



Iraqi-Kurdish Women Learn to Read



Photo: USAID/Ben Barber

“I want to continue my education. We all want our husbands to get literacy courses as well. I would love to study in the university if God wills it. The first thing I love is education.

- Fatah, housewife & mother of four

For two years, heavily-armed Ansar al Islam had controlled Biara, an ethnic Kurdish village perched in the hills just below the Iran border. During the control of Al Ansar, women and girls were kept from school and were not allowed to read. U.S. forces drove the terrorist group out - now the woman and girls of the village have an opportunity to attend literacy programs.

A small grant from USAID, working with the Coalition Provisional Authority, funded the Iraqi Kurdish development group that has opened literacy, sewing, hairdressing and other classes in Biara. Women in the village like Fatah are learning to read and have access to books and periodicals.

The group also offers classes at nearby villages in the steep mountains east of Suleimaniyah and north of Halabja where Saddam Hussein unleashed the world's first nerve gas attack on civilians in 1988, killing 5,000 and injuring thousands more.

First Person

