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IRAQ

**PRIMARY HEALTH
CARE PROJECT**

SUCCESS STORY

Al-Garrafi Local Health Committee Leads to Improved Water for Primary School

PHCPI aims to strengthen the Iraqi Primary Health Care system – a critical step for achieving the Ministry of Health’s strategic goal of providing improved health care services for all Iraqis.



Photo: USAID / PHCPI

Examining the school water tanks to determine their condition



Photo: USAID / PHCPI

Preparing the sterilization tablets used before the tanks were replaced

Ensuring access to routine, high quality and equitable healthcare is a key objective for the Government of Iraq. Improving the quality of primary health care services is at the core of what the Ministry of Health (MoH) is doing in support of this government priority. An important aspect in establishing quality public health services is the development of strong relationships between primary health clinics and the local communities that they serve. The USAID Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) has been supporting the MoH, clinic staff and community leaders to develop wider roles for local health committees (LHCs). These committees serve as an important bridge between the local primary health clinics and their communities by allowing greater public input in identifying health priorities and improving the quality of the clinics.

One example of the positive impact an active LHC can have is the work of the PHCPI-supported Al-Garrafi Primary Health Clinic, serving a community of nearly fifty thousand. Abdulla Kadhim is a member of Al-Garrafi’s affiliated LHC and also works as a teacher at the Al-Faraked Primary School. Recently, Abdulla noticed an incidence of diarrhea and vomiting among 20 students and concluded it was due to the school’s water supply. Spurred into action, Abdulla began a school-wide health awareness campaign, during which LHC members distributed handouts and posters to students highlighting the risks of drinking poorly sanitized water. Building upon this campaign, several members from the school traveled to meet with the Directorate of Education to request the water tanks be replaced and properly connected to the municipal water supply to ensure a reliable source of clean water. Before the tanks were replaced, the school utilized sterilization tablets to purify the water with mixed results.

Thanks to the strengthened partnerships USAID/PHCPI has fostered between the primary health care centers and local health committees, people like Abdulla are now empowered to identify public health problems affecting their communities and take lasting steps to fix them.