Changing mindsets through reading to NURTURE CHANGEMAKERS

2022 ANNUAL REPORT
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ABOUT WE LOVE READING

OUR VISION
Changing mindsets through reading to nurture changemakers

OUR MISION
Achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 is a complex situation because most solutions are just bandaids we want to address the root cause of catalyzing system change.

We believe we can do that because every human being has the mindset of I can and feels responsible to solve locally to do that we came up with a simple approach we train youth, women and men volunteers to read aloud in their native language to the children in their neighborhood on a regular basis. This is the “We Love Reading” program.

The outcomes of the program are: first that the children fall in love with reading and therefore become lifelong readers and learners. Second, the adults discover their voices literally and figuratively being empowered to become changemakers themselves and in their community, because the mindset of I can.

OUR VALUES
WLR values
Integrity, collaboration, Trust, Creativity, Wisdom.
OUR LETTER TO THE WORLD

Dear World

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is a complex challenge. Most solutions are only bandaids. I want to address the root causes to catalyse systems change. The way to do that is every human to have a mindset of I can and take responsibility to solve locally. But how to achieve that?

We adopted a simple strategy of training volunteer adults to read aloud to children in their native language in their local neighborhood. This is the We Love Reading program.

The outcome:

- It fosters the love of reading among children so they can reap the benefits of reading becoming life long learners.
- It empowers adults and youth mostly women to become changemakers finding their voices literally and figuratively.
- It creates a community with the mindset of I can.

WLR started in Jordan and spread to 65 countries becoming a social movement.

Why? because:

1. WLR has the secret sauce to motivating both children and adults to pursue learning because they want to not because they have to based on trust.
2. Reflecting nature WLR is based on shared universal human values while celebrate diversity by focusing locally.
3. Focus on the shared human experience that is essential for a healthy mental and emotions and social human.

This year we focused on conducting research in collaboration with Yale, Hong Kong, and Jordan university on our women WLR Ambassadors. We wanted to explore their motivation and their change making journey. We Love Reading (WLR) is a community-based intervention that combines intellectual stimulation and relational interaction with children through reading aloud to them. The role of a WLR ambassador can be a form of leadership in influencing children. Therefore, these WLR ambassadors can undergo an intensive change-maker journey that gives them an opportunity to develop their “possible self as a leader” internalizing a leader identity driven by motivation to lead.

Our research showed that building opportunities for women to socially interact and expand social ties helps to enhance their life satisfaction. This evidence matters to development initiatives seeking to foster women’s empowerment, wellbeing, and social inclusion. Also, expanding opportunities for volunteer work is one way of empowering women to work, learn, and socially interact.
WE LOVE READING
WE LOVE READING AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

WLR is systems change.
WLR is an organic program that evolved from grassroots. That is why it does not subscribe to existing systems and paradigms. That is why WLR is a disrupter.
WLR challenges existing frameworks and paradigms in the way it solves local problems.

WLR simultaneously forges and offers new frameworks and paradigms to fit its approach. This approach is not new it harks to our evolutionary history and to nature.
We are humans hence we need systems that are closer to nature ie biological. The existing systems we have adopted are mechanical and pertain to the inanimate. That is why they don’t work in the long run.

In a machine approach, we focus on training. In a biological approach, we focus on practice (reading aloud)
In a machine approach, we focus on static measurement. In a biological approach, we focus on the dynamics of systems (storytelling).
Humans are the same ancient social creatures evolved over millennia. Current systems are artificial
WLR is bottom up. Not theory driven.
WLR is based on the concept of rediscovering the autonomy not giving autonomy. Therefore WLR avoids hegemony.
Similar ideas pop up everywhere
Find the ideas and create a community of learning
Create a movement a force to change education around the world

Systems sensing instead of system assessment

WLR does not fit into the existing frameworks just like a circle cannot fit into a square.
Each WLR Ambassador is a systems changer.
Similar ideas pop up everywhere.
Find the ideas and create a community of learning.
Create a movement force to change education around the world.

Systems sensing instead of system assessment

WLR does not fit into the existing frameworks just like a circle cannot fit into a square. WLR developed its own frameworks.
In leadership instead of a top down hierarchal framework, WLR is based on a decentralized horizontal, bottom up approach that is based on trust and that every human knows what is best for them.
In measurement instead of counting numbers as a reflection of impact, WLR uses storytelling to showcase real change that is intergenerational because it shows the deep change within that is sustainable. As we attempt to measure how do we make sure we don’t destroy what are we measuring? If behaviour is so complex any measurement is a reduction and only touches the surface. What is the use of measuring. More importantly it could be misleading because it is reductionist.
Should not we then not measure and only observe and give space to allow things to grow. This is not typical and very disruptive to the concept of measurement itself but isn’t systems change about disrupting the system so one would assume you would need a new way of measurement. If we compare this concept to nature and Quantum mechanics (Fixed versus dynamic) once you fix a particle certain qualities are lost. WLR Ambassadors are free once you tie them down to requirements you lose autonomy and creativity.

In scaling instead of aiming to establish an entity in every country/region etc, WLR talks of spreading mindsets not programs through humans to create a movement, not a franchise. WLR aims to impact everyone not only a few.

Programs should be able to balance the universal while celebrating diversity similar to the properties of DNA.

In marketing instead of creating a splash and publicity WLR is low profile. It seeks to disappear and seize to be needed. The concept of degrowth not growth.

