“Tahrir Square Stories” Interactive Education Pack

Teaching young people about the Arab uprisings

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A new era for the Arab world

The Arab uprisings are transforming the region and world-wide public opinion. To help young people understand the significance of the protests, we plan to produce an accessible, interactive teaching resource. 'Tahrir Square Stories' will bring the video, audio and text narratives created by young people in the Middle East and North Africa to their counterparts in the UK and provide an essential critique of the media's coverage of events.

The idea

Why did diplomats, policy-makers, analysts and academics fail to see or understand the growing popular unrest preceding the Arab uprisings? Why did revolution seem so unthinkable before December 2010? And how have the protests transformed our understanding of political activism and collective mobilisation? To appreciate the full significance of the Arab uprisings, including their global impact, we need to find ways to capture what is happening on the ground through the eyes of those involved.

The Arab uprisings have produced huge volumes of high quality images, video, text and audio materials. Thousands of people, many of them young and computer literate have stories to tell from Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen and beyond. Many are anxious to communicate their experiences to the outside world but, in the information age, media is constantly being displaced or buried by the sheer volume of material being recorded every day.

Caabu aims to develop a compelling and accessible educational resource for distribution free of charge to educational institutions and students. This resource will not only narrate the events of the Arab uprisings through the stories, pictures and videos of those involved, but also explain *how* these popular movements came about by means of high quality commentary, historical notes and contextual analysis.

Engaging young people across the region in media production, we will collect the very best of their output before it is lost in the digital haystack. They will be invited to share their stories and their work with an international audience in a versatile format that will be preserved for years to come. Working with Digital Explorer and innovative Classroom Media Player software, Caabu will provide a unique platform for new voices from the Arab world to tell their stories.

About Caabu

Since its establishment in 1967, Caabu has taken on a strong political, educational and media role.

A cross-party organisation, with Chairs from all the main political parties, Caabu works to advance Arab-British relations through its support for international law, human rights and democracy.

New Media and Education

Commentary and critique

Alongside personal stories from the uprisings Caabu will provide commentary and contextual analysis, exploring the extent to which the complex realities in the region often get swept aside by simplistic descriptions such as 'Facebook or Twitter Revolutions' or narratives of 'Westernised people versus oriental despots'. In contrast, Tahrir Square stories will not only provide an original compendium of the protests, but an essential critique of the western media's coverage of events.

It is vital to remember those whose stories we haven't heard. In the rush to celebrate the revolutionary power of new social media, commentators often neglect to reflect the fact that these outlets are overwhelmingly dominated by the urban middle classes. What about other sections of society, who aren't tweeting on their mobiles or uploading videos to YouTube? Or the long standing social, political and economic factors that have brought people onto the streets but continue to be neglected by so many commentators?

With the inclusion of a wide range of contextual materials, this project will seek to challenge flawed assumptions about the Arab uprisings and address their root causes. By exploring different ways to share stories from across society, we hope to be able to present a fuller and more representative view of these momentous historical events.

A teacher and student friendly resource

Caabu already provides nationally recognised support and resources for educators working on issues relating to the Middle East and North Africa. From worksheets to visiting speakers, we help encourage teachers and students to explore the Arab world, it's history, culture, politics and peoples. Within weeks of the first stirrings of the Arab uprisings, schools and other educational institutions were contacting us for advice on how to incorporate these momentous events into their classroom sessions and we are inundated with requests to run workshops on the subject.

Project objectives:

- To provide a platform for young people across the region to tell their stories to international audiences via Digital Explorer's innovative Classroom Media Player software
- To produce a compelling and accessible resource, that not only narrates the events of the Arab uprisings through the stories, pictures and videos of those involved, but also provides a critique of the media's coverage
- To distribute the education pack free of charge to 1000 educational institutions in the UK on DVD and make it available world-wide as a free download on Caabu's website
- To build on the growing emphasis on global citizenship in the UK curriculum, including developing an understanding of major international events and an appreciation of democracy and human rights around the world
- To reframe the debate about the Arab world and demonstrate to British teachers and students the values and vitality of its societies for a new generation.

Project Time Line

Project Stage	Month	Project Milestone
Stage 1 Design work and development of core software. Contact with content providers.	1 2 3	First functioning prototype of software with sample
Stage 2 Working with young people in Arab world to gather and expand upon material they've produced. Prepare contextual material from Caabu.	4 5 6	Final list of content decided upon
Stage 3 Material, examined, converted and prepared for integration into the project. Throughout this period, incremental "beta" versions of the software will be produced and distributed for testing.	7 8 9 10	Beta version 1: 40% of content in place Beta version 2: 80% of content in place Beta version 3: All content in place. All features fully working
Stage 4 Beta version 3 will be distributed to teachers for testing and initial classroom usage. Bugs fixed and problems addressed. Users guides and marketing will be prepared for final distribution.	11 12	Final version: Ready for release and distribution Release and launch of final version to public

How the Project Will Work

The Education Pack project will take approximately 12 months to compete, including design, writing and software development time. This process will be broken down into four distinct stages.

