YOUNG AMBASSADORS

Stories We Love of Young Reading Ambassadors in Jordan

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Story of Rama - Ajloun

I am an 18 year old girl from Ajloun. I did not like reading very much when I was young, but after I took the reading aloud training, I am excited and I love the idea that I will read aloud to children.

I heard about the training through “Al-Amani Association”, and I am thankful for that. The training was amazing and it brought up so many new ideas. It showed how great this initiative is because it targets all children, even those who live in the marginalized areas. My experience with reading started from the church, where they used to read religious stories to us. At home, my father used to read us stories and my aunt has a PHD in Arabic studies and always encouraged us to read in Arabic. She used to speak using the classical Arabic which helped increase our vocabulary.

I would love to spread the idea of WLR inside the Church of Saint George in Anjarah in Ajloun, gather children at the church, and encourage them to read by hosting read-aloud sessions. I am proud to be the first reader in the Saint George Church in Anjarah. I wish all people would start reading for themselves, and then read to children to foster a generation of children that loves reading.
I AM THE CLOSEST TO THEIR AGE AND I KNOW WHAT THEY LIKE BETTER!

Story of Ghassan - Baqaa Camp

I am Ghassan from Syria. I came to Jordan with my family and now we live in Baqaa camp. My journey with We Love Reading started when I attended a training with my mother. During the training, I loved the idea of reading aloud so much that I was the most enthusiastic and active trainee, and I am the youngest and I know what children like better!

After the training, I started reading at the Quran Center where I usually learn and memorise the Quran. After a few sessions I held, I noticed that my colleagues finished their lessons earlier and memorised Quran verses faster to join the reading session. They loved the stories and shared them with their families, which caused the number to get bigger and bigger. I needed some support to be able to handle reading to this huge number of children. So, I trained two of my friends to read with me, and divided the children to three reading groups.

For a while, I had to stop because of my school exams, but the children did not want me to stop reading. Everyone started calling me and some of them came to my house to ask why have I stopped reading. I felt how important it is to pursue reading, so I bought some stories and gave them to my friends, whom I previously trained, and asked them to continue reading. I even opened the doors of my house for them to hold the reading sessions.

The owner of the building where I live noticed the number of children who came to the building, and when I explained to her the reason, she prepared the roof of the building to become a permanent place for reading. I was really amazed by the influence that reading has left on children. After I finish reading any of the stories children start discussing the manners and what the story is really about. And when they see wrong behaviors such as littering they criticize and hate that behavior.

Now, we have launched an initiative in collaboration with the Quran center manager to clean the streets of the camp. By this initiative I can tell that the influence of reading has spread not only on children but also on the community around us!

And for the influence that reading has left on me, I can say that I am proud to be an active agent of change in my community. Everyone, no matter his or her age, can have a great influence on their surroundings by very simple ideas such as reading sessions for children.

I hope that We Love Reading will get bigger to reach more children around the world!
YOUNG PARENTS AND TEACHERS
I am an elementary school teacher, and I read aloud to children in my class. I took the We Love Reading training and was excited to use the reading aloud skill to read for kids in my class. When I started reading for the children in my class, they enjoyed every story I read to them, and always waited for more stories. Once, I noticed that they came to the class sleepy, and I knew that they had stayed awake very late the previous night. So, I read them a story called “Why Do I Go to Bed Early?” about a girl who goes to bed early. The following day I noticed how energetic and active they are, and that was all because they had loved the story and slept early the previous night.

**Reading aloud to children has helped change their lifestyles for the better.**
READING CHANGED MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE

Story of Hanan Qriqat - Ajloun

I have four beautiful girls, three of whom are deaf and use sign language to communicate. The youngest has no speech problems at all, but she was always using sign language to communicate with others and refused to talk. One day, I heard that a training on reading aloud will be held soon in Ajloun.