**New frameworks require new terminology that is based on nature not mechanistic. Hence, WLR does not use the term beneficial**

**New framework also require new approaches:**
Not human centered design but evolution

WLR is a ship in the making or more adequate an organism that is evolving continuously. That is what system change is about.
WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

We strongly believe that creating an ecosystem that fosters lifelong learning and motivates individuals to read, explore and contribute through volunteering is crucial. That’s why we decided to team up with the Jordanian government on a variety of exciting projects. After all, bringing such an ecosystem to life demands the dedicated efforts of all stakeholders, including civil society institutions, government bodies, and the private sector. Without further ado, let’s dive into the main areas where we worked hand-in-hand with the Jordanian government:

1- National Reading Campaign

In May 2022, the We Love Reading program, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, launched the National Reading Campaign that set the whole of Jordan alight. The campaign featured an innovative digital platform that aimed to instill a love of reading in children and young people through fun and interactive means. To make it a success, local volunteers were trained to read aloud to the children and spread the word in their communities.

The Minister of Culture, Haifa’a Al-Najjar, couldn’t hide her enthusiasm, stating, “We are thrilled and honored to launch the We Love Reading platform. This outstanding program has created a remarkable partnership that aims to touch the hearts and souls of all our people.”

During the campaign, ambassadors from all corners of Jordan rose to the challenge, holding lively reading-aloud sessions for children in their neighborhoods. More than 10,000 children were positively impacted, with over 650 reading-aloud sessions held to make reading a beloved part of their daily routine. What an incredible achievement!
2- The Interactive Book Fair

We Love Reading has participated in the interactive book fair organized by the Jordanian Ministry of Culture under the patronage of Minister Haifa Al-Najjar. Our esteemed ambassadors from every Jordanian governorate poured their hearts and souls into holding lively reading-aloud sessions for children, capturing their imaginations and instilling a love of reading.

The interactive book fair, which lasted for five weeks, was a groundbreaking event that aligned with the Ministry of Culture’s vision to launch a national strategy to encourage reading in partnership with various governmental, private sector, and civil society institutions. And with 60 reading sessions held by our ambassadors, the impact of the fair has been nothing short of outstanding!

But there’s more to this story. Our exceptional Ambassadors didn’t stop at the reading sessions; they also presented the National Reading Campaign during the book fair events, promoting it to enthusiastic crowds. Over 500 books were distributed, making the campaign’s vision of encouraging children to read and explore even more real and achievable. We couldn’t be prouder of our ambassadors’ commitment and the impact they’ve made in spreading the Love of Reading across Jordan.
3- National Reading Day

In conjunction with “We Love Reading” efforts to promote reading culture by launching the National Reading Campaign, the Prime Minister, his Excellency Bishr Al-Khasawneh approved the 29th of September to become the National Reading Day in Jordan. National Reading Day comes as an affirmation of the critical role reading plays in raising awareness and enriching knowledge, and it aims to promote a reading culture and make it a daily habit. On this occasion, We Love Reading carried out several face-to-face and digital activities, with the aim of encouraging the culture of reading, such as reading sessions for children, awareness sessions about the importance of reading for parents, etc. In addition to that we broadcasted encouraging messages to promote the love of reading.

4- The Launch of the National Literacy Strategy on International Literacy Day

We Love Reading participated in the activities of International Literacy Day, where His Excellency the Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Dr. Wajih Owais, and Her Excellency the Minister of Culture, Mrs. Haifa Al-Najjar officially launched the National Literacy Strategy in Jordan.

We Love Reading participated in the exhibition of non-profit organizations and initiatives related to education and literacy, and the We Love Reading team presented WLR achievements, current projects, and future goals, in addition to promoting the National Reading Campaign.
5- Tales Box program in cooperation with Jordanian TV

We collaborated with Jordanian television and the French Media Development Agency CFI to create reading sessions, which were broadcasted on Jordanian television. The program, which comprised of two seasons, received excellent feedback.

This program was part of the Qudra 2 program, a regional initiative co-funded by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).
WE LOVE READING DIGITAL TOOLS

The Online Training

We Love Reading program has developed throughout the years and the demand for the program has increased. WLR receives requests from individuals all over the world asking to become WLR ambassadors. WLR Online Training has been out for free for individuals who want to become Ambassadors but cannot attend a WLR Ambassadors’ Training (Face-to-Face).

The We Love Reading Program is about local volunteers reading aloud to children in their neighborhoods in the COVID-19 context at home. As schools are shutting and children are at home, the “We Love Reading” program is an online program for parents and community members to learn to read aloud to their children in a fun way and keep them engaged with learning. The training included learning the importance of reading aloud for fun to change mindsets to create change-makers for both adults and children.

The program trains you on how to read aloud for fun and how to start read-aloud sessions in your local neighborhoods on a regular basis. Reading to children should be in the mother tongue language of the child. To increase the reach of the program, we have partnered with Greater Translogic Advisory Services from South Africa to host our online training for free and for unlimited users.
I received the We Love Reading online training, then I've started to implement the program in my second country UAE. Through the implementation of the We Love Reading program, I seek to provide fun experiences and knowledge to students.

Hanan Bawadi - Ambassador of WLR

In collaboration with volunteers from around the world, We Love Reading Online Training is being translated into ten languages besides Arabic and English!

- French. Amal Khaleefah
- Hindi. Khyatt Desai
- Persian. Farzaneh Shahartash
- Urdu. Amna Hassan Kazmi
- Vietnamese. Bich Hang
- Italian. Francesca Fedeli
- Luganda. Dr. Saudah Namyalo
- Chinese. Geyu Chen
- Spanish. Jesus Gonzales
- Mangolian. Temy Temuulen

Check our online training portal supported by GTAS
National Reading Campaign Platform:

As mentioned in the previous chapter We Love Reading has collaborated with the Ministry of Culture to Launch the National Reading Campaign in order to change mindsets through reading to nurture change makers.

