



The Middle East Partnership Initiative

MEPI Funds “My Arabic Library” for 3000 Schools in Middle East

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The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is providing more than 80 titles of high-quality American children’s books to more than 3000 schools in several Middle Eastern and North African countries (Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon now and plans to expand to Morocco). This seminal offering known as *My Arabic Library* is the first major program in the region to use classroom libraries to develop independent reading, critical thinking and analytical skills in young readers. To maximize the effectiveness of the reading materials, the program also engages school principals, parents, and local communities to support early independent reading.

Working with Scholastic Inc., the world’s largest publisher and distributor of children’s books, MEPI funds not only the translated books and community outreach but also teacher training and curriculum materials. Several thousand 4th and 5th grade teachers and trainers have received ongoing hands-on instruction in how to use these valuable classroom resources to greatest effect. For example, 2,600 teachers were trained in October 2005. Reaction to the books and



training has been so enthusiastic that the Ministries of Education in Bahrain and Jordan requested that their initial orders for books be doubled for use for the September 2005 school opening. More than one million books were made

available.

“My Arabic Library” to Expand: MEPI works closely with reform-committed educational authorities in partner countries. Representatives of Bahrain, Jordan, and Lebanon took part in a July 2005 workshop to consider titles for the expansion of the program to the 1st and 2nd grades. MEPI plans to extend the program to cover grades one through six.

Geographic expansion is also underway as Morocco has accepted MEPI’s invitation to join in this beneficial educational program. Other regional governments have expressed interest in acquiring *My Arabic Library*.

MEPI is a Presidential initiative that supports economic, political, and educational reform efforts and women’s empowerment in the Middle East and expanded opportunity for all people of the region.

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