



## FIRST PERSON Scholarship Recipient Helps Students

### Dormitories help rural girls get access to middle school education



Photo: USAID/Dominique Zembrag

Souad met with USAID officials and the president of the local association that runs the dormitory where she lives in Tighessaline, central Morocco.

***“I know that education has changed my life. My interests are different from those of my sisters and I have learned to make my own decisions and judgments,” said Souad.***

Since she had no family living near the closest middle school and high schools to her home, Souad was afraid she would be unable to finish her education. The schools were located dozens of miles away from her home, and she had no way to get there each day. In addition, her family could scarcely afford the school fees she would have to pay.

When Souad learned about a boarding program in Tighassaline, central Morocco, supported by USAID and run by a local group, the Rural Girls Scholarship Committee, she jumped at the chance to continue learning. The organization runs a dormitory for academically gifted middle school girls who cannot afford to continue studying. It provides scholarships for boarding, lodging, academic support, and a small grant to cover books and fees. Souad applied, was accepted, and was able not only to complete middle school, but to continue on to high school.

When Souad finished middle school, the organization’s director invited her to continue living in the dormitory so that she could complete her high school education. In return, he asked her to tutor the younger girls and help them with their homework. Souad was grateful — her family would never have been able to afford other boarding alternatives.

“I feel that I have been given a wonderful opportunity, and I know that opportunities in life don’t come twice. I have succeeded in middle school and I don’t want to lead the same life as my mother. I know that education has changed my life. My interests are different from those of my sisters and I have learned to make my own decisions and judgments.”

With tears in her eyes, Souad thanked USAID and its partners for having given her the opportunity to complete her secondary education. “I want you to be proud of me,” she said. “And I want to do something for girls and women later on.”

In July 2005, Tighassaline proudly graduated the first cohort of scholarship students who completed three years of middle school. USAID’s assistance is helping to increase the number of girls benefiting from scholarships, fill the dorm to capacity, and help more girls like Souad finish their schooling.