

# OPERATION UNDERGROUND RAILROAD TRANSLATION CROWDSOURCING PROPOSAL

ATTN: Tim Ballard, Founder & CEO

## OVERVIEW

Operation Underground Railroad (O.U.R.) fights for a cause with the potential to capture the hearts of people across the globe. However, with its homepage and materials available only in English, it is currently unable to reach the majority of these people. Only around one-third of Internet users are English speakers. By translating and localizing its content into additional languages, O.U.R. can make steps toward reaching the remaining two-thirds. Through reaching out to Internet users globally, O.U.R. will experience increases in donated funds as well as additional volunteers, events, and campaigns around the world. And this will lead to what matters most: more children rescued.

## Goals

The three main goals of this project are as follows:

- Translate and localize videos, brochures, website content, and blog posts of O.U.R.
- Keep costs low to ensure efficient use of donated funds.
- Provide high quality translation to ensure potentially sensitive content is handled appropriately.

## PROPOSAL

Students of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) will enter a strategic partnership with O.U.R. to translate and localize its content to help the organization realize an increase in financial and human resources. A student club called the MIIS Underground Railroad, founded by Emily Taylor, unites TILM (Translation, Interpretation, and Localization Management) students, as well as students from other academic programs, to volunteer their translation and/or localization skills and expertise for this project. The MIIS Underground Railroad will oversee the translation of all content and then work together with O.U.R. to integrate the translated content onto the official homepage. The MIIS Underground Railroad will be completely self-funded, so that the translation is carried out with no cost to O.U.R. (with the exception of the additional bandwidth required to host the translated content).

## What to Translate

The ultimate goal is to translate and localize all O.U.R. materials while maintaining both high quality and low cost. This will necessarily slow the pace of translation. As such, items to translate and localize will be prioritized as follows:

- Trailer for The Abolitionists movie
- O.U.R. brochure
- Donation page

- Homepage (Main Page, About Us, Join the Fight, O.U.R. Stories, Partnerships, Events & Media)
- Donor portal
- Blog
- Social media
- Email newsletter

## Languages

The aforementioned content will be translated into the following languages, in no particular order:

- Spanish
- French
- German
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean

## How Content is Translated

The MIIS Underground Railroad plans to use a variety of methods that will produce high-quality translations from student volunteers. Some current strategies include the following:

- Host a workshop on subtitling videos, using *The Abolitionists* trailer as an exercise.
- Collaborate with professors of translation to use O.U.R. materials as in-class exercises, homework, and/or extra credit assignments.
- Partner with desktop publishing professor to localize the translated brochures into high-quality multilingual PDFs.
- Partner with website localization professor to integrate translated content into a multilingual O.U.R. website.
- Host on-campus translationathons.
- Translate and localize content during club meetings.

## Quality Control

Quality is a top priority for this project. We will ensure that the translations preserve the nuances of the original English while using language and tone that is appropriate for the target language. This is especially crucial given the sensitive nature of the content. Another goal of our quality assurance is to ensure the translated content will have the intended impact on the target audience. To attract additional interest in O.U.R. globally, the translated versions must be as emotionally moving as the original.

While many translation crowdsourcing projects are open to the general public, as one form of quality control, only members of the MIIS community (students, faculty, and alumni) will be eligible for participation. This factor alone will prevent the majority of potential problems that translation crowdsourcing faces, such as translation vandalism.

We anticipate high quality translations from the MIIS community, but several quality assurance steps carried out throughout the life of the translation will ensure professional-level quality.

- Before translation
  - The MIIS Underground Railroad will define quality for its members, volunteers, and partners by clarifying the objectives, purpose, and audience of the translation.
  - Members of the MIIS Underground Railroad will create or oversee the creation of a term base to ensure accurate and consistent terminology use.
- During translation
  - Volunteer translators will use SDL Trados to build and share a translation memory over a server. This will improve the consistency of translations across multiple volunteers.
  - Volunteers vote on others' translations via a round robin rating system.
- After translation
  - Volunteer project managers will conduct Quality Assurance tests in SDL Trados Studio to ensure each translation meets specified guidelines.
  - Before publication, translations will be proofread by volunteer professors who are both professional translators and native speakers of the target language.

## Why MIIS?

While the MIIS Underground Railroad club could potentially expand into Underground Railroad clubs at other schools with graduate-level programs of translation in the future, for the purpose of keeping costs to a minimum while preserving high quality, this project will be carried out by volunteers from the MIIS community for the time being. The stated aims of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey to educate students in areas of critical importance to a rapidly changing global community and to prepare students to make a meaningful impact in the world align perfectly with the humanitarian goals of O.U.R. MIIS students are emerging leaders who seek sustainable, equitable solutions to a variety of global challenges and as such, with their language skills, they make ideal candidates for this project. They have the linguistic training that general translating crowdsourcing volunteers might lack, and they have the global problem-solving perspective that other professional translators might lack. Essentially, they represent the best of both worlds for O.U.R., creating the perfect opportunity for low-cost and high-quality translation and localization crowdsourcing.

## Motivation

The goals of O.U.R. align perfectly with the passion and drive of members of the MIIS community, so motivating volunteers is not anticipated to be a problem for this project. However, as a reward for their hard work, volunteers will receive T-shirts either of an original MIIS Underground Railroad design or purchased from the O.U.R. store using club funding received from the MIIS student council.

## CONCLUSION

On behalf of the MIIS Underground Railroad, I invite O.U.R. to collaborate with us to translate and localize its materials, beginning with the trailer for its upcoming movie *The Abolitionists* to its brochure, website, blog, social media account, and email newsletter into eight languages. We would like to assist O.U.R. in its efforts to rescue children from sex trafficking, and the skill sets of the members of the MIIS community lend themselves well to translation and localization. This proposal outlines how the MIIS Underground Railroad can oversee what will be an ongoing project at minimal cost to O.U.R. while providing professional-level quality. Please contact me at the address below to discuss the details of this collaboration.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Emily Taylor  
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