Main question
Does We Love Reading improve children’s literacy and attitudes toward reading?

Background
Community-led, shared book-reading interventions have been shown to improve early childhood development and reduce inequity. There is limited research on their impact on refugees, but shared book-reading programs may be helpful in addressing some of the many educational challenges that Syrian refugee children in Jordan face.

How the research was conducted
To assess this, we evaluated We Love Reading, a locally developed and implemented program in Jordan. We used a randomized controlled trial, where half of the participants took part in We Love Reading sessions for 12 weeks, and the other half did not.

322 Syrian refugee mothers and their 4-8-year-old children living in Amman and Zaatari camp took part in the study. We collected data immediately before the intervention (baseline) and immediately after (endline).

Key findings: Literacy & education
11.3% of children aged 6 and older were not enrolled in school. Since data were collected during COVID lockdowns, most children in school attended online (77.5%).

Literacy levels among the children were low, with many school-aged children unable to identify any common or uncommon Arabic letters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Cannot identify even one common letter</th>
<th>Cannot identify even one uncommon letter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key findings: We Love Reading
As seen below, children who took part in We Love Reading had more positive attitudes toward reading. There were no impacts on child literacy.

Implications
Literacy levels among participating children are very low. Literacy is important to many aspects of children’s development and functioning; it is critical to address these low literacy rates, to enable the prosperity and future positive functioning of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

We Love Reading shows promise in improving children’s attitudes toward reading. Better attitudes toward reading may have many positive knock-on effects on children. We will study these other impacts with a 3rd data collection period.


For more information, please go to https://osf.io/gcv5z/ or contact Prof Isabelle Mareschal at i.mareschal@qmul.ac.uk