Our Musseque* by José Luandino Vieira.

Participation at the London Book Fair in 2013 (page 15) strengthened ties to Portuguese publishers. “These publishers are very keen to promote Portuguese-speaking literature in the UK,” says Stefan Tobler.

“Without CGF’s support the Portuguese group would not have been such a success. The project has developed a model of reading as yet untranslated literature and



exposing it to the publishers in an innovative way. Because of this example, volunteers are starting reading groups in twelve other languages.”

And Other Stories has expanded the initiative to help emerging translators develop their careers. Emerging translators they have commissioned have since won contracts from other publishers. Inspired by the BCLT mentorship programme (page 13), And Other Stories is developing an editorial training programme for emerging literary translators. This includes detailed editorial feedback for those submitting work on spec or taking on their first book-length commission. They are also strengthening links with universities, cultural institutions and Portuguese-speaking communities. Competitions have won emerging translators contracts to publish with And Other Stories.

Reading groups “universally adored” *Now And At The Hour of Our Death*, which will be And Other Stories’ first non-fiction title



*“This new model is being recognised as a pioneering method of promoting international literature.”*

Stefan Tobler

### Find out more

Visit [www.andotherstories.org](http://www.andotherstories.org) and watch one of their Portuguese reading groups in action at: [http://youtu.be/b-s3BU8cz\\_M](http://youtu.be/b-s3BU8cz_M)



# British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT)

Mentoring and professional development for emerging translators;  
public events to promote translated literature

“Translation is a difficult career to get into,” says Daniel Hahn. “But there are lots of people willing to help and a very strong sense of community. Passing on knowledge is part of the culture.” The mentoring programme for new translators run by the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) has put that informal support onto a professional footing.

Hahn set up the scheme in 2010. The aim was to bridge the gap between early-career literary translators and full membership of the Translators’ Association. The scheme pairs established and emerging translators for six months. This one-to-one mentoring helps new translators develop skills and establish contacts with the publishing sector.

Each relationship is unique but running twelve mentorships concurrently brings group benefits. An industry day and

presence at the London Book Fair gives all the mentees the opportunity to meet publishers, agents and other translators.

The programme is very flexible, selecting languages each year based on where there appears to be a need for new translators. Mentees have established contacts with fellow translators, particularly through the Emerging Translators’ Network, editors and other professionals, which will help them progress. The scheme has become a ‘go-to’ source for publishers, with mentees winning contracts.

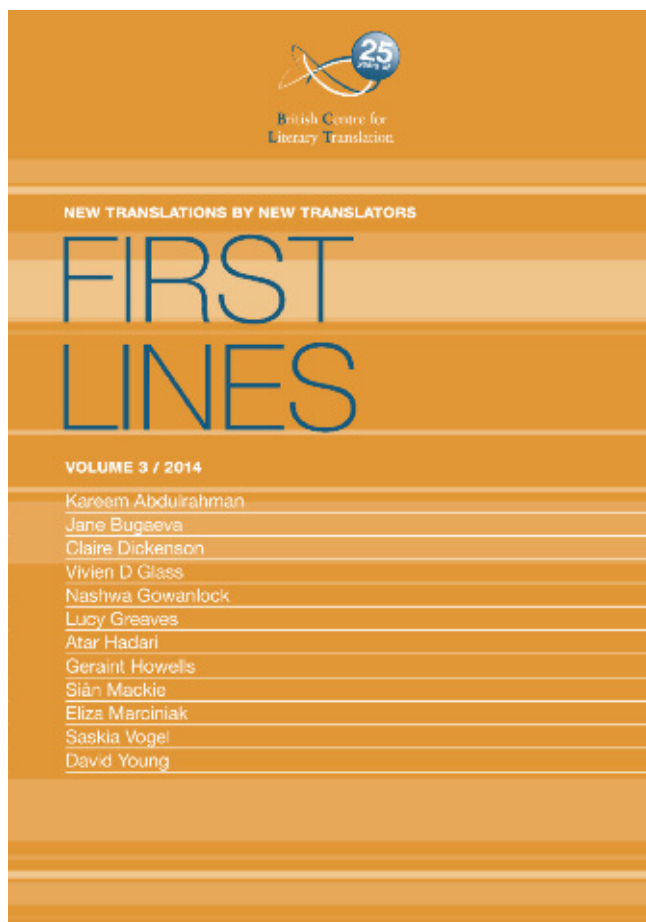
BCLT are now collaborating with the Writers’ Centre Norwich (page 17) on taking the scheme forward.

