

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING PROJECT



Le **MONDE**
des possibles



Wallonie



FÉDÉRATION
WALLONIE-BRUXELLES



Cofinancé par
l'Union européenne

univerbal

2024 STATISTICS

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INTRODUCTION

[Le Monde des Possibles](#) is a non-profit organization located in the downtown district of Liège, Belgium. For the past 22 years, Le Monde des Possibles has been working to welcome, include and defend the fundamental rights of migrants by offering French as a foreign language courses, citizenship courses, digital training, training in social interpreting, intercultural projects and the promotion of multilingualism, training in access to rights for asylum seekers, socio-legal hotlines, training and courses in socio-professional integration (non-medical professions in hospitals and digital professions). Lifelong learning permeates all our actions and practices. The association has 4 accreditations and employs 25 full-time equivalents across 2 sites, and is also developing European projects, which are presented [here](#).





BACKGROUND

Le Monde des Possibles has been receiving requests for language support from partners and associations in Liège and the surrounding areas who work directly with migrants and people who have little or no knowledge of French. Due to recent migratory flows and the arrival of people in Belgium who require immediate interpretation services to carry out administrative procedures, there is a great need for community interpreters. In 2016, the Univerbal project was established with the support of the European and regional Social Fund to provide training in social interpreting and tackle the alarming situation of exclusion of migrant people in Belgium.

THE UNIVERBAL 2023 SERVICE

KEY FIGURES



53 trained interpreters



23 languages, including :

Arabic  Albanian  Somali  Spanish  Kinyarwanda 
Russian  Fulah  Tigrinya  Pashto  Dari 



5023 hours
provided in 2023

They trust us!



CROIX-ROUGE
de Belgique



fedasil
AGENCE FEDERALE POUR
L'ACCES DES ORPHELINS D'ETAT

caritas
en Belgique

CHU
de Liège

Ville de
Herstal

cpas
Weikenraedt

SAVOIRETRESSEL

A.D.A.S.





THE UNIVERBAL PROJECT

The project has two main focuses:

- organization of **training sessions** for community interpreters as part of a pre-professionalization process for future interpreters, providing a framework for interpreting work, including signing a code of ethics.
- organization of a **community interpreting** service that provides trained interpreters to public services working on the front line with migrants who have little or no command of the French language.

Univerbal is a project that aims to utilize migrants' language skills to their fullest potential. It recognizes that the community interpreter profession demands proper training, assessment, and ongoing support before and after any interpreting session. Additionally, Univerbal advocates for fair compensation and recognition for interpreters.

Le Monde des Possibles is developing and supporting a social economy project to encourage institutional recognition of migrant workers' know-how and strengthen their socio-professional integration. At the same time, it offers a space for creating new possibilities in social interpreting, where innovative solutions still need improvement.

After completing their training, participants have the opportunity to join Univerbal's social interpreting service. They also have the chance to take part in regular training and supervision groups supported by psychologists. In this way, they acquire professional expertise in the field of interpreting while gaining access to the job market thanks to the recognition of the professionals with whom they work.

TRAINING

We organize two training sessions per year. Each session comprises 195 hours of classroom training, including 30 hours of supervised professional practice.

- Module 1: Ethics, Interpretation Techniques and professional practice (70h)
- Module 2: Introduction to the intercultural approach (10h)
- Module 3: Social, legal and civic information (30h)
- Module 4: Basic medical vocabulary and a specific approach to mental health (15h)
- Module 5: Content creation and design (15h)

Deeply committed to providing future interpreters with the best possible tools, the training program is also intended to be a forum for discussion, knowledge-sharing, and the creation of collective projects. It provides a framework, with the signing of the Code of Ethics for Monde des Possibles interpreters, which echoes the Code of Ethics of Bruxelles Accueil and SeTIS.

The course also enables future interpreters to professionalize their work in the social environment, thanks to work placements and performance evaluations carried out jointly with partners.

Interpreters-in-training complete a glossary in each of the specialties they encounter to find an equivalent or paraphrase in their language for words or expressions encountered in French. This glossary helps them prepare for the most common lexicon and will be a reference for their future practice.

Trainee interpreters are regularly trained to role-play in class and with professionals in all these areas. They also participate in observation and practical training courses organized by our regular sponsoring partners.

Every year since 2021, 5 community interpreters from Univerbal have perfected their skills as social interpreters by attending courses run by the University of Mons, which awards them a university certificate upon successful completion.

UNIVERBAL COMMUNITY INTERPRETING SERVICE

Univerbal is currently operational in the city of Liège and assists institutions and associations that are actively working on the front line. These services allow professionals to book interpreters who can travel to their sites and help them communicate effectively with beneficiaries with little or no French knowledge. The service interpreters are available for work on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

We currently have 46 interpreters, most of them women, offering a total of 29 languages:

AFAR	DARI	KIRUNDI	FULAH	SWAHILI
ALBANIAN	SPANISH	KURDISH	RUSSIAN	TIGRINYA
ENGLISH	FARSI	KURMANJI	SERBIAN	TURKISH
ARAB (Magreb)	GEORGIAN	MALINKE	SERBO-CROATIAN	UKRAINIAN
ARAB (Syrian)	HASSANIYA	PACHTOU	SOMALIAN	WOLOF
CROATIAN	KINYARWANDA	PERSIAN	SOUSSOU	

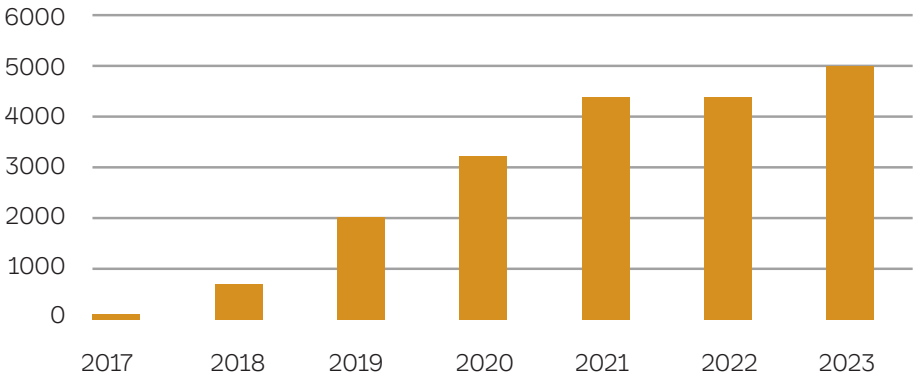
Since the launch of the Univerbal service, most interpreting services have been in Arabic. Although the number of services in this language has decreased over the past two years, Arabic remains the predominant language in 2023. However, Univerbal has provided more services in Russian due to the Ukrainian crisis. Additionally, languages such as Dari, Georgian, Kirundi, and Turkish are becoming more popular, although their relative shares are still relatively small.





SERVICE EVOLUTION

The year 2023 was marked by a new dynamism in activity, with the number of hours worked increasing by 12.8%. A total of 5024 hours were worked in 2023, compared with 4455 in 2022. On a monthly average, the number of hours worked was over 400.



BREAKDOWN OF HOURS BY TYPE OF SERVICE

Our partners are active in three sectors: medical, psychological, and social services. The relative importance of these three sectors in Univerbal's activities needs to reflect needs in absolute terms rather than the partnerships that Univerbal has succeeded in forging over the years.s.

This shift began in 2022 and is expected to continue in 2023. Univerbal believes that this is a positive development that will allow it to serve the needs of its customers better and make a more significant impact in the communities it serves.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Medical	56%	25%	19%	25%	26%
Psychological	19%	48%	56%	45%	38%
Social	25%	27%	25%	30%	36%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

UNIVERBAL ACTS AS A VEHICLE FOR WOMEN'S SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Univerbal could count on the collaboration of 52 performers in 2023, compared with 53 the previous year, the vast majority of whom were women.

Figure 4 - Interpreters offering their services

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Men	2	8	9	6	7	8	6
Women	12	31	47	39	42	45	46
TOTAL	14	39	56	45	49	53	52

PROJECT IMPACT

During 2021-2022, we embarked on a social impact measurement process supported by our region's Social Economy Directorate. This participatory approach, carried out with the support of an external partner has demonstrated that Univerbal plays a crucial role in the emancipation of interpreters, offering them prospects for the future and helping them rebuild a positive identity.

