



MY ARABIC LIBRARY

Inspiring young readers and teachers in the Middle East and North Africa

“Education unleashes the creative contributions of citizens, to improve their own lives and to build the common good.” —First Lady Laura Bush

Experts from the Arab world have identified a “deficit of knowledge” as a key challenge facing the Middle East, particularly with more than 50 percent of the region’s population under the age of 25. To help with this challenge, the State Department’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is devoting significant resources to accelerate educational reform so more students have the educational opportunities they deserve. One particularly successful MEPI education program is *My Arabic Library*.



incorporate books into the classroom, a critical component of the program. They learn the value of building independent reading time into the school day, how to promote interactive learning after reading time, and how to encourage children to think in new ways. By the end of 2007, more than 40,000 teachers will have been trained to use *My Arabic Library*.

ENCOURAGING CRITICAL THINKING AND A LOVE OF READING

MEPI’s *My Arabic Library* is the first major program in the region to use classroom libraries in grades 1 through 6 to develop independent reading, critical thinking and analytical skills in young readers.

In partnership with Scholastic, Inc., the world’s largest publisher and distributor of children’s books, *My Arabic Library* is providing more than 7 million books to 6,200 primary schools and 12,000 classrooms in Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Morocco, with plans to expand to Libya. The titles include 210 high-quality American children’s books that are now available to children in the Middle East in their own language.

STARTING WITH TEACHER TRAINING

To maximize the effectiveness of *My Arabic Library*, the program starts with training so teachers learn how to

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Another important aspect of *My Arabic Library’s* success is actively engaging parents and local communities to support children’s independent reading. Special principals’ meetings help develop support among school leaders to reinforce the value of *My Arabic Library* and the importance of championing free reading to young people.

REACHING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Because young students have the freedom to check out books for use at home, their siblings and family share in the experience — opening wider the windows of reading and knowledge. *My Arabic Library* has been successful with students, teachers, principals, and parents alike.

THE JORDAN SUCCESS STORY

In Jordan alone, *My Arabic Library* touches thousands of lives. All of the country’s 2,300 public schools benefit, with more than 2 million books in 10,000 classroom libraries, and with almost 6,000 teachers and 870 principals trained.