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School upgrade equals jobs, better learning environment

By Norris Jones
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Thi Qar Province, Iraq — An Iraqi crew is renovating a high school in southern Iraq, repairing the leaky roof, replacing hazardous electrical wiring and fixing the non-functioning toilets.

The project at Al Nadwah School in Al Dhyabat Village in the northern Thi Qar Province translates into jobs for the local community with about 40 residents on the construction crew, building materials purchased from area businesses, and the school itself employing 19 teachers.

“These improvements are enhancing the learning environment here,” said construction representative Toni Graves with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “My job is to check on the progress and quality of the work. It’s inspiring to see the appreciative smiles from the students.”

The Iraqi laborers are rehabilitating the floors, ceilings, doors, windows, staircases, interior and exterior walls. New electrical panels, wiring, florescent light fixtures, ceiling fans, power outlets, and switches are being installed. The \$152,000 project is expected to be complete next month.



Students: These students in Thi Qar Province reap the benefits of the ongoing renovations at their high school. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

More than 240 students attend classes at the 15-room facility which was originally constructed nearly 30 years ago.

Headmaster Mohammed says this is the first major renovation his school has had, and the community is very appreciative. “It’s looking great,” he said. “The Iraqi workers - many of whom live here - know how much their efforts mean to area families. Everyone is pleased.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Gulf Region Division has overseen the renovation or new construction of nearly 1,100 schools, and another 38 are still in construction.



School entrance before and after



Classroom before and after

These photos document the repairs being made to a high school in Thi Qar Province by an Iraqi construction crew. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

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Note: For high resolution photos see www.grd.usace.army.mil/news/releases/index.asp.