One of the essential components of the campaign is the National Reading Campaign platform the platform allows We Love Reading ambassadors to share their reading sessions with others, it helps them as well to become partners in developing the WLR program.

Due to this platform, we were able to collect and analyze data about reading sessions (locations, feedback, children's gender, most active ambassadors, etc).

Further to this it was the cornerstone to build WLR digital community which w are currently working on.

visit the website
www.welovereading.jo
LONG TERM IMPACT

In 2006 when Prof. Rana Dajani started reading to children in her neighborhood, she had no idea how far the program would go and how many children it would affect and help to fall in love with reading and learning for good.

Prof. Rana Dajani said: “When I started reading aloud to the children in my neighborhood, it was the eyes of the children that were food to my soul that kept me going. It was their eagerness and enthusiasm and excitement that was a testimonial that reading aloud can make a difference. Their eyes would light up and have a strange sparkle. The reading aloud was planting a seed in their souls that took root and flourished changing their mindsets to become who they are today.”

We tracked a group of children who attended reading-aloud sessions to know the impact the We Love Reading program has had on their lives:

“When I started reading aloud to the children in my neighborhood, it was the eyes of the children that were food to my soul that kept me going.”

- Rana Dajani
Meet Layan, one of the children who grew up with We Love Reading

Layan Mahmoud (23 years old) one of the children who attended the reading sessions back in 2006 said: “Whenever I felt the need to escape the woes of the outside world or to simply view life from a different perspective, I would always find comfort when I immerse myself between the pages of a book. It provided utter bliss and joy for me to forget who I was for a bit and live as someone else; a wandering adventurer, a professional assassin, or even as another angsty teenager who may be facing bigger issues than I thought I had.

But all of that wouldn’t have been possible had those small sparks of interest in reading not been ignited into a blaze of passion, and all that started in a small neighborhood mosque; where We Love Reading ambassador (Rana), wearing colorful outfits and a hat, decided to show a group of skeptical yet intrigued looking kids what it’s like to read for fun and to find comfort in a book.

It wasn’t just reading that we gained from it, after all, it was the feeling of accomplishment every time we finished a story, the new friendships we made, and the sense of responsibility when we were handed our next story to borrow and return in the same shape for others to be able to read too. For that, and forever more, I was and will forever be grateful to be a part of this delightful experience.”

“It wasn’t just reading that we gained from it, after all, it was the feeling of accomplishment!”

Layan Mahmoud
Morad Aldan (18 years old) young man who used to attend the reading-aloud sessions held by We Love Reading ambassador Nabeela Najim (57 years old) took the WLR back in 2013. Reading aloud sessions had a powerful impact on Morad on different levels. Now he is a distinguished student who is engaged in multiple activities. He was also one of the top achievers in high school and scored 94.75 on the Tawjihi exam which is the university entrance exam in Jordan. It is noteworthy Nabeela was one of the first reading ambassadors she started reading to her grandchildren and since then she is holding reading sessions in her neighborhood.

“IT may seem as if We Love Reading is now this big world-renowned organization that went on to do great things, but to us then, it was our most awaited circle of bliss on an otherwise wasted Saturday and with another adventure to explore”

Rawan Albtoush (17 years old) who used to attend reading aloud sessions in her childhood.
IMPACT IN NUMBERS

WRAPPING UP A YEAR OF GROWTH 2022

65 Countries.

8,135 Ambassadors.

531,110 Children read to.

165,510 Reading Session.

276,916 Books Distributed.
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).
65 Countries:

Dr. Clarie Odhiambo, a representative from the Siaya Community Library, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to implement this program and shared the impact it has had on the community. She explained that the library has established a daily reading routine for young children and also started a reading club, where children can read in church, under trees, or anywhere else. The library has provided books in Arabic and in the Luhya language, enabling children to read in a language they understand and love. They also encourage parents and teachers to help children focus on reading by reading aloud and finding books that relate to the children’s interests and experiences.

Dr. Odhiambo went on to emphasize the importance of this program in changing the lives of learners for a lifetime. The repeated reading of stories, word identification, and the association of the story with the children’s lives have improved their word recognition and language skills. This has encouraged them to learn new words and remember them when they play or sing. With the help of the We Love Reading program, the Siaya Community Library is making a significant impact on the lives of children in Kenya, especially those who are struggling to read.

The Siaya Community Library (SCL) in Kenya has recently started implementing the We Love Reading program with the aim of achieving several important goals. These include bringing literacy and learning into people’s homes by engaging the whole family in learning activities, promoting a love for reading through book-gifting and book clubs for marginalized communities, strengthening local culture through intergenerational learning, and enhancing their community library to offer a wide range of services to learners.
We Love Reading program has made significant strides in expanding its reach worldwide. This year, the program has extended to new and diverse locations around the globe, demonstrating its increasing impact on individuals and communities alike.

In particular, the Obei-Art Organization in Benin has become one of the latest entities to embrace the potential of We Love Reading. Through the initiative of its founder, M. Hounga Degue, the organization was introduced to the We Love Reading program during a meeting with our Partner organization in Mexico, Club UNESCO Cege@.

Since that time, Hounga has worked diligently to implement the program within his organization in Benin.

It is noteworthy that 200 individuals from Benin are currently undergoing the We Love Reading online training in French, the official language of Benin. Obei-Art Organization, a unique institute that focuses on producing artistic and cultural works, processing agricultural products, and training young people, is the proponent of this laudable development. The organization not only creates impressive works of art and culture but also supports orphans and people with disabilities.