“There’s a new generation of translators,” says Daniel Hahn. “They understand that ‘being a translator’ is different from

‘translating’. Your job is to be an advocate for translation, to find your public voice – whether that’s through a blog, reviewing or speaking in public. An enormous amount of what Gulbenkian funded is about being part of a big conversation about translation.”

BCLT also looked at raising public awareness as part of extending that conversation. A push to get translated literature onto the programmes of literary festivals revealed a real public appetite. Many festivals now feature translation. From a small number of BCLT-sponsored events a few years ago, the Edinburgh International Book Festival is including translation as a major strand in 2015.

“The translation world in the UK is completely unrecognisable from what it was five years ago,” says Daniel Hahn. “It’s an extraordinary shift.”



*“Without translation,  
how do you read the  
best writing in the  
world?”*

*First Lines Vol 3,  
anthology of work  
by translators on the  
BCLT Mentoring  
Scheme 2014*

## Find out more

See the list of 2015 mentorships at:  
[www.bclt.org.uk/mentoring/](http://www.bclt.org.uk/mentoring/)



Workshops have included exploring translation between sign language and English with pupils from the Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children. Photo: Free Word Centre.

*“Being a Translator in Residence was a life-changing experience; it gave me the space and freedom to expand, share and actively apply my knowledge.”*

Canan Marasligil,  
Translator in Residence 2013

## Free Word Centre

### Translators in Residence programme, engaging with communities

Each year, the Free Word Centre appoints two ‘translators in residence’ to bring translation to life in new ways and forge connections between different cultures. “Translators open up other cultures,” says Rose Fenton, Free Word’s Director. “We wanted to take translation ‘off the page’, going beyond the academic to stage playful and interactive events.”

The programme is linked to the professional development offered to translators by the Stephen Spender Trust (page 23) and BCLT (page 13). Working with schools and local communities is central. But each residency is bespoke, playing to the individual’s ideas, enthusiasms and strengths. Resident translators have developed workshops exploring translation through food, comics, poetry, cartoons, sign language and much more.

The programme was also driven by the practical question of how translators make a living in a country where only a tiny percentage of literature is in translation. “Translators are realising there are many different ways in which they can use their

skills,” says Rose Fenton. “Translators in residence do need quite an entrepreneurial mindset. They’ve flown when opened up to collaboration.” She believes such a community of practice is essential: “It all comes together in this pot and becomes more than the sum of its parts. There’s a huge generosity, sharing contacts and ideas, collaborating...”

Free Word promotes this broader community too. Since 2010, for example, it has been lead producer on International Translation Day, where translators, students, publishers, booksellers, librarians, bloggers and reviewers share challenges and celebrate successes. Sam Holmes (page 21) is exploring creative multilingualism as Free Word’s Researcher in Residence.

The residency programme has evolved since it began in 2010. The ambition is for future residencies to last a year rather than four months. From April 2015, a programme co-ordinator will focus on relationships with schools. Fenton is keen to extend beyond London: mini-residencies in the regions are one possibility.

The ambition is to see translators become champions of translation in all its forms, both on and off the page. “It’s been so exciting to see someone forge unlikely partnerships, come out confident and full of ideas to take things forward.”

#### Find out more

Read about Translators in Residence:  
[freewordcentre.com/projects/translators-in-residence](http://freewordcentre.com/projects/translators-in-residence)

Listen and watch highlights from International Translation Day:  
[freewordcentre.com/projects/international-translation-day](http://freewordcentre.com/projects/international-translation-day)

# Literature Across Frontiers

Support for the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair; research into translated literature



First held in 2010, the Literary Translation Centre is now an annual fixture of the London Book Fair. Photo: Dave Weston, Post Photographic.

