The Children who Grew up with "We Love Reading"
About We Love Reading

We Love Reading aim is changing mindsets through reading to create changemakers. The program was founded in 2006 by Prof. Rana Dajani in Jordan and has spread to 65 countries, where thousands of We Love Reading libraries have been established.

Book Development:

We Love Reading has published 33 children’s illustrated storybooks designed for readers between ages 10-4. The storybooks were developed according to set criteria and methodology, and produced in collaboration with our strategic partners and local writers, illustrators, and designers.

Research:

We Love Reading with top research institutions actively conducts rigorous, scientific research on our read-aloud program to assess its effectiveness and to continuously improve our approach, helping us better serve our humanity.
Dear Readers,

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. They would beg for more and more. The reading aloud was planting a seed in their souls that took root and flourished changing their mindsets to become who they are today. I believed that reading aloud would make a difference on the long run even if others did not. The children grew up to be special as the stories you will read will show. I imagine that years from now that it will be said that children growing up in a certain neighborhood were different no one knows why... But if we go back we find out that they were part of We Love Reading and they were read aloud to. They are the next generation of change-makers. They are carrying the torch forward... They are the butterflies of the future I am proud to have been part of their lives.

We have to believe... That is all.

Prof. Rana Dajani

We Love Reading Founder
When the First Seeds were Sown

On a Saturday morning in February 2006, Prof. Rana Dajani, the mother of four carried a bag of children’s books across the road to her local mosque in Amman, Jordan. She donned a traditional dress and a silly hat, and spent an hour reading stories to two dozen children gathered at her feet. During Friday prayers the following week, the imam of the local mosque advertised her story time to the congregation. Fifty children showed up for the second event. With a small grant from the mosque, as well as some personal savings, Dajani bought a collection of books for her first library. She acted out the stories in a costume and with puppets, and read three books before offering to lend each child a book to take home. Some of them had never had a children’s book in their homes. “The way the children look at you, the way you feel their eyes sparkle as they’re listening to the story, it makes you forget everything, and you just say, “Oh my God, this is worth it’” Dajani says. Thus began We Love Reading (WLR), a global program that guides women volunteers through the process of forming and hosting weekly read aloud circles for children in their neighborhood’s public spaces. This magazine followed some of the children who attended reading aloud sessions to see what impact does We Love Reading has on their lives.
When the First Seeds were Sown

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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 those 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 you can only see on a showman of sort, 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. None of us back then would even imagine that we would set precedent for something that would help so many other children and bring a change to communities all over the world. And while not all may grow to be the same eager bookworm I grew up to be, I am sure that they would be thinking back fondly of those Saturday afternoons and of an adult who cared about what children had to say and
bring to their surroundings.

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 (and it didn’t hurt that we were offered some treats with every book either). For that, and forever more, I was and will forever be grateful to be a part of this delightful experience, and I am even more grateful for the chance to share my story with others. But since I’m not the only one who attended those reading aloud sessions, I set on a journey to find some of my fellow attendees who would offer their perspectives on the matter. As hard as it was to contact them, I was delighted to reconnect with them and hear about what they remember about our little reading aloud sessions.
Ro’aa Abbas Aljalodi

Ro’aa Abbas Aljalodi is a 19 year old reader and aspiring writer who attended the reading aloud sessions the We Love Reading (WLR's ambassador (Rana) held. Ro’aa was eager to tell us about her recollection of the WLR ambassador’s (Rana) read aloud sessions and how that left an impact on her life. Ro’aa stated that the WLR ambassador's (Rana) read stories transported her to this imaginary world filled with characters that were relatable and inspiring and it planted seeds of ideas and values using entertaining methods that left an impression and helped build her character. Even regardless of how they helped enhance her language and writing abilities she felt that it also played a great role in improving her social character and planted positive thoughts that helped build a balanced and interesting personality. Ro’aa believes that the WLR ambassador's (Rana) helped her understand that books are a whole realm that consists of everything a mind could conjure, and it deals with various ideas and beliefs which may or may not suit your surroundings. Therefore, she is certain that we have to search for the right book, but we can find books that will be an asset along the way in a time where guidance is most needed, and in that realm, she found people and characters that motivated her to be like them and reach for success no matter what held them back.
“WLR ambassador's (Rana) stories transported me to this imaginary world filled with characters that were relatable & inspiring and planted seeds of ideas and values using entertaining methods that left an impression and helped build my character.”