Obei-Art’s efforts are instrumental in creating a better world, particularly for children in Benin. As Hounga noted, "WLR is helping us achieve our organizational goals, and children really love reading in groups. In fact, we’ve just had over 500 new subscriptions, most of them from young ladies. Thank you, We Love Reading!"

He added: "Leading is our duty and the reason we are doing this program, I look to enhancing this program in all west Africa".

This development is truly extraordinary and marks a new milestone in the We Love Reading program’s ongoing transformational impact worldwide.
Our Extraordinary Ambassador “Hanan Bawadi”

Using my talents for something good is absolutely one of the best feelings!

Our ambassador, Hanan Bawadi, has recently published a research paper entitled “Reading is a Civilized Behavior and a Social Necessity”. This descriptive study focuses on the “We Love Reading” program and has been published in the International Journal of Educational and Psychological Research and Studies. In her paper, Hanan highlights the significance of reading for individuals and society, its impact on personal development, cultural enrichment and the promotion of awareness, particularly in Arab society. The research also highlights the importance of modern technologies in promoting the culture of reading and in providing a platform for spreading it in the society.

Hanan further emphasizes the role of the “We Love Reading” program in facilitating digital reading sessions for children during the Corona period, and the impressive results achieved when students read aloud and fluently via the Zoom platform. She expresses her gratitude for the training she received from We Love Reading and the opportunity to participate in the National Reading campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture.

As Hanan says, “Reading is the human mind’s tool for understanding life, and it is a way of expression through the transmission of ideas and experiences. It is the main learning tool and an essential part of enlightenment and development.” Her paper is a testament to the critical importance of promoting a reading culture and utilizing modern technologies to help society thrive.”
Meet Raoudha Mahjoub our Ambassador in Tunisia

Raoudha Mahjoub: “I’m Really proud of my children”

“La lecture est joie et culture” is the club that I have created to encourage children to read for pleasure.

they can choose the book, then they are invited to read loudly. I found this efficient way to make the kids pronounce well (as we have books in French, English and Arabic).

The session lasts one hour, and during this period of time, children (who have dyslexia) were involved as well ... we designed different games for them to fill the lacks).

Many kids improved in reading and writing ....
Some of them were shy when they started attending the sessions in the club, but later they became good speakers, they even succeeded in acting.
In our club kids learned:
how to work in a team, being helpful, tolerant, sociable, and self-confident.
I’m proud of my children!!

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I’m proud of my children!!”
Raudha Mahjoub
NEW PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

The Korean Government - UNESCO

Since its creation in 1945, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) mission has been to contribute to the building of peace, poverty eradication, lasting development and intercultural dialogue. UNESCO has partnered with We Love Reading Program to strengthen activities for development cooperation, and to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Korean National Commission for UNESCO - KNCU - was established on 30 January 1954, Following the Republic of Korea’s admission to UNESCO in 1950. The Chairperson of KNCU is The Minister of Education of Korea. As the first agency of United Nations to define and develop specific programs for young people. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO through the Bridge Program has funded We Love Reading to conduct 5 WLR trainings and evaluate the impact of the Program on women and children engaged in the Program in a randomized control longitudinal study.

The Big Heart Foundation

The Big Heart Foundation (TBHF), a philanthropic foundation officially established in May 2015, proceeded by various initiatives and campaigns launched by Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bint Mohammed Al Qasimi, wife of His Highness the Ruler of Sharjah and Chairperson of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs.

The Foundation’s mandate is to protect and empower vulnerable children and their families in vulnerable situations across the world. Since then, TBHF has provided health, education and emergency aid services -among others- to almost 4 million people in need more than 25 countries.

TBHF is partnering with We Love Reading and Home storytellers to create a documentary on We Love Reading refugee ambassadors in Zaatri camp, in addition to developing a children’s book about refugees and women empowerment.
We Love Reading is a partner in the Rights for Time research network funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). GCRF is a £1.5 billion fund by the UK Government to address complex global development challenges and support collaborative research that will improve the economic prosperity, welfare and quality of life of people in Low and Middle Income Countries- LMIC.

Rights for Time is a research network comprised of interdisciplinary research taking place in multiple countries that is bringing the hidden legacies of conflict directly into humanitarian protection, human rights policy and practice and is working for the benefit particularly vulnerable groups, such as refugees, women, children, and other marginalized communities.

The British Academy funds International Programmes that focus on fostering international collaboration in the humanities and social sciences as well as promoting the sharing of international perspectives on global challenges. Education and Learning in Crises is one section of the British Academy that funds research exploring the challenges of education and learning in contexts of conflict and protracted crises.

CFI is a public sector operator funded primarily by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. It was founded in 1989 by the Ministry of Cooperation with a ‘cultural assistance mission’: to supply overseas television stations with French television programmes free of charge.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SCHWAB Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship

We Love Reading program Founder Professor Rana Dajani has received the Schwab Foundation Social Innovation Award for the year of 2022 as part of the World Economic Forum Davos Agenda. Professor Dajani was chosen to be the only winner from the Arab countries and was chosen from a group of 400 influential community leaders in 190 countries around the world who have impacted the lives of 722 million people around the world.

Fair Saturday Award

We Love Reading has received the Fair Saturday Award for her efforts to develop society through reading. This award was born in 2017 with an aim of recognizing, on an international level, the initiatives of inspiring individuals and organizations that have demonstrated a social impact through art and culture. This award underscores the value of promoting new business models with a mission to achieve more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable growth.
OUR EVENTS

**United Nations Transforming Education Summit**

We Love Reading participated in the “Pathways to Transforming Education: Proven Solutions from Social Entrepreneurs” day during the Transforming Education Summit (Solutions Day), a United Nations GA event, at UN Headquarters, New York.