Stage 1:

Caabu will work alongside Digital Explorer, the developers of the classroom media player, to design the formatting of the software for the project. Decisions about visual style and functions will need to be taken at this stage of the process. This stage will last approximately two months. By the middle of the second month, Digital Explorer will have produced a working prototype, ready to be populated with some sample content (video, sound, pictures) as a proof of concept for the project as a whole. At the same time, Caabu staff will visit Tunisia and Cairo to connect with young people and encourage them to develop content based on their own experiences for inclusion in the final program. Caabu staff will also be identifying areas requiring contextual and historical material to fill gaps and comment on content—these will be written and finalised during this stage and the next.

Stage 2:

Content will begin to be collected from young people in the Arab world and the overall structure of the project will be finalised. We are currently looking to collect approximately 150-200 pieces of content (videos, photos, text and audio), primarily from Tunisia and Egypt, but if possible from other countries as well. Caabu will coordinate with young people in these countries to help them produce interesting and relevant content. At this stage a final list of all the content we wish to include will be drawn up. This will take approximately three months.

Stage 3:

While still collecting content, the material we have will be sorted, categorised and prepared for inclusion in the program. As material is compiled and integrated into the teaching resource we will release “Beta” versions of the software with partial content integration, gradually accumulating material as the months go by. By the end of Stage 3, after approximately three and a half months, we will aim to have a fully working version of the program with all content integrated ready for testing and bug fixing.

Stage 4:

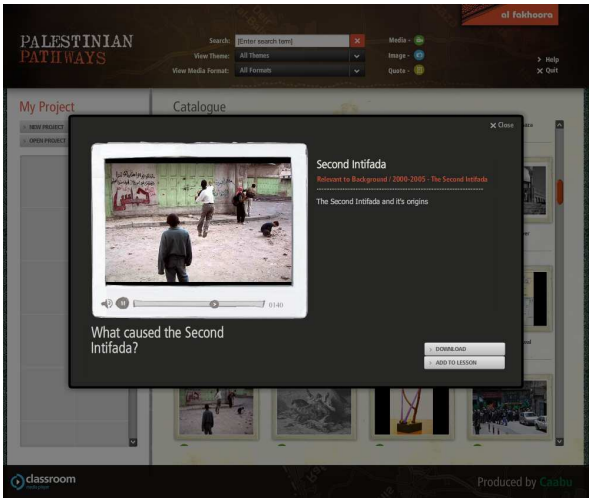
The final Beta version will be distributed for testing and feedback, and any necessary work completed by Caabu staff to make it fully functional. At the same time, supplementary material on how to use the software in the classroom will be produced and a marketing campaign will be begun to schools and educational centres. Once the bug fixing and testing phase is complete, we will prepare it for launch both physically (on DVD) and through our website, and provide it free of charge to interested parties. After the launch, the program will remain available on our website, indefinitely, and we will promote and support the use of the Education pack via our school talks across the UK.

The Classroom Media Player Software

Innovative software

The Classroom Media player software is an excellent vehicle for delivering content which we can customise to our needs. It can deliver audio, video, text or images in a classroom environment. Its most innovative aspect, however, is the way in which it allows users to sort and categorise content and enables the creation of customised lists of materials for future presentations—something no other program in the field can do–making it a really useful tool for both teachers and students.

Using this flexible software, complex topics can be presented in a straightforward, student-led fashion. Students can sort, select and order the material themselves and even present their favourite videos and pictures back to their classmates using the in-built "Lesson Building" functions.



Students can browse freely or filter the content by themes (such as country or topic). Teachers can also take advantage of the software's flexible features by using it to create multimedia presentations for their students.

Caabu has already had great success using this platform to create a 'Palestinian Pathways' program, which is currently in use both in the UK and abroad. With 'Tahrir Square Stories', we are looking to build on this achievement using the software to open up a whole new aspect of the Arab world to the classroom.

Marketing

With Caabu's experience in the education sector we can ensure that the software is marketed to greatest effect, both through targeted mail-outs and through our extensive network of education contacts.

In addition, using our successful school visits and speakers programme, we can utilise 'Tahrir Square Stories' during our complementary talks and workshops to support teachers and students in schools across the UK. This way we can ensure that learners are getting the most out of their use of this exciting new teaching resource.

Costs

For only £44,565 we will deliver a first class piece of educational software, available for schools and home learning both in the UK and worldwide. With the right support, Caabu can bring its expertise and experience in producing innovative and vitally relevant educational resources to an even wider audience and help, during this crucial time, to contribute to transforming the popular image of the Arab world.

Item	Unit	Cost per Unit	Quantity	Total
Staff time	hour	27	1200	32400
Licensing/Royalties for Video, Images and Audio				2000
Licensing Software and design work (Classroom Media Player)				5610
Marketing of Software**				1200
Printing of DVD for distribution***	disc	1.355	1000	1355
Return flight to Cairo				400
Return flight to Tunis				350
Hotels in Cairo and Tunis	night	80	10	800
Transport in Cairo and Tunis				100
Per diem	days	25	12	300
Travel insurance				50
Total				**£44,565**

Notes

* Staff costs include: national insurance; management and administration costs; capital depreciation costs and general organizational running costs. It is calculated on an hourly basis per staff member.

** Based on a mass mail out of a printed leaflet advertising the resources to every school in the United Kingdom

*** Based on a print run of 1000 discs, including delivery, printing and cases.