*“In the rest of Europe, translated literature forms an inseparable part of literary culture.”*

The Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair has established itself as a highly successful hub for everyone passionate about the art and business of literary translation. The Centre has a dedicated programme of events and provides a networking space for translators, editors, publishers, students and writers.

The Centre was the brainchild of Alexandra Büchler in 2008, when she was on the board of the Translators’ Association. The idea was embraced by the board and other organisations working in the translation field. It took two years to raise funding and establish the event, but it was an instant success.

“The low number of books in translation published in the UK is at odds with the multicultural nature of British society,” says Alexandra Büchler. She is founding Director of Literature Across Frontiers (LAF), one of ten partner organisations running the Centre. The Centre’s success has depended very much on this collaborative approach. Building this community of practice has had knock-on benefits, making a strong contribution to International Translation Day, for example.

“The London Book Fair has developed a lot in the last eight years when it comes to international participation and literature in translation,” says Alexandra Büchler. One 2013 visitor commented: “I was amazed how vibrant the Literary Translation Centre was. . . . Every time I stopped by I found myself involved in conversations and wound up learning a great deal about the UK translation scene – far more than I even realised there was to learn.” Seminars in 2014 looked at topics from working with living authors to the low number of women translators and featured special sessions on Korea, the book fair market focus.

Data on translated literature is hard to come by. LAF is also undertaking research, in particular ways of generating publishing statistics. Its 2013 study, *Three Percent?* – referring to the often quoted share of translations in English-speaking countries – provided the first accurate figures for translated titles published in the UK. It also proposed a method for collecting and analysing translation data.

LAF is now working with the Writer’s Centre Norwich (page 17) to develop its online resources. It’s also looking at data on translated literature for the period 1990–2012, following up its *Three Percent?* report.

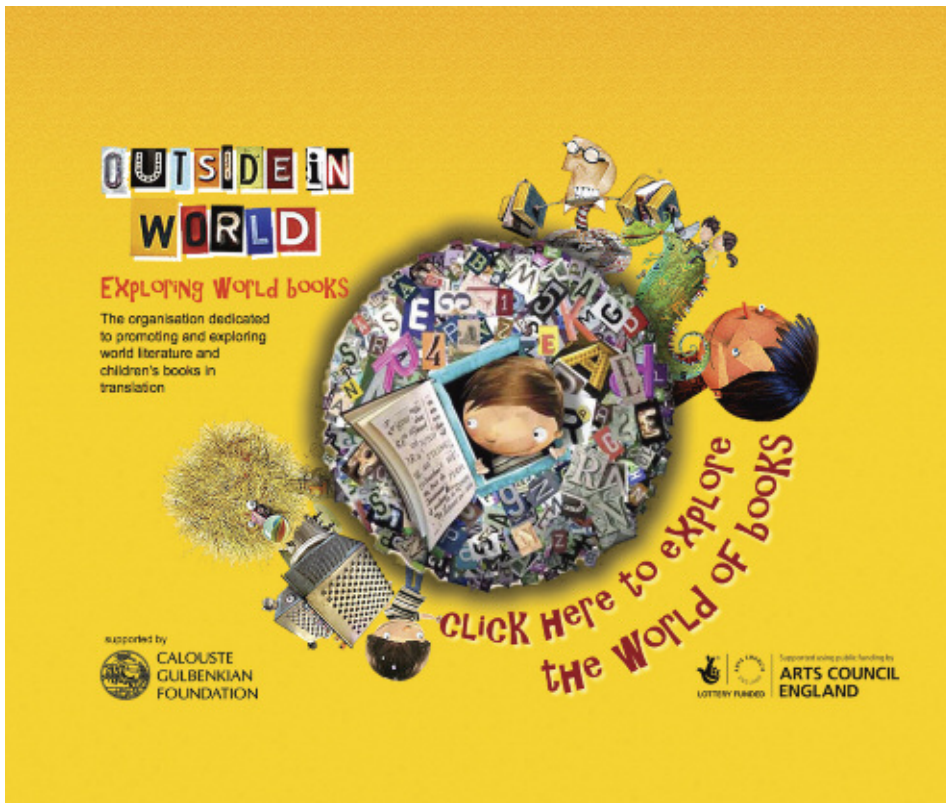
## Find out more

Other supporters of the Literary Translation Centre are: the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation itself, Free Word Centre, the British Centre for Literary Translation, English PEN, the Arts Council, British Council, the Translators’ Association, Wales Literature Exchange and Words without Borders.