Ro’aa Abbas Aljalodi
Enas Aldassan

Enas Aldassan is 20 years old, another attendee of We Love Reading ambassador (Rana)’s, reading aloud sessions, who painted a rather vivid picture of how she remembered the We Love Reading ambassador (Rana) to be. She recalled how the We Love Reading ambassador (Rana)’s kind smile never faltered in front of us and how she showed genuine interest in our thoughts and wanted us to reenact the stories with her as if we were in a theatre. She also recalled how she used puppets to tell the stories sometimes and change the tone of her voice when needed, and how she would use elaborate movements to capture our attention and hang onto her every word. Enas expressed that she was already interested in books but for a six-year-old or so at that time, that felt like an otherworldly experience unlike any she’s ever had before. She is a twenty-one-year-old university student now, but she has yet to forget those days thirteen years ago and wishes she could go back and listen to the We Love Reading ambassador (Rana)’s stories again. Enas firmly believes that We Love Reading was a big part of her love for reading now and her eagerness for exploring the unknown regardless of the genre, it feels like an inseparable piece of her heart now.
Rawan Al btoush

Rawan Al btoush, an athletic 17-year-old who loves to sing, was yet another one of those who attended the reading aloud sessions with her brother. She recalls taking a story home after every reading aloud session and reading it with her brother to discuss it next time. She remembers the We Love Reading ambassador (Rana)'s stories to be fun and easy to love for those who wanted motivation to read and to feel the joy of it. It filled her time during the vacation and gave her more patience to read for longer periods of time, and while she didn’t get into reading for a long time after, she managed to get back to it recently and love it as she did with the We Love Reading ambassador (Rana).

“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.
Morad Aldan

Meet Morad, an 18-year-old young man who used to attend the reading aloud sessions held by We Love Reading ambassador Nabeela Najim. 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 one of the top achievers in high school and scored 94.75 on the Tawjihi exam which is the university entrance exam in Jordan. On this occasion, our ambassador, Nabeela, congratulated him, as Nabeela still maintains a good relationship with the children she used to read to, even after they have grown up. It is noteworthy Nabeela, 57 years old, was one of the first We Love Reading ambassadors she received the We Love Reading training before 2013. she started reading to her grandchildren and since then she is holding reading aloud sessions in her neighborhood. Nabila says: "I read in order to preserve my reading habit in this time when technology has dominated the minds of our children. I noticed the difference reading made on children".

2013

2022
Saif Eldeen Mohesen

"My name is Saif Eldeen Mohasen, I'm 11 years old.

I love reading and writing stories, I started to write children's books when I was six years old when my teacher Ala'a Al-Badareen the We Love Reading ambassador used to read aloud for us and she asked us to do a fun activity on weekend, so I started my first trial to write a story entitled "The butterflies garden".

When Miss Ala'a read it, she was impressed and she continued to encourage me to write more stories as she used to read for us regularly.

Now I read a lot of stories which helps me develop more ideas and write better. I participated in a contest for writing children books and I got first place at the level of Tafila Governorate.

I thank Miss Ala'a for helping me fall in love with reading and fostering my talent and I thank my family for bringing me books and encouraging me".
Ala’a Al-Badareen is a We Love Reading ambassador from Tafila Governorate. Ala’a is a school principal who took the We Love Reading training back in 2017 and since then she holds reading aloud sessions for children in different schools, Ala’a said: "children loved me more because I read to them they call me the stories teacher.

I noticed the impact of reading on children whom I used to read aloud to for many years, their school performance has improved and reading also impacted their personality growth.

Saif was one of the spectacular children I used to read to, his leadership skills have improved with reading and I still have all the books he wrote."