



For Release

Arab League, U.S. Launch Open Book Project



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Ambassador Mohammed Al Hussaini Al Sharif of the League of Arab States announce the launch of the Open Book Project at the State Department January 28.

Washington — High-quality educational materials, especially on science and technology, will be available for free online in the Arabic language, thanks to the Open Book Project being developed by the U.S. Department of State in cooperation with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO).

“Our hope is to lower geographic, economic and even gender-based barriers to learning,” said Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton at a January 28 press briefing to announce the initiative. “Anyone with access to the Internet will be able to read, download and print the open materials for free or adapt a copy that meets the local needs of their classrooms or education systems.”

The Open Book Project will support the creation of Arabic-language open educational resources (OERs), which include materials released under an open license that allows for free and legal use, sharing and adaptation. Releasing materials under an open license is the choice made by the owner of the copyright and is consistent with U.S. and international property regimes, according to information provided by the State Department.

“We live in a time when technology is expanding access to information and learning materials like never before,” Clinton said. Some universities put textbooks



online for free, the secretary noted, and science-education websites go viral. Instances such as these, she said, demonstrate technological progress but also a commitment to make more learning materials open and free.

According to the secretary, working with ALECSO and others to create free access to quality educational materials demonstrates to Arabic-speaking publics America's interest in helping them realize their economic aspirations.

"We see educational diplomacy as the means for fulfilling the obligations to try to match reality and actions with the aspirations and hopes of the men and women across the Arab world," Clinton said.

"Since the early days of the Arab revolutions, the United States and the Arab League have worked more closely together than ever before," Clinton said. Last year in New York, she noted, the first U.S.-Arab League Dialogue was held and an agreement to cooperate signed. "At a time when extremists everywhere work to deepen divides across cultures, we see partnerships like this one as a chance to bridge them," Clinton said.

ALECSO, based in Tunis, is an institution of the 22-member Arab League, a forum to promote political, economic, cultural, scientific and social programs of interest in the Arab world.

The U.S. partners in the Open Book Project include the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Rice University — both known for their strong programs in technology research — and Creative Commons, a nonprofit organization that specializes in the sharing and use of creative work through free, legal tools.

The U.S. State Department will host the first formal meeting of the Open Book Project partners in March. At this meeting, according to State Department sources, participating organizations will make commitments and begin implementing them over the next 12 to 18 months.



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State Dept. Key Facts on U.S.-Arab League Open Book Project

Fact Sheet

The Open Book Project

An initiative of the U.S. Department of State, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and leading education innovators to expand access to free, high-quality education materials in Arabic, with a focus on science and technology. These resources will be released under open licenses that allow free use, sharing, and adaptation to local context. Offering access to these resources will help to create educational opportunity, further scientific learning, and foster economic growth.

The initiative will:

- Support the creation of Arabic-language Open Educational Resources (OERs) and the translation of existing OERs into Arabic.
- Disseminate the resources free of charge through our partners and their platforms.
- Offer training and support to governments, educators, and students to put existing resources to use and develop their own.
- Raise awareness of the potential of open educational resources and promote uptake of online learning materials.