The Solutions Day at the Transforming Education Summit (16, 17 & 19 September 2022) provides a platform for partners to mobilize support to launch or scale up initiatives connected to the Summit Thematic Action tracks. Coalitions for action or other multi-stakeholder initiatives that will contribute to transforming education will be presented.

We Love Reading founder Prof. Rana Dajani who was the moderator of the session said, “we are launching a report Pathways to Transforming Education, the report is a call to all educators and governments responsible for running large education systems to adopt a learner-centric and participatory approach to education’s policy-making and implementation.

Pathways to Transforming Education is the brainchild of the members of Catalyst 2030’s Issue-Based Education Collaboration, which has 60+ members from 20 countries. Created, written, edited, and designed by social entrepreneurs.

The report aims to provide an evidence base for practitioner-derived learning principles that we collectively believe constitute the vision for a transformed education in line with SDG 4. It showcases innovative on-the-ground solutions from social entrepreneurs and reflects the perspectives of learners and ecosystem enablers, including policymakers and funders. It is a comprehensive view of the tools and perspectives required to disrupt the status quo of education systems worldwide and transform them by the expanded view of education laid out in SDG 4.

The Transforming Education Summit was convened in response to a global crisis in education – one of equity and inclusion, quality, and relevance. Often slow and unseen, this crisis is having a devastating impact on the futures of children and youth worldwide.
We Love Reading Program Participate in the World Economic Forum Davos Annual Meeting

We Love Reading" program Founder Professor Rana Dajani who has received a Schwab Foundation Social Entrepreneur Award for the year 2022 as part of the World Economic Forum Davos Agenda participates in the World Economic Forum Davos annual meeting. This year’s Schwab Foundation Awardees demonstrated that through values-based approaches centering on inclusivity, collaboration, relationships of trust, and long-term sustainability, we have proven ways of changing institutions and mindsets, and disrupting traditional ways of working that hold systemic barriers in place” said François Bonnici, director of the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship.

Professor Dajani said: “This award and acknowledgment is for every person who has been part of the journey of We Love Reading in every way consciously or unconsciously. Everyone is important, “Do not belittle any good deed” as Prophet Mohammad said. Therefore my fellows in this journey go forward keep reading, learning, and walking, follow your curiosity, your dreams, your aspirations, believe in yourself, trust yourself and you will make the impossible happen.”

This event coincides with the publication of Prof. Dajani’s latest article “Funding social entrepreneurs: why it’s time to think local” on the WEF’s website. Prof. Dajani’s book “Five scarves Doing the impossible, if we can reverse cell fate, why can’t we redefine success?” was chosen by the world economic forum in the 7 books list to inspire change in the world Prof. Dajani’s book was selected along with other books, including “ The worth of water, our story of chasing solutions to the world’s greatest challenge” by the actor Matt Damon.
Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces UNESCO Conference

We Love Reading has participated in the Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces UNESCO conference. Prof. Dajani Founder of We Love Reading and UNESCO Jury for International Literacy Prizes was the moderator in the Adapting Learning Spaces for All session during the event. Literacy learning spaces are transforming, and learning is increasingly occurring beyond traditional ‘school-classroom’ spaces such as at the workplace, community, family, and virtually, to name a few non-formal and informal spaces. The characteristics of youth and adult learners, and their evolving needs for literacy learning such as flexibility, proximity, ease of access, and link with the labor market are guiding factors for the transformation of literacy learning spaces. Against this backdrop, in this session panelists have discussed how literacy learning spaces and their transformation in family, community, workplace, digital, and more can be adapted for the most vulnerable populations based on their gender, geographical location, disabilities, ethnicity, and language diversity.

The main speakers at the event were H.E. Nasseneba Touré Diané Minister of Women, Family, and Children Côte d’Ivoire, Ms. Diane Richler Former chair of International Disability Alliance, Ms. Rola Naeb Expert for Literacy and Second Language Learning for the Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants (LASLLIAM), Mr. Marco Martinez President of the Kumoontun Association.
A delegation of We Love Reading participated in the “training workshop for the Bridge programmes’ partner organizations”, convened by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), which took a place in Seoul, Korea for two days.

During the first day of the workshop, Prof. Rana Dajani did a presentation on We Love Reading research activities. Lina Qtaishat, Research Project Manager, presented a SWOT analysis for the We Love Reading program. She also spoke about the most prominent stages of the “We Love Reading Support for school children” project.

On the second day, a public seminar was held by a number of officials involved in implementing projects in eight countries under the Bridge programme (Pakistan, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, East Timor, Laos, Bhutan, and Malawi) on the topic “Informal Education and the Role of Women in the Context of International Development Cooperation Programs”. During the seminar, many examples of non-formal and lifelong education to empower vulnerable women in developing countries and in the Republic of Korea were presented, and the participants discussed common challenges and solutions.

Prof. Rana Dajani the founder of We Love Reading was one of the main speakers in the first session entitled “Women’s participation and meaning in non-formal education”.

Training Workshop for the Bridge Programmes’ Partner Organizations” in Korea
How can the International Recognition of the Social and Solidarity Economy help achieve the SDGs through social and inclusive innovation

We Love Reading participated in the “How can the International Recognition of the Social and Solidarity Economy help achieve the SDGs through social and inclusive innovation?” event organized by the UN.

The objective of the event is to raise awareness of the positive development impact of the social and solidarity economy, which can help localize the SDGs and render the recovery more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable using experiences shared by Member States and civil society.

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) encompasses enterprises, organizations, and other entities that are engaged in economic, social, and environmental activities to serve the collective and/or general interest, which is based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over the capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets.