Watch previous LTC seminars on the London Book Fair’s YouTube channel.

Explore Literature Across Frontier’s work at [www.lit-across-frontiers.org](http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org)





UK readers can explore children's books in translation from around the world using Outside in World's website

*"Children have the right to access books from around the world."*

Deborah Hallford

# Outside in World

Website promoting foreign children's literature

The UK children's book market is massive but books translated from other languages make up only a fraction of it. Outside In World is dedicated to promoting children's books in translation.

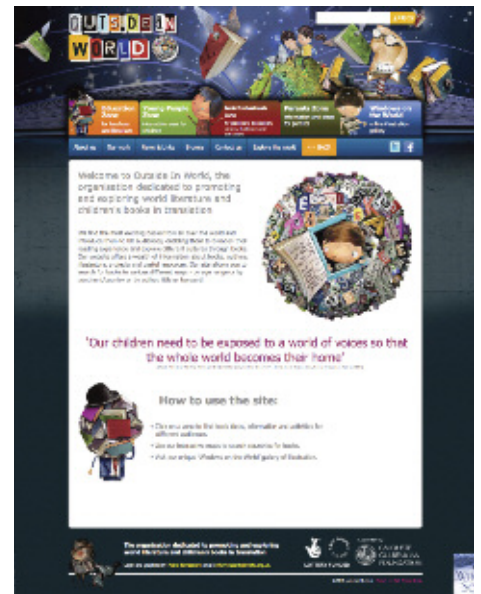
"We find the most exciting books from all over the world and introduce them to UK audiences," says Deborah Hallford from Outside In World. "Children gain direct and authentic experience of lives and voices from different cultures. Children are fascinated by books from other countries – but they need to be given the opportunity to find them."

Outside In World has a book collection of 1,500 titles and reviews 240-300 books per year. They find works in translation cover topics that UK readers might not otherwise come across. European writers, in particular, seem much more open to tackling sensitive topics such as death and bodily functions than many UK writers.

Support from the Foundation allowed Outside In World to relaunch what was a fairly basic website in 2012/3. It now offers a wealth of information about books, authors

and illustrators, and useful resources for publishers and translators. Users can search for books by age range, country, author, title or keyword. "It's hard to get money for a website. Many funders won't consider it but it's absolutely crucial for us," says Deborah Hallford. The revised website has also brought Outside In World a much higher profile, particularly through social media.

A small portion of the Foundation grant allowed Hallford and her colleagues, Alexandra Strick and Edgardo Zaghini, to go to the International Children's Book Fair in Bologna. There they found the inspiration for their next project (funded by the Arts Council and the Unwin Charitable Trust). 'Reading the Way' seeks to identify accessible and inclusive books from around the world, road-testing them with UK audiences. "Children with additional needs are largely overlooked in the UK. We saw so many good ideas at Bologna," says Deborah Hallford. "We want to gather best practice and bring this back to UK publishers." Legacy funding from the Foundation means they will be able to showcase their findings in seminars back at Bologna and at the London Book Fair.



**Find out more**

Visit [www.outsideinworld.org.uk](http://www.outsideinworld.org.uk)

# Writers' Centre Norwich

Support to take forward the legacy of the programme



Writers' Centre Norwich hosted a 'National Conversation' event on living translation, chaired by Daniel Hahn with Ali Smith, Xiaolu Guo and Margaret Jull Costa on the panel. Images courtesy of Writers' Centre Norwich. Photos: Belinda Lawley.



Over the past five years, Writers' Centre Norwich (WCN) has worked with many of the organisations involved in the programme. Following a discussion with the Foundation about risk to projects when the programme ended, WCN drew up a proposal to gather the core elements and take these forward.

