

Changing mindsets through reading to  
NURTURE CHANGEMAKERS



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

## A YEAR OF IMPACT

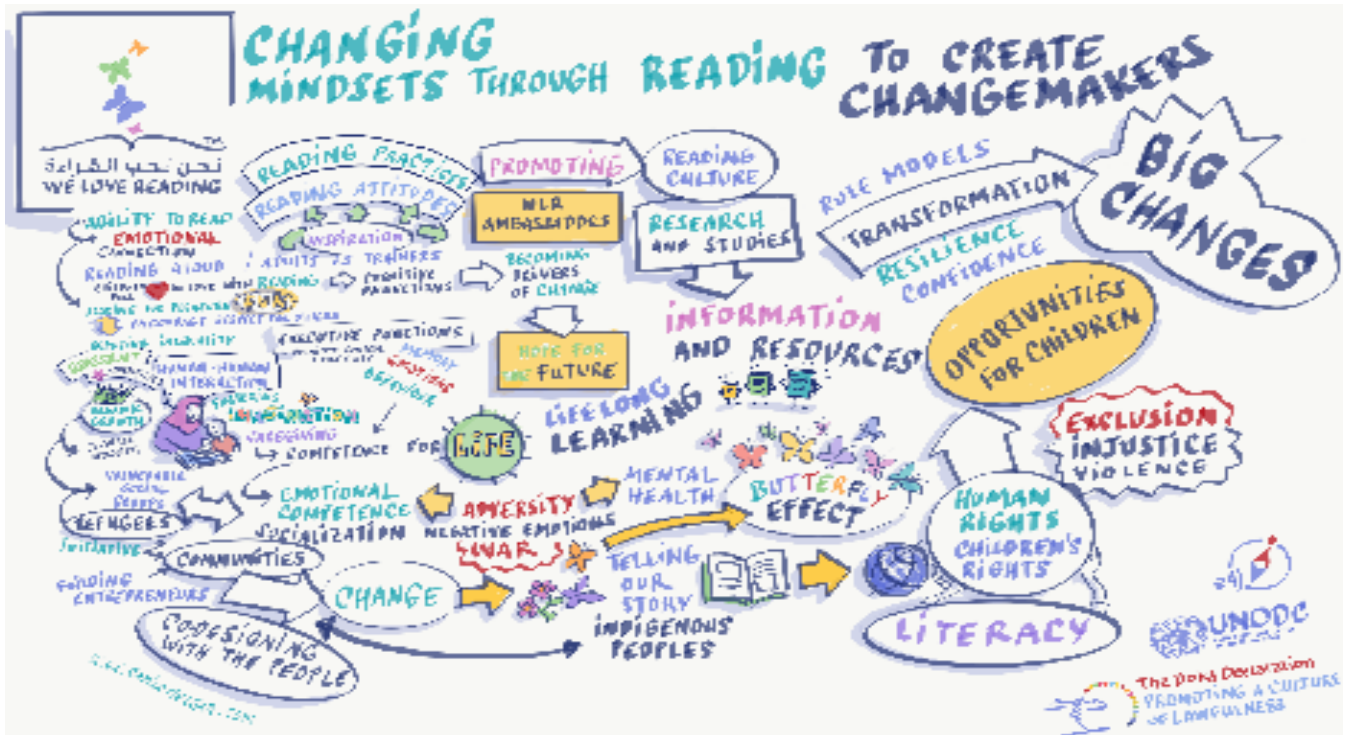


# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	About We Love Reading
11	Working with Government
14	We Love Reading Training
18	WLR Long Term Impact
22	2024 Impact by Numbers
24	WLR Around The World
28	Telling Stories that Spark Change
32	Awards and Collaborations
33	Conferences
39	The Neighborhood Storyteller Documentary
44	Our Research
52	Children's Books Development
54	Publications and Media
57	Areas of Impact and SDGs
58	Our Partners
60	Support Our Cause




## ABOUT WE LOVE READING



## OUR VISION

Changing mindsets through reading to nurture changemakers.



## OUR MISSION

Achieving sustainable development goals by 2030 is a complex situation because most solutions are just band-aids. 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 change-makers themselves and in their community because the mindset of “I can”.

We Love Reading started in Jordan and now has spread to 72 countries around the world. WLR has become a social movement.

WLR scales well, first because it has the magic sauce the secret sauce to motivate children and adults to do things because they want to, not because they have to, based on trust. The second thing is that We Love Reading is based on shared universal values while celebrating diversity by acting locally, reflecting the harmony in nature. Lastly, We Love Reading focuses on the human-human interaction that is fundamental to the development of a healthy mental, emotional, and social human being, technology, and ensuring continuous development based on scientific research.

## OUR VALUES

Integrity, Collaboration, Trust, Creativity, Wisdom.

## Our Letter to the World



Dear all,

Read is the first word in the Quran.  
 Read to reflect, learn, and grow.  
 To gain tools (words, structure) to express emotions and ideas.  
 To document, or else someone else will.  
 We need to tell our story.

We see how the documentation of Palestinian history and atrocities today was instrumental for the ICJ and ICC. That is why information, education, academics, and journalists are being attacked. Or else someone else will write the history. Write the story. Write your story. WLR draws from nature in how it is designed.

- Telling stories is how we survived as a species and how we learn. That is why WLR is all about the local context of storytelling and the native language.
- We are social creatures, and we need human interaction to develop a healthy body and mind. That is why WLR is about reading aloud in person, face-to-face. This results in boosting confidence, building resilience, and reducing stress.
- We were created diverse; that is why WLR celebrates diversity and maintains a delicate balance between global and local. This leads to the belief that everyone is special and has something to contribute to the world. This moral and ethical base is very important to ensure equity and equality for all.