Prof. Rana Dajani said “Social entrepreneurs are the core and critical component of the Social and Solidarity Economy because they produce a quality outreaching of services to the last mile the poorest of the poor. We can get there and we can give them the best services, and because the government wants to foster citizenship and a sense of belonging that makes everything easier if people feel they belong and that’s what social entrepreneurs do when they develop solutions they foster that feeling of belonging agency, ownership, and intrinsic motivation that allows the people themselves to identify their own solutions that are more sustainable, cost-effective and keep going even after the governments change.”
Catalyzing Change Week CCW

Catalyzing Change week is the world’s largest event led by social innovators and entrepreneurs to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and accelerate collaborative systems change during more than 250 sessions and activities in a dedicated annual week. Organized by Catalyst 2030, Catalysing Change Week 2022 built on the success of CCW2021, bringing together social entrepreneurs, representatives from the private sector, governments, funders, and others involved in systems change, to inspire change in support of achieving the SDGs.

These models of best practice are in keeping with the recent findings of the Embracing Complexity and New Allies reports. The week served as an opportunity to engage, advocate and stimulate learning across the entire social entrepreneurship ecosystem. This year We Love Reading took a part in the Catalyzing Change Week by organizing multiple virtual and face-to-face events:

1. Social Justice Index
2. How to Conduct Research on Program Impact Under Humanitarian Conditions
3. People's Report as a Pedagogy Tool for University Awareness of SDGs
4. Innovative Model for System Change Philanthropy
5. Jordan Ecosystem Gaps and Solutions
6. Reimagining Social Entrepreneurship in the Islamic World
7. Launching of Reading National Campaign by Jordan Ministry of Culture and We Love Reading
The Education Transformation Report Discussion on World Teachers’ Day

On World Teachers’ Day, We Love Reading participated in an online session to discuss the “Pathways to Transforming Education Report”. The meeting brought together a group of teachers and educational experts from all over the world.

The We Love Reading Ambassador, Tammam Al-Hiyari, the winner of the Queen Rania Award for Outstanding Teacher, participated as a representative from the Arab region, and Sarah Al-Atoum (16 years old student) participated as well.

The speakers discussed the importance of the report issued by the Catalyst2030 Network, which aims to transform education in line with SDGs, and in line with the learner needs. The attendees discussed the eight principles of education mentioned in the report, which are:

- Learner-centric models and Learner-led approach
- Skills for Life
- Learning a Living
- Social Justice, Gender, and Community-based learning
- Learning for People & planetary change
- Learning for Civic Participation
- Accessible & Inclusive Learning
- Learning in Conflict Zones

The speakers also unanimously called on governments and education ministers to adopt the Education Report.

Previously, Dr. Rana Dajani met with a group of We Love Reading Ambassadors from teachers and educators who have a long experience in teaching, where they discussed the report and the recommended suggestions.
The Neighborhood Storyteller Movie

Since its release, the documentary film “The Neighborhood Storyteller,” based on the life of our ambassador Asmaa Al-Rashed, has received numerous international awards, including the Toronto Women’s Film Festival Award, the Best Short Documentary Award at the Amsterdam Short Film Festival, the Excellence Award from the Docs Without Borders Festival, the Hague International Film Festival Award, and the Women in Film Award from the International Mountain Film Festival received by film director Alejandra Alcala. The film has also been highly commended at the Orion International Film Festival and has been an official selection at 25 international film festivals in 14 countries worldwide. Furthermore, it has been nominated for major film festival awards.

The documentary, produced in 2021 was submitted by the Big Heart Foundation, directed by Alejandra Alcala, and produced by Home Storytellers, a non-profit organization that uses film to shed light on sustainable solutions to the refugee crisis through character-driven short documentary films.

The film has been an official selection at the New York International Women’s Film Festival and a semi-finalist at the Flakers Rhode Island International Film Festival, the Atlanta Film Awards, and a finalist at the Dublin Independent Film Festival. Additionally, it was officially selected at the Portland Film Festival, La Famia International Festival, Syria International Festival, and other festivals.

This winning synchronizes with releasing of our new book for children “Mama’s Magic” which is based on the life of Asma Rashed as well and it’s available in both Arabic and English languages.
Some stories deserve to be told!

The film tells the story of Asmaa Al-Rashed, who was forced to flee her home in Syria due to war. After attending the We Love Reading training at Zaatari Camp, Asmaa rebuilt her identity as the neighborhood storyteller, using reading aloud to children as a bridge to tackle critical issues in her new community in Jordan’s Zaatari refugee camp. Six years later, Asmaa’s firstborn daughter reaching adolescence inspires her to embark on a new read-aloud project to empower teenage girls to build a future of opportunities she never had.

Despite her complex living situation as a refugee and the community’s conservative mindset, Asmaa is determined to raise a conscious generation of successful women. “The Neighborhood Storyteller” is a documentary that explores human resilience, the transition from child to adult, and one’s capacity to turn hardships into an opportunity for self-growth.

A special screening of the film “The Story of the Neighborhood” was held at Shoman Cinema in Jabal Amman, in the presence of a large number of intellectuals, non-profit organizations representatives, and reading ambassadors.

After the screening, a discussion session was held to discuss the film, where Asma said, “Since 2016, I have been selecting a group of girls each year to include them in the reading program.”

She also stressed that despite her desire to emigrate, she will establish an institution to help the girls in the camp and remain interested in making a positive change in their lives after her travels.
Outwardly, Asma and I looked completely different. We come from distinct backgrounds, cultures, languages, religions and attitudes. But it didn’t take long for me to realize we had more in common than I ever imagined.

