



U.S. EMBASSY - BAGHDAD

2008 Provincial Reconstruction Team News

-PRTs Partner with Iraqi NGO to Spur Economy of Sadr City-

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Baghdad, Iraq - The teeming Shia district and militia stronghold of Sadr City captured the news recently because of sectarian violence and rocketing of the Green Zone. Now, with heightened security the lives of residents are improving due, in part, to the stabilization and reconstruction efforts of Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams (ePRTs).



Students in Sadr City model new school uniforms sewn by the the Modern Sewing Company, an enterprise started up with the help of a Baghdad ePRT.

One sign of progress is the cooperative venture between the Modern Sewing Company, a state owned enterprise, and Women for Progress, an Iraqi non-governmental organization (NGO) facilitated by the Baghdad ePRT 3 operating in Sadr City.

The business venture makes history as the largest economic development project ever undertaken in Sadr City.

Earlier this year, the ePRT and the Modern Sewing Company recognized that school uniforms would benefit local school students and improve access to learning opportunities. On June 19, 2008, the contract to begin production of uniforms was signed and an initial payment made to begin production.

The ePRT is providing the initial support as part of its strategy to partner with businesses that can supply products demanded by Iraqi consumers. Through fostering such economic development and increasing the quality of goods produced, the PRT is working toward building a self sustaining Iraq.

The Sewing Company will manufacture 190,000 new school uniforms over the life of the contract. To fulfill the order, the joint venture will employ 300 to 500 additional employees. Before production begins, investments in training and technology are being made to develop the capacity to fulfill the order.

Employment of women will lead to new training and vocational skill opportunities for a group that has traditionally been underrepresented in the manufacturing sector while providing affordable clothing that will increase children's morale by eliminating fashion barriers that exist in classrooms.

The effort was made possible by a \$ 1.7 million grant from the U.S. Ambassador's fund known as the Targeted Development Program (TDP). The project's impact will be felt locally as Iraqi's gain new employment and improved economic security. In addition, the Iraqi government will administer the distribution of the new uniforms to local students by the beginning of the school year in September.

Through this joint initiative, the U.S. Government is providing critical resources needed to help the state owned enterprise develop while the ePRT's planning with local leaders created new relationships that could aid other reconstruction efforts.

The ePRT hopes the Sewing Company and other industries will continue to reinvest the spill-over dividends back into the community. Ultimately, the long-term goal that the team would like to achieve is for state-owned enterprises to act as a spur for others to contribute to development in Sadr City.

Throughout the production phase ePRT 3 with its military counterpart, the U.S. Army 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, will monitor and advise the Sewing Company. Also, a walk through the factory for media and the public is planned in the future to display its the operational and production capacity.

Through joint cooperation and demonstrated commitment, the U.S. Government and ePRT 3 are demonstrating their resolve to improve the economic conditions of Sadr City by getting Iraqi's back to work thus helping to restore normalcy to Iraqi's lives.