ANNUAL REPORT
2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABOUT WE LOVE READING             4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR LETTER TO THE WORLD           5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRAPPING UP A YEAR OF GROWTH       6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR IMPACT                        7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLR AROUND THE WORLD              8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLR SUCCESS STORIES               10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWARDS                            14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOGNITION                       15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLR EVENTS                        16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORY BOOKS DEVELOPMENT           18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUIDE BOOKS SERIES                20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONGOING RESEARCH                  21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHED RESEARCH                22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREAS OF IMPACT AND SDG           23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUR PARTNERS                      24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT OUR CAUSE                 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABOUT WE LOVE READING

Changing mindsets through reading to create changemakers

We Love Reading is a program that aims to foster the love of reading for pleasure among children, by training local men, women and youth to hold read aloud sessions in public spaces in their neighborhoods where books are routinely read aloud to children. We Love Reading was founded in 2006 by Dr. Rana Dajani in Jordan, and has spread to 55 countries around the world, where thousands of We Love Reading libraries have been established.

OUR VISION
To foster the love of reading for pleasure among children.

OUR MISSION
Providing a simple, sustainable, and scalable “read aloud” program to foster the love of reading for pleasure among children in the MENA region and the world, designed to give ownership to local communities through training local volunteers as “We Love Reading Ambassadors”. We believe in empowering and engaging our workforce, creating partnerships with key stakeholders, adopting excellence in our processes, utilizing technology, and ensuring continuous development based on scientific research.

OUR VALUES
Interest of the community, Well-being of our workforce, Quality, Approaching the whole world irrelevant of gender, religion, social status, Integrity, Impacting future generations, Respect, Ownership, Human-centered approach.
OUR LETTER TO THE WORLD

WLR won the lottery!
In every sector and in every field, WLR has had an impact: children, adults, youth, community, mental health, social entrepreneurship, women, ECD, education, technology, science etc.

How?
By allowing space for organic development through natural evolution by focusing on the essence of success as Robert Frost said following the path less trodden, the less obvious, the more difficult and least appreciated.

It is all in our secret sauce!

WLR is innovative at three levels
1. WLR has the secret sauce to motivating both children and adults to pursue learning because they want to not because they have to.
2. WLR is a basic framework based on shared universal human values to allow it to scale all over the world while at the same time being flexible to be able to adapt to any culture or context
3. WLR harness technology to serve rather than be controlled by technology so the adults use technology to be connected through a digital platform while the children are reading aloud books with a human because human interaction is essential for our survival as a species we are social animals and our brains in order to develop need human interactive stimulation.

WLR raises real hope because it changes mind set to I can. In order for Hope to make sense it has to be a journey. WLR is a journey for the ambassador.

WLR is a phenomenon!
This special year of 2020 We Love Reading aims to have an online presence through its website and online courses in 10 languages to reach as many new people as possible building on our success of reaching a total of 700 WLR ambassadors in Vietnam in 2019!
This year WLR will publish the first book in a series of books describing the WLR phenomenon. WLR will focus on research on psychosocial health and parent engagement focusing on the family because we believe that family as an essential part of the WLR process. Our WLR package has been finally picked up by international NGOs and private companies on the path to financial independence that we aim to achieve by the end of this special year.

WLR success is your success because you made it happen. WLR never sought publicity or rewards or recognition but only doing what is right whatever it takes.

Like a turtle slow but sure collecting wisdom on the way.

Dr. Rana Dajani
Founder
2019
WRAPPING UP A YEAR OF GROWTH

56 Countries
7,529 Trainees

4,478 Ambassadors
497,792 Children read to

154,860 Reading Sessions
266,213 Books Distributed
OUR IMPACT

The model of the program is that We Love Reading ambassadors also train others in their community and read aloud for an average of 20 children where those children also share this experience with their community (family, friends...etc).
WE LOVE READING
AROUND THE WORLD

