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YOUNG FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR LAUNCHES MOVEMENT TO REVIVE ARABIC LANGUAGE

Growing up in Scotland, Jinanne Tabra struggled to learn the Arabic language. Like most Arab children in non-Arab countries she had limited access to Arabic books, games, toys and other learning materials. Tabra went to an English-speaking school during the week and an Arabic school run by the local Arab community at the weekends.

"I complained every weekend. It wasn't fun at all," she says. "The books we had were not interesting or exciting, they didn't make learning the language fun." After moving to the Gulf and being immersed in an Arab environment, Tabra's Arabic fluency increased. However, it never left her mind that there were millions of Arabs around the world who were still struggling to learn the language.

Midway through her senior year at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, ARABOH.com was born. During a short mid-semester break from classes, the young entrepreneur flew in to the UAE to establish the business in the Sharjah's SAIF Zone before returning to a final semester balancing classes and a new startup. Founded to promote the education of the Arabic language, particularly among Arabs living outside the Arab world, ARABOH.com is an online community for educational books with an Arabic theme that will allow future Arab generations to grow up reading, writing and thinking in their mother tongue.

ARABOH.com launched on July 2nd 2008, carrying more than 700 titles from some of the most internationally respected publishing houses such as Scholastic, Academia International and Asala. 'I saw the need and decided to do something to fill it,' says Tabra. 'I knew exactly what I wanted to do.' Books are categorized by age range, and can help anyone from a preschooler to a senior citizen learn the language. Some books are solely in Arabic, while others are in English and Arabic, French and Arabic, or all three. Books can be shipped anywhere in the world.

'We have everything from baby books to novels,' she says. 'We even have Shakespeare in Arabic.' Since most of the publishing houses don't have summaries of the books, Tabra has read every book and written summaries in both English and Arabic. To make her Web site lively and informative, she also began scanning book jackets and parts of the stories to post to the site. Books can be shipped anywhere in the world and a portion of profits from all book sales goes to charities that aid children in the Arab world.

Tabra sums up her first business venture as a movement to keep Arabic heritage alive all over the world. "ARABOH.com is a movement. It's about teaching our children to embrace their Arab pride. It's about giving the gift of the Arabic language to your family, to your friends and to the world." To view the list of available books, visit www.araboh.com.