- WLR nurtures agency, ownership, and intrinsic motivation within, so that everyone learns and does things because they want to, not because they have to. This should be the foundation of all education systems—preparing our children for an unknown future and, in vulnerable situations, ensuring that they have the skills to become independent, lifelong learners driven by innate curiosity, critical thinking, and a mindset of «I can.»

- This approach invites us to reimagine education in terms of who the teacher is, where we learn, for how long, and what we need to learn.

- It is part of our DNA that we are problem solvers—or, in other words, social innovators. Everyone is a guardian. That is why WLR's mission is changing mindsets through reading to nurture changemakers. We cannot only work to achieve the SDGs. To really change the system, we need a lawyer, an activist, and a storyteller. We see this today more than ever in Palestine and Gaza.

The chaos theory in physics states that when a butterfly flutters its wings in one part of the world, it moves the air one centimeter. A hurricane is formed beyond time and space. Or as Muhammad (PBUH) said: \*Do not belittle any small deed.\*  
I invite you to gather your courage and confidence. Remember, nothing is impossible. Trust yourself and be the butterfly of change.

[Meet the Founder and Director of the We Love Reading Program.](#)

Rana Dajani

رنا الدجاني





## We Love Reading and 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 to 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 autonomy, not giving autonomy. Therefore WLR avoids hegemony.





We Love Reading In-Person Training |2024

## **Each ambassador is a changemaker.**

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. 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 behavior is so complex any measure is a reduction and only touching 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 seeks 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 frameworks 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 Platform

We Love Reading has collaborated with the Ministry of Culture to Launch the National Reading Campaign on 29 September, 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).

visit the website  
[www.welovereading.jo](http://www.welovereading.jo)





## 2. Jordan's National Reading Day, 29 September



In celebration of Jordan National Reading Day and with the goal of reaching every child in every neighborhood, the We Love Reading program organized events targeting all governorates in Jordan. Reading sessions were held in each governorate, led by the ambassadors of the program.

The event featured read-aloud sessions for children, and collections of children's books were distributed to the ambassadors on this special day. This initiative aimed to celebrate the importance of reading and remind children of its value through "reading for pleasure" sessions. These sessions, which the ambassadors had been trained for, equipped them with skills and techniques to foster a love for reading in children's hearts.

The reading sessions took place in various locations, including parks, educational centers, schools, and mosques, gathering as many children as possible. Additionally, ambassadors who read in schools and educational centers conducted reading sessions throughout the day for all grades, aiming to reach every child.

### 3. Tales Box Program in Cooperation with Jordan TV



We collaborated with Jordanian television to create reading sessions, which were broadcasted on Jordanian television. The program, which comprised of two seasons, received excellent feedback. The episodes of the first season were produced and broadcast, and the second season was completed over the course of two years with new episodes and inspiring stories.

You can also search on Facebook by looking up “The Tales Box” to view all the episodes.

### 4. The Ministry of Culture Collaborated with the WLR Program for Amman as the World Book Capital 2026



In the presence of the Jordanian Minister of Culture, Haifa Najjar, a meeting of the preparatory committee was held to discuss the nomination of Amman to be the World Book Capital for the year 2026. Manager Engineer Lina Qtaishat represented the We Love Reading program at the meeting.

# WE LOVE READING TRAINING

## 1. In-Person Training



### A. WLR Conducts a Series of In-Person Training Sessions in the Capital, Amman

Discussions on promoting reading moved from training halls to open spaces during a series of training sessions held by the “We Love Reading” program in the capital, Amman. The first training was conducted in the Marj Al-Hamam area, while the second in Sahab and the third training in the university street at the Gerasa Hotel. Led by trainer Ghufran Abu Diya, the trainings focused on how to read aloud to children and covered essential techniques for engaging them in a way that preserves the essence of the book, emphasizing the importance of fostering enjoyable reading sessions among children.

The trainings were attended by a diverse group, including parents, teachers, university professors, kindergarten directors, and a book illustrator. The participants received the training in two parts: theoretical and practical, with immersion in reading strategies related to voice modulation, body language, showing illustrations of the book, and responding to children’s questions that arise after the session.

Banan Ammar, one of the trainees, shared her experience, saying: «The training was clear, practical, and realistic. It helped me understand the duration of children’s attention spans when listening to stories and emphasized that reading time with children is quality time. It is worth mentioning that these trainings are funded by the (Korean grant/ the 2024 Bridge Jordan Project), who awarded the We Love Reading program the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2017.



## 2. We Love Reading Digital Tools- The Online Training

### A. New Version of WLR Online Training

Since the launch of the WLR online training program, it has experienced growing demand. We Love Reading has continuously worked to develop it in collaboration with technology experts, ensuring a well-organized digital platform for both ambassadors and the training team.

In mid-2024,, after considerable effort and ongoing improvements, the program introduced a new version of the training, available in both Arabic and English. It also provides translations in several global languages, including Spanish, French, Turkish, Korean, Urdu, Hindi, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Dutch.

Many countries and hundreds of individuals have already begun implementing the program, thanks to its simplicity, flexibility, rich content, and broad impact.

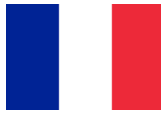
The training is led by Dr. Rana Dajani, who guides trainees through the importance and benefits of reading aloud to children. She also shares practical tips to help participants organize reading sessions in their communities.

**Register now and become an ambassador for reading in your country and community.**





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

You can contribute to transforming your community by volunteering to translate the training into a language not yet available. This allows the program to be implemented in your community at no cost.

Contact us to collaborate on the translation and join us in making a difference.

## B. We Love Reading Virtual Community



As part of the digital tools offered by We Love Reading, the interactive features enable participants to ask questions and write comments through the We Love Reading Community Network on WhatsApp. This network connects thousands of ambassadors and program team members.

Through this platform, we share photos of reading sessions from around the world, discuss various challenges, connect ambassadors from the north to the south of the globe, and exchange future opportunities.



### C. We Love Reading Participates in Technology and Children Session in Aqaba

At the invitation of the National Council for Family Affairs, the National Team for Early Childhood, and Plan International, We Love Reading program participated in the second day of a three-day event held in Aqaba. The program contributed to the Technology and Children session, showcasing its alignment with the digital world through its online training available in multiple languages and the development of platforms that establish an interactive network connected WLR ambassadors worldwide.

The program was invited by the council as part of the project to engage programs that address social needs within the early childhood category, highlighting the importance of its implementation in addressing community challenges within a digital and technological framework that serves diverse groups.

The program was represented by Dr. Mayson Al-Tarawneh, a We Love Reading ambassador who received the training in 2017 in Aqaba. She introduced the program, its digital tools, and the ease of accessing its training and joining its network.

The project also monitored programs and activities implemented by institutions working in early childhood development and discussed challenges and opportunities for improvement.

## WLR LONG TERM IMPACT



### 1. Beyond Reading: The Immersive Experience Narrated by Jameela Abu Melhem

«It's like an endless impact; I realized it when I saw the children I had read to years ago; we lived together with the characters in the books, and now they are among the top students in their high school».

Jamila Abu Mulheim, the ambassador of We Love Reading in Jerash, speaks about the importance of the We Love Reading program as a long-term impactful program, evident in the children who attended the reading sessions. Abu Mulheim says: «The We Love Reading program is sustainable; we feel its impact both in the present and the future. The children I once read to still reminisce with me about our discussions during the reading sessions. When I look at the new generations I read to, I see their future filled with success. This drives me to continue reading with even more passion, knowing the evidence of the significance and meaning of what I do».

Numerous studies conducted by the We Love Reading program in collaboration with top research institutions and international universities have proven the impact of reading interventions on children. These studies have also highlighted the potential of storytelling as a powerful tool to promote various positive behaviors among children. The innovative approach of the «We Love Reading» program not only enhances literacy and reading skills but also fosters essential social and emotional skills in children.



## 2. The Youngest Ambassador Rachel Dias Makes a Significant Impact

### The Books for All project is on a mission to provide inspiring books and engaging literacy programmes to disadvantaged children in Goa. NT KURIOCITY gets details

originally from Margao, then suggested using a book donation drive for needy children. She garnered the support of four other like-minded students from Dubai – Zahra and Iqbal from Raffles International School, Suni from Dubai National School, and Aarav from Fern Park School – to back this initiative during the donation efforts in their own schools," says Remediana, a school leader. "Considering that families in the slum area do not have enough money for school books, the Books for All project aims to help kids learn to love reading and grow smarter. Quality education is, of course, about much more than just reading. But being able to read is the foundation on which so much else builds: children first learn to read and then learn to learn. Children living in poverty are unlikely to be able to read well at school, which is devastating for their future lives," Remediana adds.

As part of their project, the Rachel Foundation and Goa Sudharop recently distributed educational resources, including storybooks, notebooks, activity books, and stationery items, to eight underprivileged children from the Rumbi community residing in the remote areas of San Jose da Arral village in Salcete. The same resources were provided to 15 children living in the Khare-band slum area in Margao.

The Books for All project also plans to set up a mini-library in one of the homes in the slum area in Margao, where the donated books will be kept for children to have easy access. "We plan to collaborate with NSS students from colleges in Margao, who will be invited to conduct reading sessions for these kids on a regular basis," explains Remediana. "My niece, Divyanka Fernandes, will be leading the reading sessions by college students, and volunteers will also be welcomed to conduct special reading sessions."



Rachel Dias

many have progressed from picture-based discussions to reading words with and without accompanying images, from single words to constructing simple sentences, and ultimately to forming complete sentences.

"Rachel is a reading ambassador in the UAE, and we know for sure that one of the slum students will be a reading ambassador in a couple of years," says Remediana. "Also, Rachel and her brother Troy are currently writing their own storybook. Five years from now, we look forward to seeing a couple of the slum kids doing the same. And the love for reading will then spread from Goa to neighbouring states, and no child will be left behind."

The Rachel Foundation will continue organising regular book donation drives led by young school students in their respective schools or neighbourhoods. These books will be given to schools and organisations to establish reading units for children. "We plan to

the assigned person. Parents, employer trainers, role models, and champions across society are needed to advance the love of reading in Goa," says Remediana. She adds that they visualise a library in each school, well-resourced and positively bustling with inclusive activity. "To create an inclusive space in the future, we intend to offer a variety of formats and media for book materials, such as print, digital, audio, and tactile, and multilingual."

Remediana calls on book-loving volunteers to lend a hand, be it through reading stories, organising fun activities like crafts and drama, or simply donating books.

"Individuals could help to build literacy programmes level. Organisations can help books into the hands of kids in underserved communities," says Remediana, adding they also hope to help those with reading difficulties engage in the joy of books. "People disabilities love books as much as the non-disabled, but until relatively recently, access to material that suited their learning or abilities was difficult or, frankly, non-existent."

In an inspiring collaboration aimed at fostering literacy and enriching the lives of underprivileged children, 8-year-old Rachel Dias, along with her mother, (Remy) Dias, a school leader in Dubai, has embarked on a remarkable journey. Rachel, a Year 4 student at a British curriculum school in Dubai, has made headlines due to her passion for reading.

Driven by a desire to spread the joy of reading, Rachel participated in the « Books for All » Project, a collaboration between the Dubai-based Goan Girls' Foundation and Goa Sudharop in Goa. The project aims to provide inspiring book collections and engaging literacy programs to deserving children not only in Goa but also in Mauritius, Vietnam, and beyond.

(Remy) Dias, Rachel's mother, expressed her pride in her daughter's endeavors, highlighting Rachel's initiative in suggesting the book donation drive and her subsequent involvement in the «Books for All» project. Remy emphasized the project's goal of empowering every child through a culture of reading, regardless of background or circumstances.



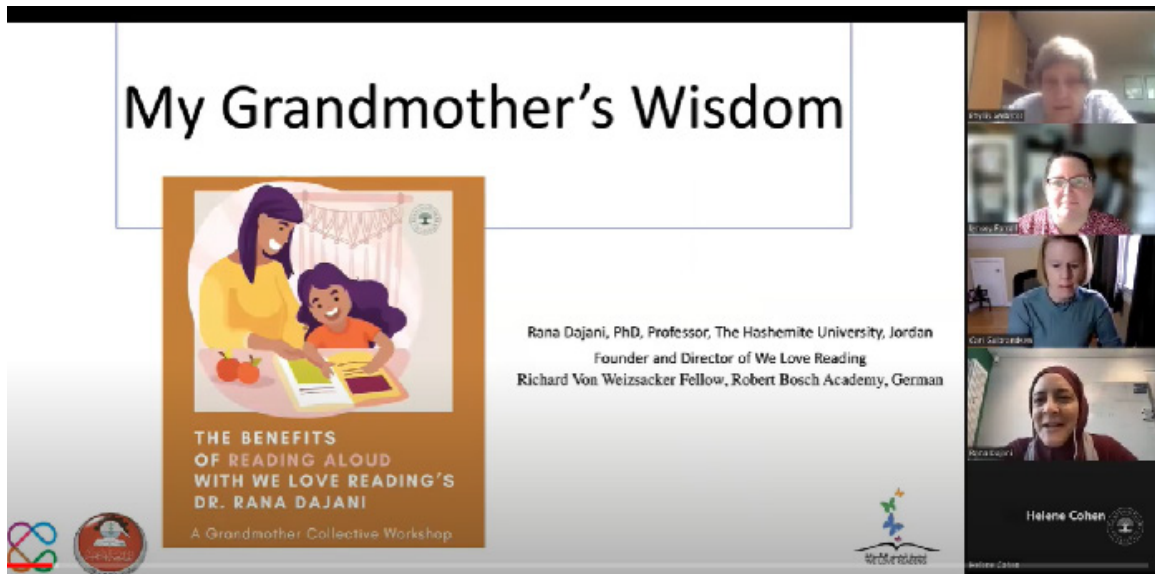


### **3. Discovering a Hidden Talent: Leen Ayoub's Path with We Love Reading**

The most satisfying feeling I get is when the number of children increases session after session. Also, many of them start to conduct reading sessions, which spontaneously spread the reading enthusiasm around me", Leen Ayoub WLR ambassador.

Leen Ayoub attended We Love Reading training by chance in Zarqa governorate when she accompanied her mother Ahlam, who was receiving the training. She had not known her talent for reading and her love for books. But what attracted Leen the most was the We love Reading children's books, which are designed with high quality to appeal to various categories of children, she started to browse them and focus on the training, much like the women who were trained in reading for children

"During the reading sessions, I feel like a leader, and WLR training gave me the chance to discover my abilities", Leen pointed out. She adds that it brought many changes in her life and led her to think of each activity and work as making her feel like a leader. Additionally, it helped her discover her passion for the Arabic language and her ability to change her voice to adopt different voices in order to represent different characters in the story.



#### 4. Empowering Communities through Reading Aloud for Grandmothers

Prof. Rana Dajani shed light on the transformative potential of shared reading experiences in a dynamic online event titled «The Benefits of Reading Aloud,» which was arranged by the Grandmother Collective.

A diverse group of people attended the workshop, eager to learn about new approaches to promoting literacy and ties within the community.

Throughout the workshop, Dajani shared insights garnered from her extensive experience in promoting reading for pleasure within communities worldwide.

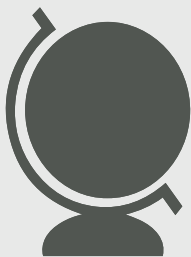
She also discussed the stories of the grandmothers who are ambassadors of WLR and have been empowered by reading and the program, highlighting how reading has impacted them and their communities.

Watch the session:

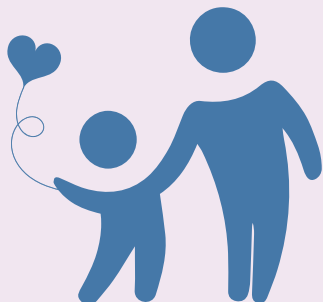


# 2024 IMPACT BY NUMBERS

72  
Countries.



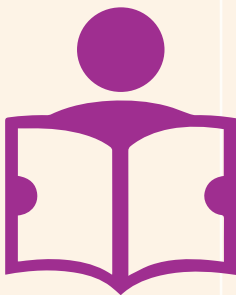
5,820  
Ambassadors.



608,805  
Children read to.



202,935  
Reading Session



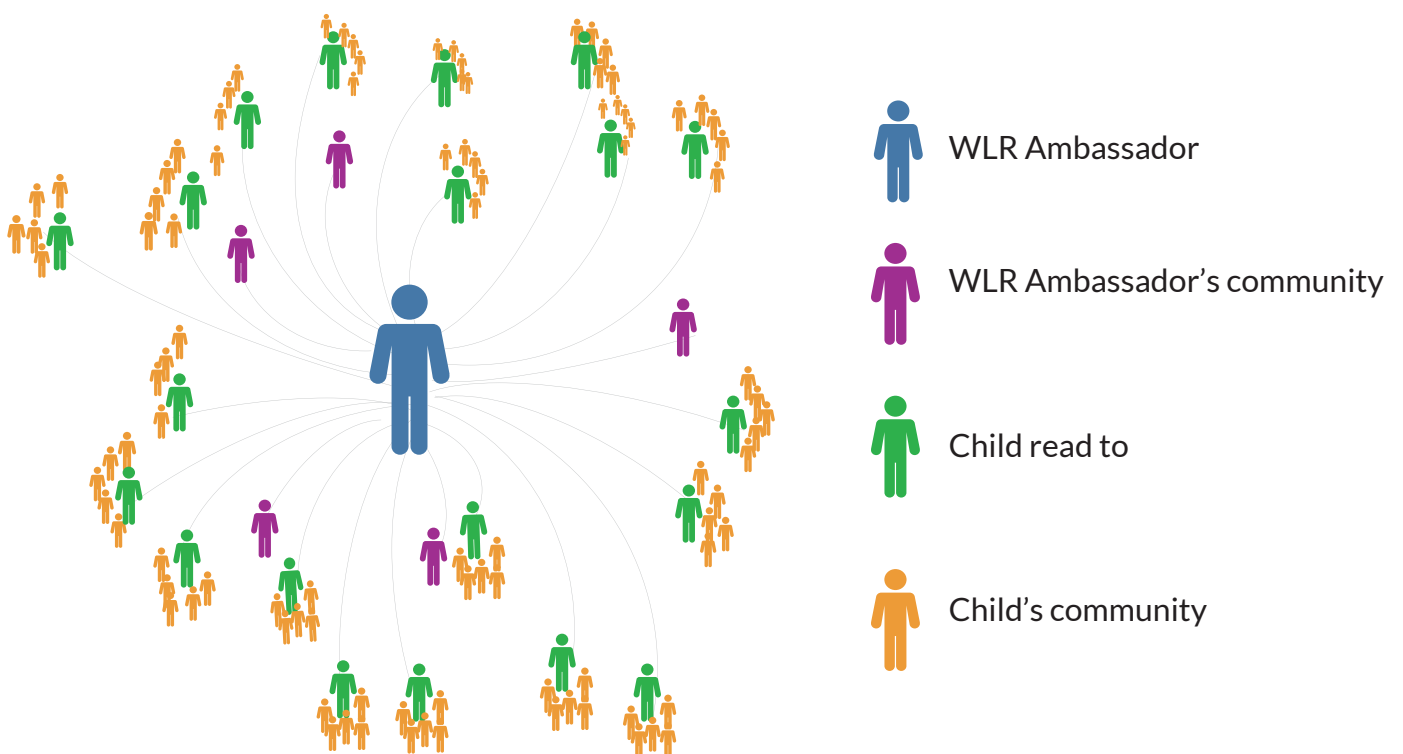
289,242  
Books Distributed.





## We Love Reading as a Social Movement

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



## WE LOVE READING AROUND THE WORLD

### 1. Empowering Refugee Women and Girls Through Reading Initiatives in Uganda



The Association of Refugee Women in Uganda (ARWU), in collaboration with the We Love Reading program and the Home Storyteller organization, recently hosted three screening sessions of the «Neighborhood Storyteller» film in Uganda. These screenings were tailored for various categories of refugees, including adolescents, men, women, leaders, and stakeholders.

These screenings were tailored for various categories of refugees, including adolescents, men, women, leaders, and stakeholders. The events, attended by 200 participants, aimed to inspire personal growth, development, and empowerment among women and girls.

Following the screenings and inspired by WLR Ambassador Asmaa Al-Rashed, the film's protagonist, ARWU conducted two WLR online training sessions and distributed a collection of books to reading ambassadors, helping them begin their journey in reading aloud to children.

### 2. We Love Reading Program Flourishes in Kenya: Siaya Community Library Leads the Way



In a resounding triumph for literacy and education, the Siaya Community Library (SCL) has made remarkable progress in Kenya after implementing the We Love Reading (WLR) program in Africa, heralding a new era of learning and enlightenment across the region.

### 3. Heads of Dar Al-Hikmah Schools in Germany Visit the Headquarters of the WLR Program



As reading is one of the best paths to language immersion and cultural connection, the founders of Dar Al-Hikmah schools in Berlin, Germany, visited the headquarters of “We Love Reading” in Amman to learn about the program’s activities and implement them.

The visit included an engaging discussion with Prof. Rana Dajani about reading and its societal role in promoting literacy, along with a review of the program’s training and children’s book development section, to implement the program and introduce children’s books that reflect Arabic culture in their schools.

The «Dar Al-Hikmah» schools, established by Abdullah Hajjir and Siham Hajjir, with primary goal of teaching Arab children the Arabic language in Germany. Abdullah and Siham Hajjir also participated in the in-person «We Love Reading» training in Jordan. They are currently implementing the program’s reading methodologies in their schools.

### 4. Kids’ Paradise organization implements the WLR program in Syria



In northern Syria, the «Children’s Heaven» organization organized a screening of the documentary “The Neighborhood Storyteller”, alongside collaborating with We Love Reading to implement the program in-person by adopting its strategies, which are grounded in scientific research.

The training aims to equip participants with skills that enable them to read aloud to children in a manner aligned with their goal of supporting children on all fronts.

The Children’s Heaven organization serves as a guiding beacon for vulnerable children, dedicating efforts to providing essential support and fostering a brighter future through proactive initiatives and purposeful actions.

# 72 Countries



- |                           |                       |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Afghanistan. (2018)    | 13. Cyprus. (2017)    | 25. Iran. (2018)      |
| 2. Algeria. (2012)        | 14. Denmark. (2019)   | 26. Iraq. (2011)      |
| 3. Argentina. (2014)      | 15. Egypt. (2012)     | 27. Italy. (2019)     |
| 4. Australia. (2015)      | 16. Ethiopia. (2014)  | 28. Jordan. (2006)    |
| 5. Azerbaijan. (2011)     | 17. France. (2014)    | 29. Kuwait. (2015)    |
| 6. Bangladesh. (2012)     | 18. Germany (2012)    | 30. Lebanon. (2010)   |
| 7. Bahrain. (2020)        | 19. Ghana. (2019)     | 31. Macedonia. (2018) |
| 8. Bolivia. (2014)        | 20. Greece. (2011)    | 32. Malaysia. (2012)  |
| 9. Canada. (2014)         | 21. Guatemala. (2019) | 33. Malawi. (2020)    |
| 10. Central Africa.(2017) | 22. Hong Kong. (2013) | 34. Mali. (2017)      |
| 11. Congo. (2014)         | 23. India. (2019)     | 35. Mexico. (2012)    |
| 12. Costa Rica. (2016)    | 24. Indonesia. (2017) | 36. Morocco. (2012)   |



37.	Mongolia.	(2020)	49.	Sudan.	(2014)	61.	Nigeria.	(2021)
38.	Norway.	(2018)	50.	Sweden.	(2015)	62.	Nicaragua.	(2021)
39.	Oman.	(2012)	51.	Syria.	(2018)	63.	Kenya.	(2022)
40.	Pakistan.	(2016)	52.	Thailand.	(2011)	64.	Cote d'Ivoire	(2022)
41.	Palestine.	(2010)	53.	Tunisia.	(2010)	65.	Benin	(2022)
42.	Panama.	(2019)	54.	Turkey.	(2010)	66.	Burkina Faso	(2023)
43.	Portugal.	(2019)	55.	U.A.E.	(2012)	67.	China	(2023)
44.	Qatar.	(2016)	56.	Uganda.	(2012)	68.	Djibouti	(2023)
45.	Saudi Arabia.	(2011)	57.	U.K.	(2015)	69.	Puerto Rico	(2023)
46.	Sierra Leon.	(2018)	58.	U.S.A.	(2012)	70.	Venezuela	(2024)
47.	Somalia.	(2016)	59.	Vietnam.	(2018)	71.	Cambodia	(2024)
48.	Spain.	(2020)	60.	Yemen.	(2016)	72.	Tanzania	(2024)



# TELLING STORIES THAT SPARK CHANGE

## 1. We Love Reading Program: Fostering Lifelong Learning



“I was seeking to establish a library in the learning center where I work, as a space for reading for pleasure and to change children’s perceptions that reading is only for learning. I found what I was looking for in the We Love Reading program through their training and children’s books,” said Najeh Jarrar, We Love Reading ambassador.

Najeh, a life skills coach at the Makani center, he is also an activist involved in many volunteer activities with various institutions. He recently completed the We Love Reading online training and began conducting reading sessions. Additionally, he held an introductory session for a group of volunteers on the Nahno platform about how to join the program, aiming to spread social work and foster change around him.

## 2. Shaimaa Asfour: Spreading the Joy of Reading in Germany



«After the initial sessions, the children eagerly awaited the reading time, rushing towards me to ask, «What’s the story of today?»» Shaimaa Asfour.

Shaimaa Asfour, Ambassador of We Love Reading, specializes in computer graphics and a mother of two kids, residing in Germany. She is passionate about reading in all fields.

Shaimaa started reading to her children, which made them fall in love with reading and made it a part of their lifestyle. She noticed her children requesting books from her, indicating their enjoyment. Shaimaa received the We Love Reading training earlier this year, believing in the necessity of spreading reading on a broader scale and intending to start the new year with something different.

Shaimaa recounts, «At the beginning, I found difficulty in the first two sessions, especially as the children found the idea strange, but later they began to resonate with the story, rushing towards me to know what the story of the day is».

### 3. How Reading creates a Recipe for Creativity



Reading session in Amman|2024

In the context of sharing inspirational stories that have made a noticeable impact, we present a glimpse of WLR Ambassador Rajaa Kanaan from Amman. Rajaa recently completed We Love Reading's online training on reading aloud to children and has since led numerous reading sessions across various locations.

Kanaan holds a Master's degree in Educational Management. Her work spans multiple fields, including teaching, life skills training, and children's literature writing. Many of her books have been published on Kidzone and in the Jordanian Public Security Department's children's magazine, The Youngest Policeman.