Alejandra Alcala - The TNS movie director

watch the trailer here
OUR RESEARCH

1- Theory of Change and Social Impact Measurement of We Love Reading
Main question: Does We Love Reading Program impact relational importance with children and motivation to lead?

Background:
We Love Reading (WLR) is a community-based intervention that combines intellectual stimulation and relational interaction with children through reading aloud to them. The role of a WLR ambassador can be a form of leadership in influencing children. Therefore, these WLR ambassadors can undergo an intensive change-maker journey that gives them an opportunity to develop their «possible self as a leader» internalizing a leader identity driven by motivation to lead. To assess this, we used a randomized controlled trial, where almost half of the participating women took WLR ambassadors training and the other half didn't.

How the research was done?
215 Syrian and Jordanian women living in Amman took part in the study. We collected data at two time-points immediately before the intervention (T1), after 4 months (T2).

Key findings: We Love Reading and relational importance
In the following Figure, at Time 2, participants in the treatment group (WLR Ambassadors) had higher perceived relational importance with children than the participants in the control group. The findings showed that the reading intervention for children created an opportunity and an environment for relations to be developed between the WLR Ambassadors and the children.

Key findings: Relational Importance and motivation to lead (MTL)
The Figure below shows that motivation to lead (MTLS) completely mediated the relationship between relational importance and leader Identity. The mediation effect indicates that the reading ambassadors› self-perceived sense of motivation to lead was the driving force behind their leadership identification. This finding is significant as it sheds light on the leadership development of non-prototypical leaders.

Implications:
The development of a higher sense of relational importance Among WLR Ambassadors aligns with the mentoring literature, which suggests that positive human relations can be fostered through mentoring programs (Lyons & Perrewe, 2014; Lund et al., 2019). Individuals who play supportive roles, contribute to the growth of others and witness this growth may develop a sense of leadership,
positive relationships, and a further motivation to intensify their supporting role to other individuals. Lund et al. (2019) discussed how developing a relational schema can influence social cognition, ultimately intensifying motivation to lead in supporting and developing the growth of others.

Researchers:
Rana Dajani
Susanna Chui

2- Long-term evaluation of “We Love Reading” program on Syrian children:

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 at three time-points immediately before the intervention (T1), after 4 months (T2) and one year later (T3).

Key findings: We Love Reading and attitudes towards reading.
As seen in the figure below, and using the measure (PPCATR), children who took part in We Love Reading had more positive attitudes toward reading at T2.
At T3 (One-year long-term evaluation) mothers of children who took part in WLR in 2021 continue to report higher levels of child attitudes toward reading a year later than mothers of kids in the control group.

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.

**Researcher:**
Rana Dajani: The Hashemite University
Amal Alkharouf: University of Jordan
Kristin Hadfield: Trinity College Dublin
Isabelle: Maeschal, Queen Mary University of London
Julia Michalek: Queen Mary University of London
Lina Qtaishat: Taghyeer Association
Sophie von Stumm: University of York

3- Social Networks, Empowerment, and Wellbeing: An Intervention Study with Syrian Refugee and Jordanian Women:

**Main question:** Are social networks associated with measures of empowerment, leadership, life satisfaction, and wellbeing? Does We Love Reading improve these outcomes for women?

**Background:**
Social networks characterize a set of interactions and relationships between people. They are often crucial to socioeconomic advancement. However, intervention research has not rigorously tested whether they matter to women’s psychological empowerment and life satisfaction, especially in low-resource Middle-Eastern communities.

**How the research was conducted?**
In 2022-2023 we documented the social networks of 215 women in Amman (106 Syrian refugees, 109 Jordanians), using mixed methods. We conducted a randomized controlled trial, in which half the women participated in a single day of We Love Reading training, while the other half did not. We collected data before (baseline) and after (endline) the WLR training.

**Key findings at baseline**
Women listed between 0 and 13 close peers. Networks were, on average, smaller for Syrians (3.72 peers) than Jordanians (4.98 peers). They were homogeneous by nationality; the peers of Syrians were 89% Syrians; those of Jordanians were 94% Jordanian.

Network size was positively associated with measures of psychological empowerment, motivation to lead, and perceived social support. Women drew upon volunteer work to potentially diversify personal networks outside the home. They felt less empowered with smaller and predominantly kin-based networks.
Key findings at endline:

Preliminary analyses show that women’s sense of life satisfaction increased for women with larger net-work sizes (as shown in the graph below). Levels of life satisfaction and leadership motivation were both higher for women with more highly-educated peers.

With respect to the intervention, the life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing of women showed an increase in the We Love Reading group, from baseline to endline.

Preliminary analyses at the Endline results show that volunteering work diversified women’s personal networks outside the home.

Implications:

The We Love Reading program shows promise to improve life satisfaction and wellbeing among women. We are continuing to study social networks, life satisfaction, and We Love Reading impacts with a 3rd round of data collection.

This study shows that building opportunities for women to socially interact and expand social ties helps to enhance their life satisfaction. This evidence matters to development initiatives seeking to foster women’s empowerment, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

Also, expanding opportunities for volunteer work is one way of empowering poor women to work, learn, and socially interact.

Researchers:
Catherine Panter-Brick: Yale University
Rana Dajani: The Hashemite University
Jannik Eggerman: Yale University
Praveen Kumar: Boston College

ONGOING RESEARCH

1- Let’s Read and Talk:

The goal of this study is to explore how a parent-child book reading intervention impacts both parent and child outcomes. This study also aims to test intervention effects on children’s school readiness (primary outcome), and parents’ engagement in book reading with their child (secondary outcome), and to explore mechanisms and processes underlying the intervention effects on school readiness and parenting behaviors and practices.