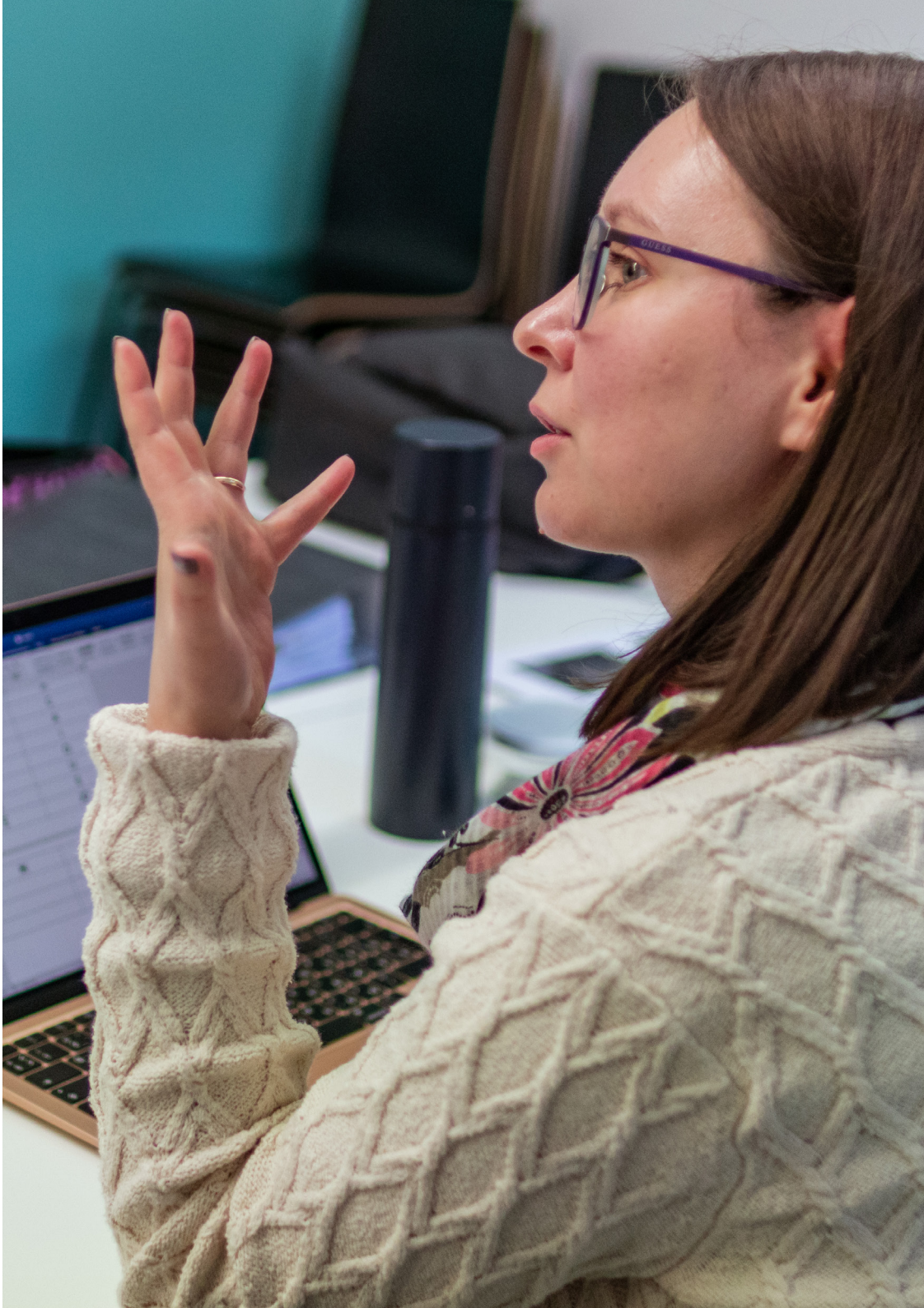
The project has empowered the interpreters and helped them develop relevant skills in the host society, facilitating their integration and adaptation to the Belgian environment. Univerbal has also encouraged intercultural exchange, knowledge transfer, and civic involvement, which have positively impacted the interpreters' perception of Belgian society.

Through participation in the project, interpreters have had the opportunity to discover a field in which they can contribute, build social connections,

gain a comprehensive understanding of Belgian society, and improve their skills in active citizenship and intercultural interaction. The results of the evaluation demonstrate the positive social impact of Univerbal.

If members of the Univerbal team are to benefit from social emancipation fully, it is essential to overcome the obstacles that hinder their institutional recognition and prospects. This includes addressing current limitations, such as the invisibility of their work, regulatory restrictions, and identity challenges. Special attention is required to address these issues.

Removing these obstacles would benefit not only interpreters but society as a whole, helping to build a more inclusive and supportive community. By investing in the recognition and valorization of interpreters' work, society can benefit from a project that brings about positive social change, as emphasized by the interpreters themselves: «Univerbal, it's our integration that facilitates the integration of others.





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