I got excited and really loved the idea that I would read for children in my area, including my kids, and thought: “Maybe this could help my youngest to express herself better!” I took the training and started reading aloud right away. After a few sessions I held, I noticed how much my youngest kid had changed. She stopped using sign language to communicate with everyone, and no longer refused to talk. She expresses herself clearly and sometimes creates her own stories. Whenever we go to a stationary store, she buys a coloring book, colors the characters and names them to make a story out of that coloring book.

Becoming a We Love Reading ambassador has changed my daughter's life!
KIDS ARE NOW SAVING THEIR ALLOWANCE TO BUY STORIES FOR THEIR OWN

- REEMA FOUZI FROM ZARQA
ALWAYS LOOK FOR MORE THAN ONE GROUP OF KIDS TO IMPLEMENT THE LOVE OF READING

Story of Sawsan - Amman

Sawsan Dardas, a reading ambassador in Amman, has been trained to read aloud with We Love Reading and since then she has been holding reading sessions for children on a continuous basis.

To encourage the love of reading in children, she has allocated a visit to Mu'tah library to encourage children to join the library as permanent members, so they can visit periodically and borrow stories. Sawsan loved the idea of We Love Reading and felt the desire to create a generation of readers. So she looked for a new group of children to cultivate the love of reading in them. She decided to visit the school of Masha’el AL-Eman, to ask them if she could read for children inside the school. They supported her and set aside one day per week for her to read stories for children and widen the spread of the love of reading to a bigger group of children!
SPREADING THE CULTURE OF READING

Story of Maha - Madaba

I am a 22 years old girl. I have been reading to children for six months now! And the idea has spread to reach my friends in Palestine. I started reading at the mosque in my neighborhood but with time, the number of children increased and I felt responsible for spreading the culture of reading and for making every child in my town read. So I started telling everyone I know about this idea.

My friends from Palestine started their own sessions, also my friend from Irbid started her own reading session. I posted about WLR on Facebook, and one of those who supports youth activities contacted me to implement a training on reading aloud for a group of people, and I did. Many schools heard about my sessions and contacted me to read for kids in their schools.

I am really thrilled to see who everyone felt the importance of this idea although it’s simple! All of the kids that I am reading to/ have read to are now going to libraries whenever they have a free time.
WLR EMPOWERS PEOPLE OF EVERY AGE. WOMEN FINDING A PURPOSE WITHIN THE CHAOS OF THEIR LIVES, YOUNG MEN RECREATING THEIR DREAMS AND FINDING A PATH TO ACHIEVE THEM. CHILDREN DISCOVERING HOPE AND FUN.

- Dr. Rana Dajani
To be honest I was looking for international organization, something like UNESCO or UNICEF but then I talk to my friend Amena and she told me about We Love Reading, then I decided to come here ... I was thinking if I go to bigger organization my work will be more structured I will have more direction but actually I enjoyed the fact that there was no structure at all! in that process I really learned a lot because my previous experience has always been in research and scientific content, but now I learned how to make brochures, how to write proposals, make certificates, write newsletters and write Wikipedia.

I really enjoyed working with Dr. Rana. I learned that it is hard to get her direct feedback, instead you should first do it and then show her how to change it, and she has such a sharp mind. She's surely my role model. There a very few women in my life when I feel like I really want to be that woman but when I looked at Dr. Rana I was like I want to be you. I would like to continue working for We Love Reading remotely, like looking over documents or giving suggestions for the website or other.

After being here at We Love Reading for so long I see that this project empowers local people to help themselves. That is what makes this organization so unique. It makes local people rely on themselves instead of relying on the outside aid.

And I think We Love Reading should have more people like me coming here. People with different visions and people who will take so much out of this place. I learned so much from working here, and living here in Jordan and having the full experience here was so great like We Love Reading (WLR) was part of it but also so much happened outside We Love Reading (WLR).

I met so many friends, learned a lot about the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, and I became more interested to learn Arabic now! I feel motivated to come back and learn the history. That full package of experience is not replaceable and so valuable.