The study uses cutting-edge technology to explore how stress influences parent-child interaction, including epigenetic sampling, heart rate data, and cortisol samples.

Researchers:
Antje von Suchodoletz: New York University Abu Dhabi
Rana Dajani: Hashemite University
2- (FIERCE) Syrian Refugee Fathers Study:

This study aims to assess, in a cohort of Syrian families living as refugees in Jordan, the extent to which fathers engage with their families, contribute to family cohesiveness, and assess family-level impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, it offers both a humanistic and social lens on Syrian refugee fathers and their roles across generations.

Researchers:
Catherine Panter-Brick: Yale University
Zaid Alkayed: University of Jordan
Majd Al-Soleiti: Yale University
Isabelle Mareschal: Queen Mary University
Kristin Hadfield: Trinity College Dublin
Rana Dajani: The Hashemite University
Lama Sawalha: University of Jordan

3- How We Love Reading Volunteers Go on to Become Social Entrepreneurs:

We Love Reading’s social entrepreneurship program follows the philosophy: “If I can open a library, what else can I do?” This research analyses to what extent the We Love Reading voluntary experience fosters intentions to start their own social entrepreneurship project afterward.

Researchers:
Farah Al Taji: Brunel University London
Rawan Alheresh: Harvard university
Zeina Muqbel: Harvard university
Rama Kummitha: Northumbria university

4-Improving Emotional Recognition and Decision-making among Refugee Children in Jordan: Evaluation of a Low-cost, Reading-based Intervention:

This study seeks to answer the question: What are the impacts of forced displacement, trauma exposure, and insecure environments on refugee children’s decision-making and emotion recognition skills, and can a reading-based intervention (We Love Reading model) improve these outcomes? Given that trauma can lead to maladapted emotion recognition and inappropriate behaviors to emotional stimuli, it is critical to examine these links in children who have experienced war and displacement.

Researchers:
Isabelle Mareschal: Queen Mary University of London
PUBLISHED RESEARCH

Predictors of Literacy and Attitudes Toward Reading Among Syrian Refugee Children in Jordan

War-related trauma linked to increased sustained attention to threat in children during the COVID-19 pandemic

Comparing online and in-person surveys: assessing a measure of resilience with Syrian refugee youth

Energizing partnerships in research-to-policy projects

In addition to published research, we have also produced a guidebook related to scientific research in Arabic.

-How To Do Randomized Control Trials
**STORY BOOKS DEVELOPMENT**

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, relevance 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 332 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 33 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

**Our story books catalogue is available at our website:**

In addition to the 33 books We Love Reading has published, we have also produced a series of guide books on different topics:

*How To Write Children Story Books*
Our Latest Book “We Love Reading – An Introduction” is now Available. The Book Highlights the Philosophy and the Experience of “We Love Reading” as Following:

**Part One: Our Philosophy**
1. Why Reading for Pleasure is Important.
2. Reading Levels Remain Low.
3. Why Don’t Children Read for Pleasure?
4. We Love Reading as a Solution.
5. How to Reading Aloud.
7. Studying We Love Reading’s Impact.

**Part Two: Our Experience**
1. We Love Reading: A Short History.
2. We Love Reading as a Social Movement.
3. We Love Reading in Refugee Camps.
4. Conclusion.

**Reviews on the Book:**
“For Refugee Children, Reading Helps Heal Trauma”
-New York Times, April 17, 2019

“We should believe that nothing is impossible," writes Rana Dajani, who has made a life and a career out of proving that everything is and can be possible. The story of her journey in building We Love Reading is profoundly inspirational, for it is the story of a woman’s heart and a women’s leadership. It is the story of what reading can do to change lives and especially what reading to children can do for one child and for the entire community Professor Dajani shows us that one act of love-the act of reading aloud can create dynamic change in the lives and minds of young people and in the entire community that surrounds them. Professor Dajani lays out a unique and replicable blueprint for nurturing and empowering societal change, story by story, and child by child."

-Pam Allyn, Founder of Lit World, Author of What to Read When.

**Book author:**
Prof. Rana Dajani,
Founder of We Love Reading.

Buy the book:
Funding social entrepreneurs: why it’s time to think local

A new model encouraging local investment that mitigates the concerns of impact investors could change funding for local social entrepreneurs.

Read the article:

WEF: How investing in social impact networks can spur innovation and change

Social impact networks use the best of collective human capital to address pressing issues. This article was published on World Economic forum website.

Read the article:

Rana Dajani: Underrepresentation of Women in Science is a Global Issue

Reflecting on her own academic journey We Love Reading Founder Prof. Rana Dajani talk about the science behind We Love Reading program.

WLR in the Media

Since landing media coverage can help expand the We Love Reading influence, raise awareness of our work with the public and, highlight success and impact. This year WLR has been gaining media attention in Jordan and overseas, WLR was on local and regional channels like Jordan TV, Roya, Amman TV, Yarmouk, etc.
AREAS OF IMPACT AND SDGs

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:
OUR PARTNERS
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!

You can support WLR project in many ways like:

Make us part of your CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). You can support the WLR project in many ways like Buying our books from our website, Dar Al-Manhal Publishers.

Buy our books:

Donate:
Fatima Enaba, a 33-year-old mother of three and an ambassador for We Love Reading, she received a We Love Reading training in 2022, established her library in a cultural center near her home, and began reading to children regularly. Fatima said: I was searching for my passion and found it through reading to children, and the children were eagerly waiting for me to come to read them stories, It was such a joy. A delegation from Harvard university visited Fatima to know more about her reading activities, she was one of the most active ambassadors on the national reading campaign.