56
Countries

1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Argentina
4. Australia
5. Azerbaijan
6. Bangladesh
7. Bolivia
8. Canada
9. Central Africa
10. Congo
11. Costa Rica
12. Cyprus
13. Denmark
14. Egypt
15. Ethiopia
16. France
17. Germany
18. Ghana
19. Greece
20. Guatemala
21. Hong Kong
22. India
23. Indonesia
24. Iran
25. Iraq
26. Italy
27. Jordan
28. Kenya
29. Lebanon
30. Macedonia
What makes me really satisfied is the feeling I have every gathering! I know that I am doing a great initiative to the disadvantaged children in my camp! They suffer a lot. Some of them has faced traumas and experienced bad events and situations (due to the clashes). I touched that through their behavior the very first time I met them. The first session was the hardest. The children didn’t know me much at that time and were laughing about ‘the idea’ of reading them a story. While I was reading, I noticed that children were bringing chairs and sat to hear me. I reread the story that time twice! After I had finished, they asked me eagerly about the time of our next session. This initiative is one of a kind in our camp and I feel as a leader in my community. This gives me higher responsibility to pick up a good story for children that has a good moral to learn from every gathering. In addition to that, I am an organized person but also the sessions’ readings have given me the commitment to gather the children the time we decide every week. I am really grateful to be a part of this community.

”Actually, all of this had happened by a coincidence! I was opening the website of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and I saw the interview with the wonderful Dr. Rana Dajani talking about this initiative. I was really impressed, and I opened the website and knew that I can be a volunteer in this, especially that I live in an area where children are suffering on many aspects.”
We Love Reading Ambassador Adala Hussien Abu Medien is reading aloud to children with down syndrome at the Abdel Mohsin Al Qattan Foundation Child Centre in Gaza in Palestine. Reading aloud to children with down syndrome helps them improve their cognitive skills through the pictures in the storybooks.

And that’s what Adala said:

“My mom and dad’s role was great in encouraging me to read and then I had a chance to join the House of Literature Club in the center of Abdul Mohsen Alqattan for children. My teacher had a great contribution to make me love storytelling and I learned a lot from her. As reading the story out loud and using dolls and how to cast poetry. Once upon a time when I arrived in prep, my Arabic teacher was supporting me by telling me I have a strong personality and I have a brilliant future.

The great thanks are for God at first and then for my family, my school and my loved ones in reaching that great stage. I am an ambassador to make others love reading around the world, and to increase readers and awareness about the importance of reading charity work.”
After discovering a newly renovated library in her neighborhood in Ghana, and hearing that there were not enough hands to carry out reading sessions for children, Pricilla was determined to make something happen herself!

“I came across the We Love Reading website and I thought wow I would love to start something like that here in Ghana. I decided then and there, why not find out from this organization if I could partner with them to make this possible? I am excited at the possibilities of being able to implement the program here in Ghana” – Pricilla

And she started reading aloud in the neighborhood library and trained two other people to help her implement the reading sessions.
Heba el-Omari sat proudly in front of a tree painted on the walls of a community center. Each branch of the tree held up a storybook on a shelf. "It took us a long time to prepare this," she tells us, "but now it looks great!"

She tells us that the We Love Reading program had inspired Butterfly Story, the newly established community center. The name of the center is inspired by our training material, which incorporates the butterfly effect and chaos theory, and the idea that small actions have larger effects.

Heba has been reading aloud to groups of children ever since she attended the We Love Reading training in Irbid in 2018 and received a seed library of 25 children’s books. She attended the two-day training, which to this date, has been delivered in many other locations in Jordan, with women and men of different ages and professions in her area. The trainings have encouraged a large number of volunteers across the country to read aloud to children in their neighborhoods wherever and whenever they find the space and time.

The center is running a summer school, and Heba holds reading sessions there 5 days a week. She tells us that she loved reading as a child, and that now she loves reading to children.
AWARDS

STI Forum 2019

Among 350 participants in the annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum), We Love Reading was chosen to be one of the 10 winners.

Ashoka Fellow 2019

Ashoka Fellows are the world’s leading social entrepreneurs. They champion innovative new ideas that transform society’s systems, providing benefits for everyone and improving the lives of millions of people.
The New York Times

We Love Reading was featured in The New York Times in the Article For Refugee Children, Reading Helps Heal Trauma, demonstrating the links between education and psychosocial health and the impact of WLR on the most traumatized or vulnerable children.

The National

An article published by The National; We Love Reading: The molecular scientist striving to set up a library in every neighborhood in Jordan, going over the journey We Love Reading went through starting from an observation by Dr. Rana that children weren’t reading for fun.

The Nissem Global Briefs

The NISSEM Global Briefs collection of peer-reviewed essays withstanding within the field of education included a chapter by Dr. Rana titled: What is the secret sauce? The story of the We Love Reading Program. In her essay, Dr. Rana wrote about the contribution of We Love Reading in supporting education in post conflict and low-resource settings.
OUR EVENTS

Collaboration for a better future - April 2019

We Love Reading (Taghyeer), celebrated a "Collaboration for a Better Future, A New Approach to Sustain Success" under the patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Dr. Omar Alrazzaz.

