Around the World in 8 Stories

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We Love Reading Is Everywhere!

I was invited to give a talk about We Love Reading at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in April 2018. In the evening, I was with an interfaith group discussing communication, collaboration and peace when an African-American woman came up to me and asked if I was the founder of We Love Reading. I said yes. She told me that she had heard about We Love Reading two years ago and that she had implemented the program in her church.

I was surprised and very excited. I hugged her and took photos with her. I boast that We Love Reading is everywhere. I was told that this was only in my imagination, and it turns out that the imagination is pretty strong and dreams do come true. I believe that We Love Reading is in more places than we know of. As Dawn has proven, We Love Reading is a social movement. We Love Reading is everywhere!

Dr. Rana Dajani
Founder of We Love Reading
I strongly believe that We Love Reading will bring significant changes to the Vietnamese children.

Huong Dang, We Love Reading Ambassador, Vietnam
The story of Farzaneh Shahrtash, our reading ambassador in Iran

Farzaneh Shahrtash, a children’s books publisher, is working together with Esmaeel Azari to promote the love of reading in remote areas in Iran. Farzaneh, an activist in her country, spotted the unfortunate conditions that children in remote areas in Iran suffer from, which deprives them of the right to read for fun. She was introduced to Dr. Rana Dajani though a mutual acquaintance and when she learned about the We Love Reading model, she decided to try it out in Iran. Farzaneh is now helping children in the city of Dehdasht to read in their own language.
We Love Reading Reached Vietnam

The story of Huong Dang, our reading ambassador in Vietnam.

It all started with a skype meeting with Dr. Rana Dajani. A group of Vietnamese psychologists and educators in France expressed their excitement in supporting We Love Reading in Vietnam. Huong Dang, a Vietnamese educator in France, was a teacher and a lecturer in Vietnam for many years. Huong said: “Vietnamese children are intelligent and have a thirst for knowledge but nobody shows or guides them how to reach knowledge. I am very interested in developing children’s reading skills and I strongly believe that We Love Reading will bring significant changes for Vietnamese children. As a former member of the Union Executive of the Faculty of Education at Vietnam National University, Dang has rich experiences in working on projects concerning children and educational volunteering. She will help in measuring the changes with psychometric tools to prove the strong and positive impacts of the project.”
Bringing the Love of Reading to Argentina

Story of Liliana Rodolao, our reading ambassador in Argentina

My name is Liliana Rodolao and I'm from Buenos Aires, Argentina. I found out about the We Love Reading initiative thanks to my son's teacher, Cristina. She asked her students to look for information about Rana Dajani because they were going to talk about her in the classroom. Helping my son with his homework made me learn about Rana Dajani and left me astonished with her amazing initiative to make children not just read, but love reading. I think that this initiative is a great way to instill the love of reading in children. When I found out about We Love Reading I was very excited about their goals and mission to promote reading for pleasure among children. I contacted We Love Reading asking if Rana could record a video for my son Gabriel, his friends and teacher. Rana was of course more than happy to do that and it was just incredible. My son, his friends and teacher saw the video and they were very happy and touched by it. I stayed in touch with the great people at the We Love Reading office and they gave me additional information about the program and how I can support it. I received materials in Spanish which helped me spread the message among my family and friends. It is just incredible that the We Love Reading program manages to spread the love of reading among kids even in the age of technology where people look for entertainment other than reading. We stayed in contact with Rana and now we are planning to open a new We Love Reading library here. I will be delighted and proud to be a part of the movement and it will be an honor for me to spread the love of reading among children.
I have been working in the Honorary Consulate of Jordan in Buenos Aires, Argentina for the last 12 years. I look for different news and info trying to promote tourism and foreign trade. One day, I came across the name of Dr. Rana Dajani and I started to read about the program. People started inquiring for information about the program and I decided to contact Dr. Dajani. In Argentina, we have widespread problems with drugs, violence and robbery, and we get many messages that you have to be rich to become somebody or girls think that they need to rely on their outer beauty. I can draw from my experience. I have an 18 year old daughter I used to read to and she became a reading lover. Now, she is a successful student with strong analytical skills. But most importantly, she has a voice and she uses it! That's the reason why I believe in the importance of reading for early childhood development.

