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Electricity Training Facility- Em'Powering' Students Across Iraq

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The Gulf Region Division and the Ministry of Electricity recently trained 30 MoE engineers and technicians on the finer points of electrical power plant procedures at the new Baghdad South Training Center. To date, more than 1,000 MoE employees trained at the new facility. The center's most recent course graduated 30 Iraqi electrical employees who each received completion certificates. (USACE Photo)

Baghdad, Iraq – At a southern Baghdad electrical power generation facility, Iraq's Minister of Electricity and the Gulf Region Division teamed up to put an additional 216 mega watts of needed power on the grid.

The plant completed in 2006 with U.S.

funding of \$223.7 million, is doing its bit to increase electrical power available to Iraqis and teaching electrical employees about all things power.

In the midst of the noise from the General Electric Frame Nine E gas turbines, 30 students from the Ministry of Electricity

are on site learning the finer points of electrical procedures development and management. These students and the 1,000 others that were trained since February are part of a growing group of trainees learning about electrical power plant management.

Nine months ago the Baghdad South Training Facility was a medium sized U.S. government standard issue dining facility. Through the genius of Gulf Region Division program managers and contractors, a building that formerly served 'three hots' a day was transformed into a facility to teach the finer points of electricity.

"GRD was in the process of dismantling a man camp of trailers at a completed electricity project in southern Iraq," said Vincent Dorio, GRD electrical sector program manger for capacity development. "Then, one of our high speed contractors

came up with the idea of using the old DFAC and some other trailer bits and pieces laying around camp to fabricate the parts into a training facility for Baghdad South. We worked together to design and reconfigure the trailers into a MoE schoolhouse; and, of course, transport the unassembled pieces 300 miles north to Baghdad."

The MoE and GRD put all the pieces of the puzzle together for the physical facilities and curriculum. Nearby student housing is within a short walk and can accommodate 40 students.

"We really wanted to develop a facility with a housing component since students will be coming from all parts of Iraq," said Dorio. "If you have a five-day class you can use all of your time teaching...some students, actually many students, stay late and come back to talk with the in-



The Baghdad South Training Center hosted classes for five months, but has already changed how the Minister of Electricity educates electrical employees. Dr. Karim Wahid, Minister of Electricity, is building the curriculum of the MoE's training program by increasing the number of courses. Formerly a dining facility from a Gulf Region Division construction site, the building was reconfigured using additional prefabricated trailer parts. Accommodations for 40 students are available. (USACE Photo).

structors and other students late into the evening. You just lose so much time with comminuting; so, we've addressed this with the trailers we've set up for lodging."

At a recent course for Mussayib Electric Plant engineers and managers, students learned to write clear instructions according to International standards for Iraq's power generation technology and industry managers.

"Anybody, I guess, can learn to be a skilled technician or skilled engineer by just being on the job," said Dorio. "But, you can learn a lot faster if someone teaches you the ins and outs. This is what we are trying to do with the Baghdad South Training Center."

As students finish their final lessons in 'Procedure Processes' one of seven modules in the week long Procedures Development class, a student exclaims his satisfaction about updating the procedures and providing input for others to learn by in the future.

"The training is excellent," said this software engineer who asked that his name not be used for security reasons. "As I am using the procedures database, I can input my recommendations and suggestions into the system for others that use the procedures to learn from. It is dynamic, very dynamic."

All types of curriculum are taught and new classes are developed and fine tuned along the way. Training is now very popular throughout the ministry.

"The people are learning their jobs better," added Dorio. "They are performing better on the job and have a better understanding of what they are supposed to do."

In most cases the new knowledge hits after the students return to their power generation facilities. "The biggest effect that I see is that because they have become better trained more people now want the training," said Dorio. "In fact, we hosted a training course for Director-



Iraq's Minister of Electricity, Dr. Karim Wahid and the U.S. government have teamed up to put an additional 216 mega watts of needed power on the electrical grid at the Baghdad South Power Plant. The new facility, completed in 2006 with U.S. funding of \$223.7 million, is helping put power on the electrical grid. (USACE Photo)

ate General level managers and many showed up. From all indications they enjoyed the training and now the employees working for them are beginning to attend training in higher numbers."

The training team is comprised of skilled training professionals from all over the world; including many from Iraq. The long range goal according to GRD is for the MoE trainers ultimately taking the lead.

"I want them to be as reasonably self sufficient as they can as far as developing the skills they need to run their country," said Dorio. "I think they are on their way of making this happen."

To make his point, Dorio reflects on the past six months as hundreds of new procedures were developed for Iraqi power plants – many of these coming from students training at the Baghdad South.

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