"The Gulbenkian programme showcases what relatively modest funding can achieve and has done so much to encourage other funders. We want to extend that impact and broaden the funding base," explains Director Chris Gribble.

The groundwork laid by the programme has enabled better communication within a tightly knit network, he says. Support for events, like International Translation Day and the presence at the London Book Fair (page 15), has given shape to the sector's year. Professional engagement with the Foundation has invigorated small organisations.

WCN has an ambitious three-year plan. A Literary Translation Programme coordinator, based at the Free Word Centre, will bring a sense of regular connection. WCN is developing the BCLT mentoring

programme (page 13), creating a programme manual, extending the funding base and synchronising with the London Book Fair and International Translation Day. Work with the Regional Literature Development Network will spread the programme nationally. Research should provide essential data for conversations with publishers and funders. Presence both online and at festivals will showcase literature in translation to funders, publishers, readers and writers.

Community is crucial. For example, WCN is collaborating with Free Word on bids to put International Translation Day and the London Book Fair stand on a sustainable footing. "That kind of cooperation is bringing together partnership in a very concrete way, alongside all the soft skills," says Chris Gribble

By 2018, he hopes to see everyone involved in literature in translation contributing to a rolling peer-to-peer training network. This would build up to a national network with read-across to occasions like International Translation Day, collaborative funding bids, greater awareness from the Arts Council and other funders, and better relationships with higher education institutions.

*"Translation as a profession is being transformed as its economic, literary and cultural value is being recognised."*

Chris Gribble

"What's most exciting is that the partners are all really keen to work together flexibly," says Chris Gribble. "There's a palpable sense of excitement, the sector is really ready to flourish."

## Find out more

Visit [www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk](http://www.writerscentrenorwich.org.uk)





The residential courses gave young people time and space to reflect. Photos: Daniel Hahn.

*“Creative writing in your mother tongue brings a pride in that language. There’s a creative reconnection with telling your story.”*

Becky Swain

## Arvon, (M)Other Tongues

Residential creative writing courses for multilingual pupils; workshops for teaching staff

Since 2009, the creative writing charity Arvon has run innovative residential writing courses for bilingual and multilingual young people from across England. The (M)Other Tongues course helps young people write in both English *and* their home languages. Those taking part include speakers of Portuguese, Somali, Urdu, and Romani, and those of French-speaking African and Caribbean heritage.

“Creative writing helps pupils at lots of levels,” explains Becky Swain, Arvon’s Head of Learning and Participation. “It’s imaginative but also can be very structured.” Activities on the weeklong course follow a four-stage process. “First, in order to feel confident with their own imagination, young people think and write in whatever language they want.” Only then do the formal translation, structuring and revision happen.

“But,” says Becky Swain, “it’s not just about writing, it’s about learning more about yourself.” An independent evaluation found participants’ confidence, overall learning ability and social skills increased alongside

improved writing skills. Many young people found their voice for the first time.

“Every teacher involved has been blown away by how much change they saw in a week,” says Becky Swain. Many of the Roma girls lacked confidence to write. Gradually, through songs and spoken word, they were able to write collective poems detailing Roma culture. Other groups talked about feeling like a family when they returned to school.

Arvon worked hard to find local champions. “Taking the time to understand and to meet trusted individuals in the community you want to work with is the most important thing,” says Swain. The local New Arrivals and Travellers Team was essential in gaining the trust of the Roma group, for example. It took nine months from contacting the team and testing the ground with local workshops, to running the residential week. Parents’ trust also needed to be won, especially if girls were to go on a residential course.

Finding schools committed to taking the work forward has been crucial. Arvon wants to deepen relationships with schools to create real culture change. They are continuing to lead in planning professional development days for teachers, with writers modelling workshops. One of the biggest legacies is an inspirational booklet with tried and tested activities to help teachers develop multilingual creative writing across the curriculum.

### Find out more

Learn more about the programme and watch one course in action at: [www.arvon.org/schools/mother-tongues/](http://www.arvon.org/schools/mother-tongues/)

Download the free resource booklet for teachers at: [www.arvon.org/schoolsandgroups/mothertonguesresource/](http://www.arvon.org/schoolsandgroups/mothertonguesresource/).



