



For Immediate Release  
September 27, 2008  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

## *Sulaymaniyah City is 'growing children'*

By LuAnne Fantasia  
Gulf Region North District



Elementary school kids in the Shalaw District of Sulaymaniyah City currently attend classes in this former chicken farm building down the street from their new school's location. [USACE Photo by LuAnne Fantasia]

Sulaymaniyah, Iraq - The contractor has barely started turning dirt for the Shalaw School in this small district of Sulaymaniyah City, but that in itself is a major accomplishment. Since the original site for the project is a former landfill and unsuitable for construction, a new location had to be found.

"This project was on hold for almost a year," said Ric Wiedmaier, resident engineer in the Sulaymaniyah Resident Office. "Governor Dana backed us to find another site for the school, which is a garden area."

Wiedmaier said there is a rule in the Sulaymaniyah Province that a garden area is never used for anything otherwise. "But, the governor decided growing chil-

dren in this school is more important than growing flowers, and pushed it through. Without him, we would have lost this project," Wiedmaier said, "and these people would have lost that hope.

"There was only one course of action we could take and that was to persevere," Wiedmaier said. "These kids are so stoked to get this new school, there was no way we could not make this happen for this village."

The Shalaw School is designed to accommodate 1,000 students a day, in two shifts of 500 each; and was easily adaptable to the new site, Wiedmaier added.



The Shalaw School kids are always happy to see the Corp of Engineers pull up to the site of their new school. After a year-long delay, the kids anxiously wait for their new school, which only recently started turning dirt. [USACE Photo by LuAnne Fantasia]

### ***Sulaymaniyah Primary School***

In the nearby district of Qirga, another school is close to completion and the villagers wait patiently.

"The people of the village are coming to me every day--since the first day--to ask when is their new school ready," said the foreman for the Iraqi construction contractor. "I tell them, 'soon, soon' and they are excited and proud." He said currently the 400 children go to school in a small, 200-square-meter house down the gravel road from their new, long-awaited school.

The bright, airy 12-classroom primary school gives these children--and an additional 800 children--a spacious 1,800 square meters, with huge skylights, a multipurpose hall, play yard and a garden area offering them the experience of

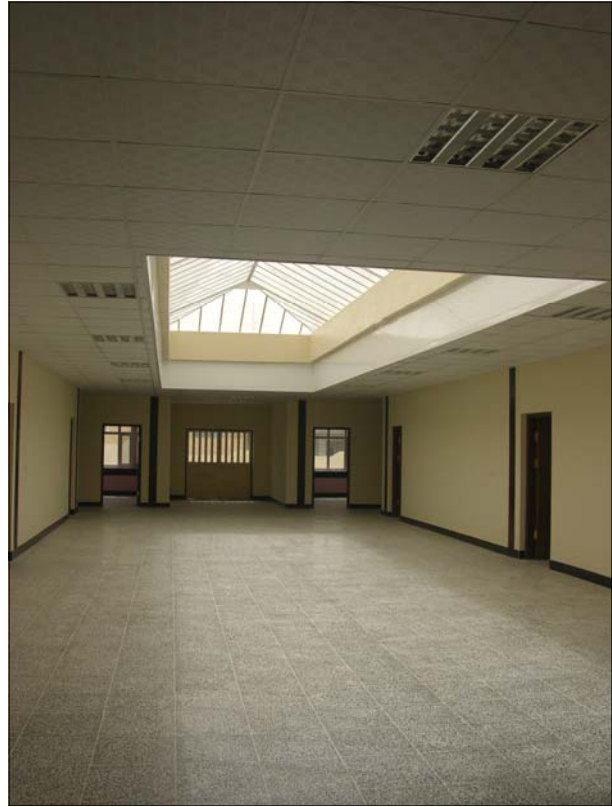


In the Qirga District of Sulaymaniyah City, villagers have visited the site everyday since construction began to ask the contractor when their new school will be ready. The school will be turned over to the Government of Iraq the first week of October. [USACE Photo by LuAnne Fantasia]

planting and nurturing flowers and vegetables. It will provide local employment to 24 teachers and 14 staff members, as well as 100 other workers during the school term.

When asked if the school will be ready for the children in October, the foreman said, "The building is ready. I hope the deputy general will bring desks for the children...and blackboards for the teachers."

The Sulaymaniyah Resident Office currently has 25 reconstruction projects ongoing, with another five projects planned. To date, SRO has completed seven reconstructed schools; with six new school constructions currently ongoing, and one planned.



The bright and airy 12-classroom Qirga School will accommodate approximately 1,200 students. Currently 400 students go to school in a small, 200-square-meter house down the gravel road from their new, long-awaited school.

[USACE Photo by LuAnne Fantasia]

**Note:** LuAnne Fantasia is the public affairs officer for the Gulf Region North district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact her at (540) 542-1437 or e-mail requests to [luanne.fantasia@usace.army.mil](mailto:luanne.fantasia@usace.army.mil). For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit [www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil).