



WE LOVE READING IN

GAZA

**Where There Are No
Children Left to Read to.**

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Letter From the Founder

What have we learned from the children of Gaza over 74 years of oppression?

We learned what love means.

We learned what humanity means.

They grow up on the Quran and the tradition of prophet Mohammed pbuh:

“Take care of the neighbor”.

“The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.”

“None of you has faith until he/she loves for his/her fellow human what he/she loves for himself/herself”.

And The Quran tell us:

(Except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience.) (By Al-`Asr:3)

They actually practice it.

They learned Language from the Quran and education in what really matters in life.

They have a clear purpose.

They taught us that human relations are what matter most.

The families whose loved ones were killed were happy for the Palestinian prisoners release and were happy for the hostages released.

The children of Gaza are our heroes.

They grow up to defend their land to be the heroes we read about in stories and movies in real life.

There are no words to be said,

Actions are our words.

The children are the manifestation of morality, values, ethics, humanity truth, dignity and integrity.

The whole of humanity is indebted to the children of Gaza.

They have taught the world what does it mean to be human.

They are the highest human anyone can aspire to become.

هنيئاً لكم

Prof. Rana Dajani.

Founder of We Love Reading.

رنا دجاني

About We Love Reading

We Love Reading is a program that aims to change mindsets through reading to nurture change makers. The program was founded in 2006 by Dr. Rana Dajani in Jordan and has spread to 69 countries, where thousands of We Love Reading libraries have been established.



Children Book Development

We Love Reading has published 37 children's storybooks designed for readers between ages 4-10.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the Program and to continuously improve our approach, helping us better serve our fellow humans.





نحن نحب القراءة
WE LOVE READING
نقرأ لاجودة الحياة

Puppet Theater
ABC

Adalah Abu Median/Ambassador of WLR|Gaza.



No Place is Safe in Gaza, and There are No Children Left to Read to!

“Gaza Strip is the world’s most dangerous place to be a child. Today, there are no children in Gaza, and I have no idea who was martyred and who is still alive. And how I will go back to see that the children I used to read to have been killed”. Adalah Abu Median.

In conversations filled with grief and pain, We Love Reading ambassador Adala Abu Median tells her story and the stories of the children to the We Love Reading team during the war on Gaza.

We Love Reading Ambassador Adalah Abu Median (18) years, has been holding reading sessions for children with Down syndrome and in underserved regions of Gaza since 2018. Adalah says: "I deliberately chose to hold reading sessions for children in marginalized areas because it brought me joy as well as that I knew very well the importance of reading to educate them and that it is a tool used to protect stranded people like the people in Gaza. However, at the same time, the occupation targeted those children and many of them were martyred”.

Adalah had been preparing for her first year at the American University in Cairo after she received an AUC scholarship, but the war disrupted her plans. She has lost all her identification documents, including high school diploma, certificates of excellence, and volunteerism certificates. As a result, her chances of receiving the scholarship are now slim due to certain protocols and a lack of fulfillment of the scholarship requirements. This has impacted her academic future and plans for the We Love Reading program.

“I was born in 2005 and have been under siege since that year”:

Adalah says: “Gaza is the largest prison in the world. We have been under siege for decades, but people do not look at the history, but rather look at the isolated event of October 7. When in reality it is a reaction to 75 years of siege. In Gaza, the most basic necessities of life, such as medicines, have not been available to us for a decades. They are forced to travel to obtain it, and most cancer patients have to wait a years to obtain a permit for receive treatment either in Jordan or in the West Bank, and sometimes they die without obtaining it.”



Adalah Abu Median/Ambassador of WLR|Gaza.

“

People do not look at the history, but rather look at the isolated event of October 7. When in reality it is a reaction to 75 years of siege.

Adalah Abu Median.

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They are surrounded by death, yet they are the ones who bring forth life.

Adalah confirmed that Gaza has not witnessed anything as terrible as this war. Her ancestors, who lived through the Nakba in 1948, described it many times worse than the Nakba.

However, it confirms that the greatest strength of the people in Gaza today is education. Adala says, “If the people of Gaza were not educated, we would not see moral and human values. As we witnessed during the war, if education collapses, morals collapse, and Gaza’s doctors are the greatest example of their refusal to leave the hospitals, despite the bombing, the Palestinians in Gaza have believed for decades that education is part of our steadfastness.”

She concludes, “I cannot predict when the war will end? What will happen after it? But we are ready to rebuild ourselves in Gaza again. We are accustomed to always starting over and refusing to go anywhere else. There is no better place than Gaza for us, even if there is no place here to live, we will rebuild the places and we will create the opportunities.”



Adalah Abu Median/Ambassador of WLR|Gaza.



The Palestine Libraries Forum | Gaza.



The Palestine Libraries Forum in Gaza

“In Gaza, we lost children’s stories; we lost their drawings. Their writings are completely gone. Even the children who wrote these stories and painted these drawings have been killed”. Dr. Sharif Al-Saoufi.

Dr. Sharif Al-Saoufi, Chairman of the Palestine Libraries Forum in Gaza, said, “The Forum’s building was completely destroyed and turned to ashes. Many people there have been martyred. Under these circumstances, the Forum donated its entire budget allocated for the Forum’s activities to the displaced people in shelter centers and schools, providing humanitarian aid for those who were affected.

The Palestine Libraries Forum in Gaza is a non-profit institute. It’s operations rely on donations and holding courses at nominal prices, as well as 5% of volunteer’s income, which aims to provide support to the local community. The Palestine Libraries Forum is among the pioneering places that provide numerous forms of entertainment, culture, and educational activities for children. The forum has a rich history of social activities to spread awareness, enhance culture, and emphasize strength, according to Al-Sufi.

“We were always able to create something from nothing, and we were partners with the We Love Reading Program, but the ongoing siege and the recurring crises prevented us from doing so.” Dr.Sharif adds. “We have organized a variety of workshops and trained the children on reading activities as well as story writing and Puppet Theater, in addition to animated stories,” Al-Sufi stated.

Al-Sufi continues: “We launched many book fairs in cooperation with cultural institutions, we took part in educational contests to stimulate efforts in the reading field.

Additionally, we worked with a few international libraries to share experiences and gain access to their scientific resources and courses, which we then implemented by using our available resources ”.

“ Furthermore, all the schools in Gaza have storytellers and reading sessions. We also rely on visual aids to improve children’s skills and stimulate their socialization.

In addition, we continue to organize brainstorming sessions with the kids, where they discuss books they have read and share knowledge and skills with one another ”. Said Dr. Sharif.

“ However, today we do not know who was martyred and who survived among those children, and I wonder what we can provide for a child who lost all his/her family members and how we can help a child to forget his/her parents, forget the scenes of the human remains he/she walked through, or forget the rubble of his/her house that fell on his/her head. Can we really communicate with these children afterwards? And what words will we say to them?” Dr. Sharif concluded.

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The generation we are raising will be our valuable strategic resource in the future. They will use science to liberate their nations. Gunpowder does not liberate people today; Science does, and science is what makes gunpowder.

Dr. Sharif Al-Saoufi.

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The Palestine Libraries Forum|Gaza.

The war on the minds

“Most of Gaza's schools, libraries, and educational centers have been bombed and turned into war zones and battlefields,” Dr. Sharif narrates. “There is basically suffering from a lack of schools, as schools are open in three periods with only one day off, due to the lack of schools, population density, and overcrowding in Gaza, thus the tremendous numbers of students are suffering.

” There are 2.5 million Gazans centered in this spot,” says Al-Sufi.

Al-Sufi says, “ Every aspect of Palestinian heritage in Palestine is under threat. We were prevented from attending some of the conferences and seminars to which we were invited. In Gaza, we are fighting to exist. The international aid centers are being bombed in order to end the presence of the Palestinian people. However, immigration will not be repeated, and we will not leave the land. “We will rise stronger, fill our libraries with books once more, and triumph over this ordeal, emerging from the wreckage like a phoenix.”

“ All members of the forum team are now volunteering in Gaza’s schools to help the children’s mental health by providing drawing tools, using all the ways to treat them from wars traumas even though it’s not over yet, and emphasizing that all the future programs will focus on the mental side of the children, but most of these schools are now exposed to bombing, one of them being Al-Fakhura school, where some of our volunteers were martyred ”. Al-Sufi mentioned.

Dr.Sharif ends by saying, ” The experiences and crises we have faced together will make us stronger and more capable of rebuilding ourselves from the ground up through culture, which is a component of resistance. All other fields play the same role in terms of resistance economic, education. Each of us fighting and putting up resistance in our own unique places.

When we first started, we were starting from scratch, and we were growing, and the results exceeded our expectations despite the lack of resources. Nevertheless, sincerity and effort increased our influence. But now the first step is to gather what remains of us, and the work will come later ”.