# English PEN, Brave New Voices

Creative writing workshops for young people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds



Sharing and celebrating work is central to the workshops. Photos: English PEN.

*“Refugees and asylum-seekers are always being reminded of what they’re not. This project celebrates what they are.”*

It’s rare to hear the voices of young people with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. Brave New Voices, a multilingual creative writing programme developed by English PEN, seeks to change that.

“It really is important for these young people to know that their voices are heard,” says PEN’s Head of Programmes, Louise Swan. “They may not have the confidence to speak their views, never mind write them down.”

PEN developed Brave New Voices from its outreach work with refugee communities. Based at NewVic College in Newham and the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum in Ladbroke Grove, the programme reached 30 young people. Translators led 20 workshops, each tailored to give the best experience for those taking part. One was built around slang, for instance. In another, participants segued between French, Arabic and English, generating immense pride in being part of a community that speaks so many languages.

“It always comes back to celebrating the skills that refugee communities have,” says Louise Swan. “Projects like this have a huge impact on a population being made to feel ever less secure.” Ninety-five per cent of participants felt taking part had improved their writing, reading and speaking a lot. Ninety-three per cent felt more confident generally.

Refugees can be very isolated, dispersed to the edges of London. Sharing the stories is as important as writing them down. Each series always produces something tangible, like a pamphlet, and closes with a celebratory event.

CGF support gave PEN time to develop the programme in very practical ways. A 10-week course is too long, for example, 8 weeks works better. Each workshop now starts with 20 minutes for tea and coffee, a ‘buffer zone’ giving people time to come in from across London.

NewVic has been so impressed that it is now running its own course. PEN has created learning resource packs for teachers and workshop facilitators, including five word-based animations. “We’re excited about getting these out to as many schools and teachers as possible,” says Louise Swan. “The programme speaks to the very heart of what we do, pulling together our advocacy for freedom of expression, multilingualism and literature in translation.”

## Find out more

The programme has produced a series of learning resources, including discussion topics, exercises and animations featuring translators and free speech campaigners. Find the resources at:

<http://www.englishpen.org/outreach/young-people/brave-new-voices-translation-animations/>



Digital stories help children share languages in the classroom

*“Imaginative, responsive good teaching uses all the material. It’s a terrible waste not to use digital.”*

Chris Meade

## if:books/WingedChariot

Multilingual digital stories for teaching foreign languages in primary schools

In 2010, just as the first iPad came onto the market, if:book and WingedChariot produced a series of multilingual digital stories for use in primary schools.

*Scruffy Kitty* can be read in English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Japanese, with spoken narration in each. *Red Apple* – a beautiful picture book developed by teachers – works in 10 different languages.

Using these apps on iPhones or iPads lets children explore language on their own or with friends. Projected onto a big touchscreen, the stories reach the whole class. Children can choose a language they have never seen before and ask classmates for help understanding what words mean. “It was great to see the shy, quiet child become the star of the day,” says if:book’s Chris Meade.

Anne Arnscott, editor at WingedChariot, watched the apps in action: “We saw the children looking at options and coming up with the country it came from, drawing out children who have experience of a particular language.”

The project was particularly successful with children newly arrived in the UK. Sharing stories quickly united them, building a real sense of community.

Such apps also help primary school teachers, who may not be language specialists. Paul Greenwood uses *Scruffy Kitty* with Year 5 pupils. “Spanish is new to me as well. To have a digital resource where the children are learning a correct pronunciation gives me much more confidence.”

The project ran just as digital was taking off. Very different technical setups in schools made it hard to extend beyond the pilot. For the children, however, digital was simply another way of telling a story, just like pencils and books.

Both education policy and technology have changed fast over the last few years. Today, classroom apps are much more common and WingedChariot continue to produce multilingual resources. In 2014, languages became part of the primary curriculum, so the case for such teaching aids seems even stronger.

“The crucial thing about a story like *Scruffy Kitty*,” says Chris Meade, “is that it could be made available in *every* language. So all the children in a class could read the same story.”