The conference highlighted the partnerships helping to make We Love Reading a success:

1. We Love Reading partners with a grassroots network of women, men, and youth who share the common values of the program and wish to bring about social change through reading. We Love Reading develops the capabilities of these community ambassadors to find creative ways to encourage critical thinking skills in young children through reading. The We Love Reading model is formulated so that each ambassador can tailor the model to fit his or her culture and community needs.

2. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UKAID are partnered with the Ministry of Education, and the Queen Rania Teacher Academy to strengthen reading and mathematics education for all students from kindergarten through third grade through the Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Initiative (RAMP). Through RAMP, the Ministry of Education has trained over 12,000 teachers in effective reading and mathematics instruction. RAMP and We Love Reading have partnered to create 800 community libraries where volunteers regularly read to children.

3. Universities and field practitioners are working together to expand the library of available research on literacy education and outreach, and to ensure that the program incorporates best practices.

4. The private sector and civil society will serve an important role in helping We Love Reading continue and grow in the future.
These partnerships are a testimonial that nothing is impossible and that by persistence, hard work and good faith in people, one can make dreams come true.

Scientists from Brown University, University of Chicago, Queen Mary University London and New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) presented research on the impact of We Love Reading on children, parents and the community. Also, in attendance were the Ministers of Culture and Social Development, and the Ambassador of Kuwait.

The international advisory board of We Love Reading includes Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya bint Alhassan, the former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and His Excellency Hamdi Tabbaa.

“Focus on early childhood years because they are when the child’s personality is built to shape his/her future. It is important to work with teachers but the hardest part is to engage parents. We Love Reading has the solution.”

- Dr. Omar Alrazzaz
We Love Reading has a specialized department for book development. WLR aims to develop books that are fun, creative, and unleash the children’s imaginations. Books are developed according to set criteria and methodology, taking into account factors such as theme, relevancy to the children’s culture and background, language, and age-appropriateness. In creating the books, WLR collaborates with local writers, illustrators, designers, and publishers. All content is reviewed by education consultants as well as consultants within the respective content themes. Thus far, WLR has created 32 children’s books covering a variety of themes, including environmental awareness, empathy, gender, non-violence, disabilities, and refugees. As of 2018, WLR has distributed more than 266,213 books all over Jordan.

**We Love Reading has developed 32 children books that cover the following themes:**

1. Environment: resource conservation, anti-littering
2. Empathy and social cohesion
3. Nonviolence
4. Refugees
5. Gender
6. Disabilities

**Some of the children books we developed:**
Our story books catalogue is available at our website:
GUIDE BOOKS SERIES

In addition to the 32 books We Love Reading has published, we have also produced a series of guide books on different topics:

How To Write Children Story Books

How To Do Randomized Control Trials
ONGOING RESEARCH

Improving Emotional Recognition And Decision-Making Among Refugee Children In Jordan: Evaluation Of A Low-Cost, Reading-Based Intervention

How Parent And Child Come To Coordinate Attention: Exploring Real-Time Mechanisms Of Joint Attention During Parent-Child Book-Reading

How We Love Reading Volunteers Go On To Become Social Entrepreneurs: Empowering People To Create Positive Change In Their Communities

Efficacy Of Low-Cost Interventions As An Alternative For Mental Illnesses, Specifically PTSD, High-Cost Therapies
PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Exploring a newly developed measure to assess children’s interest in school in Jordan.

Reading Social Stories In The Community: A Promising Intervention For Promoting Children’s Environmental Knowledge And Behavior In Jordan.

Reading About People’s Feelings Increases Empathic Concern And Generosity In Children.

Final Report: The Impact Of The We Love Reading Pilot Program On The Psychosocial Health Of Participating Children In Zaatari Refugee Camp.

We Love Reading–A Women’s Literacy Program In The Arab World.
AREAS OF IMPACT AND SDG

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

The 193 United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under the title: “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and 169 strategies, which are an urgent call for action by all countries -developed and developing- in a global partnership. The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in the following areas of critical importance: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership.

WLR focuses on the following SDGs:
SUPPORT OUR CAUSE

Read to children in your neighborhood

Buy our books or donate to start a library

Make us part of your CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

Spread the word!

Contact admin@welovereading.org