Libraries as Victims of War



The Right to Life Society|Gaza.

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“Stories are our memory, libraries are the storerooms of that memory, and reading is the craft by means of which we can recreate that memory”.

The author Alberto Manguel said, and Nihal Al-Ashi says:

“Rebuilding the library is my first mission I will do it, after the war”.

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Nihal Al-Ashi The mother of We Love Reading Ambassador Adala Abu Median, “The first thing I will do it with my daughter after the war is rebuild the “Samir Mansur” library. We frequently visited and donated books and stories to the library after it was bombed twice in 2021, and today it was again bombed, with thousands of books under the rubble of war “. Nihal states.

Nihal, a mother of three girls, Adalah, Salma, and Dalal, works at the Right to Life Society, which was established in 1992 by her mother in law after she had a child with Down syndrome, then, she decided to support children with autism and Down syndrome. In addition, due to the lack of specialists in Gaza handling this category, her mother-in-law rented a house to start the association, and took care of any cases she saw in the community at her personal expense until she got numerous grants from many organizations, local businesses and rewards the Stars Foundation Prize.

“ However, everything has been devastated today,. children in Gaza being the most vulnerable group experiencing death and suffering. Gaza has become unimaginably worse, but I have no intention of releasing photos depicting devastation. I will only share images of stunning Gaza ”. says Nihal.

“ When I noticed Adalah's interest from early age in reading and her voluntary participation in many educational institutions, in both the Literature Club and the Science Club, as well as in reading initiatives, events, and recreational activities, I encouraged and reinforced her interest and guidance to extend the circle of reading to promote reading in Gaza’s neighborhoods ”.

“ After receiving my basic reading training with autistic children which included a course that focused on translating documentaries for autistic children I asked my daughter Adalah to apply the methodology I had learned in her reading sessions for the children ”. Nihal continues.

She received the We Love Reading training, which helped her to facilitate children's reading sessions in a simple and enjoyable manner. “ Although Gaza, this small outpost has witnessed many wars, but as usual, we will rise and restore everything again ”.Nihal concludes.





Empowering Children Through Reading Claim Their Rights



Dr. Maysoon Othman ambassador of WLR.
“Multiple Intelligences” kindergarten|Jordan.

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“ Reading is a guide that can lead and empower children to understand their rights, which non-negotiable.

Dr. Maysoon Othman ambassador of WLR.

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In an effort to raise knowledge of the current state among children through books and illustrations, Dr. Maysoon organized an event including a reading session about Palestine.

The event, which featured a stand in solidarity with Gaza, was held in collaboration with the "Protect the Children of Gaza ", initiative on the International Children's Rights Day.

Maysoon holds a PhD in special education. She is a researcher and director of the “Multiple Intelligences” kindergarten, which includes children with special needs. In addition, she is a resident of the Supreme Council for Special Education and Autism Centers. Maysoon obtained the We Love Reading training in 2014 and conducts reading sessions for the children in her kindergarten and for children with special needs. She said, “ Reading helped children’s development cognitive and taught them about their society and the events around them.

” Since the beginning of the war, we have been explaining to the children about Palestine. Elaborating through stories is what puts the child’s imagination and awareness at the heart of those events and prepares him/her for the biggest stages in his/her life and understanding of the terms of war, occupation, and children’s rights. Reading is what helps communicate and consolidate these concepts in a simple and enjoyable way ”. Maysoon says.

According to her work in the research field and with the children, reading is the tool to treat the behavior problems in the children and parent’s responses to the initiative were fascinating. They saw how the child transfers behaviors to his/her siblings and family, which can increase the network of awareness.

"From this point onward, each of us should actively play our role. However, what surprised me were the children's questions after the reading session. They asked about the situation in Gaza, where the children in Gaza are currently living, and how we could help them. These questions are truly important evidence of the impact of reading," Maysoon explained to WLR.

And she concludes, "My experience with the We Love Reading Program has had a positive effect on my work and my relationship with the children, as well as brought me closer to their thinking. Although the children can read by themselves, reading sessions became a lifestyle for them. I found reading the best tool to spread knowledge about what is happening in Gaza.

سلسلة قصصية للأطفال (٤٤)

حلم عبد الحميد شومان



تأليف
روضه الفرخ الهدد

Abdul Hamid Shoman's Dream | Children's book.