### Find out more

Watch the ‘Stories to Touch’ apps being used in the classroom:  
<http://futureofthebook.org.uk/?p=333>

Find the apps at:  
[www.wingedchariot.com/kids-apps/](http://www.wingedchariot.com/kids-apps/)



# Norwood School, The Londonwordscape Project

Bilingual creative writing courses for pupils, training staff and producing teaching materials



Pupils can work in whichever language they feel is right. Photos: Sam Holmes.



Teacher Sam Holmes was “blown away” by the (M)Other Tongues multilingual creative writing course (see page 18) he attended with pupils. That course was residential. He wondered if schools could offer something as inspiring on-site.

The result is The Londonwordscape Project, creative writing courses aimed at different language groups in schools across London.

“Creative writing allows young people to choose what approach to take,” says Holmes. “Some write autobiographically, others use fiction. It gives them a chance to tell their own story and explore issues they find difficult. Reading out their own work and listening to what others have written means they also share experiences.”

Each course reflects the circumstances of each school. So far, five have taken part. In one, children had roots in the local Portuguese community, in another participants were recent arrivals from three continents.

Sessions are run by bilingual facilitators. “Kids can speak any language at any time,” Holmes explains. “They don’t limit what they say because they’re worried about getting the words wrong. They can perform at their absolute best.”

Fitting into busy timetables has been the biggest challenge. Most courses have taken place after school.

The model has evolved throughout the project, producing a growing bank of resources. But spreading the word requires more. Getting on the radar of senior staff is important. Many teaching assistants happen to be bilingual: Holmes is exploring whether they could help run courses. With Kings’ College, he’s looking at ways to embed the concept into continuous professional development for teachers and INSET programmes. He’s working with Translators in Schools (see page 23) and is now Researcher in Residence at the Free Word Centre (see page 14).

“Current paradigms of language learning have very specific purposes,” says Sam Holmes, “whether that’s adapting to life in the UK, passing exams or getting by on holiday. All of them share the idea that we use one language at a time. But people don’t compartmentalise their languages in their day-to-day interactions. That’s what makes this innovative – it’s much closer to reality. Kids can be as nuanced and as complex as they really are.”

*“It’s like having stabilisers on a bike – you can go much further without falling. When kids stop feeling safe in one language, they can switch to another.”*

Sam Holmes

## Find out more

Learn more about the programme and read some of the students’ work at [www.thelondonwordscapeproject.org](http://www.thelondonwordscapeproject.org)

Contact Sam Holmes at [sam.holmes@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:sam.holmes@kcl.ac.uk)





Families worked with artists to make the films then attended a joint celebration screening. Photo: Patrick Boyd.

*“Lots of people were trying new things, so people were going out of their way to make it fantastic.”*

Dylan Calder

## Pop Up, Fusion video project

Animated films by children and families based on traditional stories from minority ethnic communities

What connects a cannibal mother, a monster-making machine, a drunken man and a creature half snake, half woman? They are all the subjects of animated films made by families in the Pop Up: *Fusion* video project.

Pop Up’s mission is to engage families in storytelling. Helping children and families feel proud of the languages they speak at home is an important part of this. The Fusion project was designed to reach families from minority ethnic communities who predominantly speak languages other than English in the home. The films portray traditional tales in four languages: Turkish, Somali, Bangla and Spanish.

Pop Up partnered with Chocolate Films to work with children and their families from four different London schools. The project brought families together with translators, artists and filmmakers. “I think we were successful partly because we brought so many different artists onto the project,” says Pop Up’s Director, Dylan Calder. “This required practitioners to experiment, collaborate and learn together – just like the

families.” Children and families took the creative lead, telling myths and legends from their cultures. They then worked with professional writers to develop scripts. Illustrators from the House of Illustration and puppeteers from Little Angel Theatre created the visual elements with the families. Filmmakers took families through how animation works, then animated and edited the final films. The families themselves recorded the voice-overs and dialogue, with professional translators checking the English subtitles.

The climax of the project was a public screening at the Free Word Centre in 2012. Part of Pop Up’s annual festival, this was also a chance to celebrate the achievements of all involved.

The underlying aim was to help parents feel more confident about getting involved with their children’s literacy education. Pop Up also wanted to show schools how reading and writing in translation could engage families with literacy.