Her activities go beyond this. Rajaa is also the founder of the "Read with My Mom" initiative, through which she encourages children to read and learn, and she organizes children's literature writing workshops.

Kanaan says, "I started the 'Read with My Mom' initiative with the goal of enriching library classes, which have always been neglected in schools. The goal was to make these classes filled with creativity and knowledge from various fields, using innovative methods like changing voices while reading. Through these efforts, the initiative succeeded in making children love library classes, and the secret always lies in changing our communities' attitudes for the better."





Reading session for children from Gaza in Amman

Snapshots from reading sessions coordinated with We Love Reading Ambassador Rajaa Kanaan to hold read-aloud sessions for children from Gaza receiving treatment at the King Hussein Cancer Center in Amman.

Kanaan says: «It is important that reading remains a part of our children's lives. It is a human necessity that fills our free time with activities that help us improve our living conditions, broaden our horizons, and enhance how we deal with the events and challenges we face».



## 4. We Love Reading Brings Ambassadors Together to Drive Change



The We Love Reading training brought together ambassadors Suzanne Strallah and Sanaa Samara to organize reading sessions, each utilizing her unique skills. After completing the training, Suzanne began conducting reading sessions as part of the “Wamdat” initiative, established in Saudi Arabia by Sanaa. Through this initiative, she hosts various cultural events, invites authors, conducts training workshops, and organizes storytelling activities for children.

“After participating in the We Love Reading training, I realized the importance of reading stories aloud to children and learned the best techniques for storytelling to directly connect with the child’s heart and achieve the goal of creating a generation that loves reading,” Sanaa states.



## 5. Reading to Revive Identity in War Zones



«The erosion of identity and cultural heritage prompted me to think of ways to instill cultural values in our children. Not only is our heritage and its importance fading from our lives, but there is also a lack of suitable content for children to read about it». said Raghad Jouhar.

Amid the ongoing war and the challenge of preserving civilization and inherited culture, Raghad was motivated to turn to reading for children as a means of immersing them in their heritage.

Raghad Jouhar, a WLR ambassador in Syria, is an engineer. She utilized the online training to achieve her goal of conducting read-aloud sessions for children. She observed that the storytelling approach, successfully captured the children’s attention—a fact evident when they began eagerly awaiting the reading sessions.



## AWARDS

### Skoll Fellow at Skoll World Forum



Prof. Rana Dajani has been chosen to join the Skoll Fellowship. The fellowship culminates in a gathering at the Skoll World Forum in Oxford, where Dajani recently had the opportunity to engage in discussions on two significant topics. In one session, she showcased the innovative work of We Love Reading through the lens of the “Neighborhood Storyteller” movie, highlighting the organization’s efforts to promote reading for children in communities.

## COLLABORATIONS

### «How to Time Travel» an Exhibition Funded by Taghyeer Organization and Rights for Time Network



Taghyeer, a nonprofit organization, collaborates with the Ministry of Culture aims to create a healthy, vibrant society by empowering people to think critically and lead the change they seek in their communities. Taghyeer strives to improve the cultural, social, psychological, and educational wellbeing of children, youth, and women across Jordan by developing entrepreneurial capabilities through hands-on training that is grounded in research and real-life experiences.

With funding and support from Taghyeer organization and Rights for Time, a research network, an exhibition titled “How to Time Travel” has been organized at the MMAG Foundation in the capital of Amman.

The exhibition presents a series of commissioned and selected works that explore themes of estrangement and displacement and propose ways in which the dimension of time conditions re-orientation and belonging.

## CONFERENCES

### 1. We Love Reading Participates in UNESCO's Celebration of International Literacy Day 2024

Under the theme “Promoting Multilingual Education: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace,” the International Literacy Day (ILD) 2024 celebration took place on September 9th and 10th in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The event brought together global leaders, educators, and experts to explore the role of literacy in fostering peace, social cohesion, and multilingual education.

Prof. Rana Dajani, founder of the “We Love Reading” program and a member of UNESCO's International Literacy Prize Jury, moderated two pivotal panel discussions during the event, emphasizing the critical role of literacy in multilingual societies and its power to promote mutual understanding.

During the event, Prof. Dajani initiated a moment of silence in respect for the people, including teachers and professors, in Gaza and other conflict-affected regions who face barriers to education.

The ILD 2024 celebration also featured the award ceremony for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes, alongside side events and discussions on literacy policies and programs that can support lifelong learning and peacebuilding. Prof. Dajani's contributions helped underscore the transformative potential of literacy in fostering peace and mutual respect across cultures.

Watch the event. Dr. Rana Dajani's speech in a video begins at 5:54.





## 2. The We Love Reading Program, Engages in Dubai's Inaugural “Reading for Pleasure” Conference

During Dubai's inaugural Reading for Pleasure Conference held on May 2024, Prof. Dajani showcased her insights and expertise in three pivotal sessions.

In the first session titled «Implementing Reading for Pleasure within a Cultural Framework», Prof. Dajani provided perspectives on how cultural norms and barriers influence the reality of reading for pleasure. Drawing from her experience in promoting literacy and fostering a love for reading, she offered best practices to overcome challenges.

Continuing her engagement, Dajani participated in another session titled «Everyone is a Changemaker: Changing Mindsets Through Reading to Nurture Changemakers». Here, she explored the transformative power of reading in shifting mindsets and nurturing changemakers.

Finally, Dr. Dajani contributed to the enlightening “Researchers Round Table,” where she joined scholars to explore the foundational role of research in understanding children's development, cognition, and reading habits, in addition to pathways for shaping policies and pedagogical approaches to enhance literacy education.