I held my first We Love Reading session in a public school for fourth graders. They were around 9 years old. The children were crazy at first but when I started to read, they all became quiet. It was magic! Their teacher could not believe their reaction!
I’m going to be reading in schools to increase the impact. I will also have a meeting with Syrian refugees who are a part of a government program to start the idea with them. Finally I’m contacting a local bookshop to start reading in the bookshop to work on gaining parents' trust.

Marcela believes that reading will be the way to change Argentinian children’s present and future
It is just incredible that the We Love Reading initiative manages to spread the love of reading among kids, even in the age of technology where people look for entertainment other than reading.

Liliana Rodolao, We Love Reading Ambassador in Argentina
We Love Reading In Macedonia

The story of Gabriela Patoska, our reading ambassador in Macedonia

As a part of the Pennsylvania Abroad program, a group of students from the University of Pennsylvania visited the We Love Reading head office in Jordan in May 2018. The students met Dr. Rana Dajani, Founder and Director of We Love Reading, where she shared the story of the initiative, the impact of the program on different areas such as early childhood development, women’s empowerment, social entrepreneurship and social emotional learning. The team also learned about WLR’s book development work and looked through the 32 children’s picture books that have been published so far. The students were impressed with the quality of the books and shared their thoughts and questions with Dr. Dajani and the We Love Reading staff. We were happy to see their engagement and excitement towards the We Love Reading idea. Andre Patoski, one of the students from Macedonia, went home during the summer holidays and shared the We Love Reading story with his mother Gabriela. Driven by her strong belief in the importance of reading, Gabriela started We Love Reading in her town. Dr. Dajani was visiting Macedonia for a conference and met with Andre, Gabriela and his friend Christine. Gabriela used to read to her children every night which is why she believes in the importance of reading to children. She is an amazing woman full of energy and love of children. She wants We Love Reading to help children get along together and fall in love with reading especially in rural areas. Christine expressed intentions to spread We Love Reading throughout Macedonia, too.
We Love Reading In Norway

The story of Aya Mustafa, our reading ambassador in Norway

On Saturday April 21, 2018, we held our first We Love Reading session in the public library of my city. At first, I was a little bit nervous when children did not show up at the time of the session. As time passed by, children began to come one after the other. My smile started to grow. There were 12 children and we read three stories. With each story the excitement and engagement were going up and up.

The time passed without us noticing and the children and I were enjoying every minute. I loved the time I spent with the children, listening to the children’s thoughts and ideas. Now we have a weekly fun reading time on Saturdays that we can’t wait for.
Reading Sessions in the Meccan Sanctuary
The Story of Hamzeh Saber Abu Slaih our reading ambassador from Madaba, Jordan

“Gather the kids around, pick a book from your bag, read out the words, show the drawings and the pictures, spread the happiness everywhere, and little by little you’ll feel the happiness filling you from within drawing the smile on your face and the children’s faces. Don’t stop wherever you are, at whatever time, just Read. The We Love Reading magical kit contains 25 story that takes you to another world. In this story you’ll find out the beauty that lies behind our program.” Hamzeh Saber Abu Slaih our reading ambassador from Madaba, Jordan, took the We Love Reading training but was too busy to read for children even though he always believed in We Love Reading. When he decided to go for Umrah to Mecca, he had the most brilliant idea of giving the children a spiritual fun memory.

When Hamzeh came back from Umrah, he headed to the We Love Reading head office in Amman to tell us the story. Hamzeh said “I took the stories with me from Amman because I wanted to read for children in the Meccan Sanctuary. There are always religious circles there, but I decided to give the children the time of their lives with a We Love Reading circle. When I started, there was 2 children, but they kept coming and coming. The most beautiful thing was having children from different backgrounds all together having fun and enjoying a good story. I had three stories with me but the children wanted more and more and I kept on repeating the stories without them getting bored”. About his feelings, Hamzeh said “In the beginning I was hesitant and afraid that the children would not enjoy the reading circle, but after the first book I felt that I’d accomplished something. I felt that I left a memory in their hearts that would last forever and I know they’ll connect this beautiful memory to this great place of worship. This really made me happy when I saw their happiness about something that is missing in their life, Reading”.

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Because I believe reading is the key to change in light of this vicious circle we live in, I became a librarian & started reading to children in the library"