The project went down very well: all the parents and almost all of the children said they found their experience “very good” or “good”. One mother’s comment was typical: “This workshop encouraged my son to learn [Bangla].” Eighty-five per cent of those taking part said they would be reading more books together in their home language.

### Find out more

Watch a behind-the-scenes documentary and the films themselves at [chocolatefilms.com/channel/project/pop-fusion](http://chocolatefilms.com/channel/project/pop-fusion).

Learn more about Pop Up: [pop-up.org.uk](http://pop-up.org.uk).

# Stephen Spender Trust, Translators in Schools

Professional development for translators to run workshops in schools



Training days prepare translators to run classroom workshops. Photos: The Stephen Spender Trust.



“We want to help children see the point of learning languages and value the languages they already have,” says Robina Pelham Burn, Director of the Stephen Spender Trust.

The Trust is developing a pool of translators who can run creative translation workshops in schools. Evolving from the Trust’s Translation Nation programme, Translators in Schools provides three training days. These teach participants how to devise and present workshops and include time with children. Importantly, it also covers how to make the business case to schools (now boosted with translation back on the National Curriculum).

“Translators bring skills that teachers may not have and they’re not bound by the same curricular restrictions,” says Robina Pelham Burn. “This freedom gives them more flexibility to bring something fresh.”

Translators choose what they do to suit individual schools and tap into their own passions. Some use poetry, for example, others focus on performance. Courses are similarly flexible – they could run for one single hour session or one day a week for a term.

Workshops allow different children to shine. Some excel in ‘decoding’ language, others thrive in performance. Children bringing language from home can lead in ways they might not otherwise have done. Some act as interpreters for their families every day, but schools don’t always know this. A by-product of the workshops has been raising schools’ awareness of which – and how many – languages pupils speak.

Foundation support enabled robust piloting and Robina Pelham Burn feels the programme has “got better and better”. The number of applications for its third stage is double that expected. Demand from schools is strong.

The programme’s website provides a hub for people to share lesson and activity plans. The ambition is to create a bank of model workshops for translators and teachers to promote translation skills and interest in studying foreign languages.

The Trust is seeking funding to roll Translation Nation out across the UK and wants to run the Translators in Schools training in other parts of the country. “Our aim is to have 25 genuinely passionate people working around the UK,” says Robina Pelham Burn.

*“The children raved about the workshop on the way back to school; they shared it with a passion and urgency that demonstrated a fundamental shift in thinking and perception.”*

Mike Flowers,  
Hillcross Primary School

## Find out more

Learn more about the programme and individual casestudies from its graduates at [www.translatorsinschools.org](http://www.translatorsinschools.org)

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## ABOUT THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is an international charitable foundation with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests. Based in Lisbon with branches in London and Paris, the Foundation is in a privileged position to support national and transnational work tackling contemporary issues. The purpose of the UK Branch, based in London, is to bring about long-term improvements in wellbeing particularly for the most vulnerable, by creating connections across boundaries (national borders, communities, disciplines and sectors) which deliver social, cultural and environmental value.

### Acknowledgements

A great thank you to all the organisations and individuals featured in this publication; the thriving literary translation sector and vibrant multilingualism network would not have been possible without their expertise, dedication and extraordinary passion. We would also like to thank a number of individuals who have been key to the development and success of the Literature in Translation and Multilingualism programme and have since moved on: Ariane Koek (former Director of the Arvon Foundation) who first brought to us the idea that developed into (M)Other Tongues; Shreela Ghosh (former Director of the Free Word Centre) who hosted an important part of the scoping phase at the Free Word Centre; Alistair Burtenshaw (former Director of the London Book Fair) who believed in and supported the Literary Translation Centre from its earliest stage; and the Translators' Association, our original partner and first connection in the field. Special thanks to Jo Burns and Linda Weichlein for conducting the independent evaluation of the programme; Sharon Telfer for writing this publication; and Helen Swansbourne for its design.

Opposite: Families awaiting a video screening. Pop Up, Fusion video project. Photo: Patrick Boyd.