Let's Read about Palestine

“ The current events in Palestine in general and in Gaza in particular inspired me to take the initiative that we should stop saying that life is always beautiful to the children, instead, we have to show them there is a Good and bad. There are children exposure to injustice, but the truth win, and through reading, we can get over the hardest challenges ”, Zohour Dghimat.

Our ambassador, Zohour Dghimat, founder of many initiatives, Zohour is always proactive in facing society's challenges and seeking solutions to spread awareness and making a change.

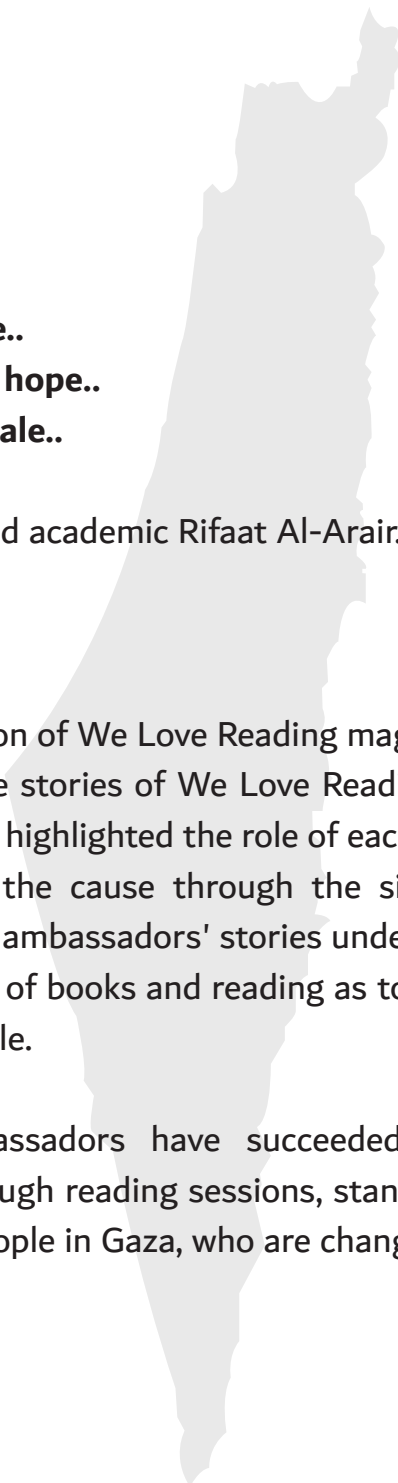
Zohour established during the war on Gaza an initiative called” Let's Read about Palestine.” She has chosen significant books about Palestinian characters exposure to injustice and forced immigration who afterwards and become great entrepreneurs.

“I decided to read a children's book on an inspirational Palestinian character to demonstrate the resilience and fortitude of the Palestinian people., as well as to show them that dreams can come true despite displacement, and nothing can ever shake the Palestinian people's tenacity and resolve. I began the first reading sessions by telling the story of Abdul Hamid Shoman, an entrepreneur from Jerusalem, he has been working as street vendor. To returned Jerusalem after a struggling voyage with a Bachelor's degree in business administration and established the internationally renowned Arab Bank in Jerusalem ”. Zohour said.

She states, “ The story I borrowed from the library had never been borrowed before. After I read it, the children asked numerous questions about the story's characters during the session. Additionally, the initiative aimed to introduce the children to the Palestinian governorates and villages, which sparked their interest in learning more about Palestine history ”.

“ I took the books as a method to put the children in the current events in a creative way and in their own language, and to share with them my belief that dreams should never be abandoned for the sake of people, as people ultimately perish while dreams endure ”.

Zohour adds, “ I also wanted to inspire the children to think about other people and how we can help our friends and families in Gaza and other places that are affected from the scourge of wars ”.



**If I must die..
Let it bring hope..
Let it be a tale..**

The poet and academic Rifaat Al-Arair.

In this edition of We Love Reading magazine, we featured the stories of We Love Reading ambassadors in Gaza. We highlighted the role of each ambassador in supporting the cause through the simplest available means. Our ambassadors' stories underscore the significance of books and reading as tools they wield in their struggle.

WLR Ambassadors have succeeded in making an impact through reading sessions, standing in solidarity with our people in Gaza, who are changing the world.



www.weloverreading.org

E-mail : admin@weloverreading.org

Tel : + 962 6 55 30190

Address: Abed Rabbo Kayed AlAssaf St, Tla al-Ali, Ne'ma Bu. |
Amman 940555 Jordan

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 @weloverreading

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