### 3. WLR Program Participates in the Events of Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Week



Prof. Rana Dajani participated in Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Week, organized in collaboration with the WED Forum in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The event aimed to enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange among partners in the field of early childhood development.

Additionally, the event featured meaningful discussions on early childhood development, where Prof. Dajani, alongside over 60 experts, participated in specialized sessions covering key topics such as effective parenting, culture and identity, and sustainable, family-friendly cities.

In a session titled «Culture and Identity,» Dajani highlighted the We Love Reading program's role in fostering culture and identity in children through read-aloud sessions conducted by volunteers trained to read in the mother language which one of the program's main points. She also emphasized the importance of WLR children's books, which illustrate and convey local culture to children, fostering their connection to it.

### 4. WLR at the Sharjah International Book Fair



«Every Story Holds Value and a Message for Future Generations»

In a session titled «Women and Writing» at the 43rd edition of the Sharjah International Book Fair, Prof. Rana Dajani, was joined by Algerian novelist Fayrouz Risham, Moroccan writer and critic Rashida Benmassoud, and Moroccan novelist Rabi'a Rayhan.

Prof. Rana concluded her speech by stating that, although she does not consider herself a traditional writer, she insisted on documenting her own story in her book «Five Scarves, Doing the Impossible» to inspire women and youth to share their own stories, as every story carries value and a message for future generations that deserves to be told.

## 5. WLR Program Shares Insights at the Global Shapers Annual Summit



Prof. Rana Dajani, a Schwab Social Innovator and the founder and director of the WLR program, participated in the Global Shapers Annual Summit in Geneva, Switzerland.

The event brought together over 500 young leaders from around the world. The Global Shapers Community is a vibrant network of over 10,000 inspiring young leaders from more than 500 city-based hubs in over 150 countries.

Prof. Rana participated in a session titled “Initiative Deep Dives” along with a group of social innovators. The panelists shared their stories, why they built their organization, what challenges they face, and how it differs from one generation to the next, which also included interactive dialogue to highlight what each generation of social innovators can learn from each other.

## 6. Inspiring Change Beyond Borders: WLR participated at Al Sharq Youth Conference



Under the title “Beyond Borders” and with the presence of a group of inspiring speakers from around the world, Prof. Rana Dajani participated in Al Sharq Youth Conference, held over two days in October in Gaziantep, Turkey.

Dajani’s participation consisted of two sessions over the two days. The first session, titled “The Human: Divinely-Designed Changemakers,

discussed how youth can be active designers for change, dedicated to humanitarian roles and a clear vision to guide younger generations towards building sustainable communities and development.

The other session, titled “Social Innovation for Global Inclusion,” Dajani provided examples and inspiring experiences about how social innovation can support inclusion and create sustainable solutions for complex problems.



## 7. We Love Reading at the 11th World Science Forum



In gathering leaders and representatives of the global science and science policy communities, Prof. Rana Dajani participated in the 11th World Science Forum held in November 2024 in Budapest, Hungary. Alongside other speakers, Dajani participated in two sessions: “Utilizing the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD) Effectively for

Accelerated Sustainable Development in Developing Countries.”

The other session Dajani contributed to was a thematic session titled “Education for Sustainable Development”, where Dajani illustrated the challenges and transformative potential of promoting reading in conflict-ridden and socially disrupted environments, demonstrated how early education can build resilience.

## 8. We Love Reading at the Learning Beyond Conference



Dr. Rana Dajani, founder of We Love Reading, spoke at the Learning Beyond Conference, which included discussion sessions titled “How Stories Can Become the School of Life?”, while the second about the documentary film “The Neighborhood Storyteller”.

Dajani and a group of speakers discussed the value of storytelling at the King AbdulAziz Center for World Culture (Ithra).

In order to enrich society, how can storytelling impact learning and life? And how can become the school of life? While the second session showcased the international award-winning film which documented the journey of We Love Reading ambassador Asmaa Al-Rashed.



## **9.WLR participated in the «Truth in Digital Media» Conference**

Under the auspices of the Jordanian Minister of Government Communications, represented by Dr. Zeid Al-Nawaisa, Secretary-General of the Ministry, Prof. Rana Dajani, participated in the conference entitled «Truth in Digital Media - Attitudes and Influential Experiences in Collective Thinking», held at the Royal Cultural Centre and organized by the Forum for Scientific and Creative Competencies , under the management of its director, Dr. Yehya Aeshan.

Prof. Dajani introduced the We Love Reading program and its role in keeping up with the digital world. She highlighted the program's strategy to adopt digital media for expansion and communication, focusing on spreading awareness about the importance of reading and providing accessible online training. This approach has contributed to the global dissemination of the program, while also fostering a global community of reading leaders through digital platforms. Ambassadors can communicate, exchange ideas, and offer support via these networks.

The Creative Club - Karak, represented by Engineer Husam Al Tarawneh, was honored as the creator of the entrepreneurial idea due to the club's contribution to radical change in the local community at the level of Karak governorate and Jordan in the field of technology.

# THE NEIGHBORHOOD STORYTELLER DOCUMENTARY

## Asmaa Al-Rashed a WLR Ambassador Featured in the Neighborhood Storyteller Documentary

The war forced Asmaa to leave Syria and marry at the age of 16. However, after receiving We Love Reading training held at the Zaatari refugee camp, Asmaa rebuilt her identity, becoming the «Neighborhood Storyteller». She began using read-aloud sessions for children as a bridge to address pressing issues in her new community in the camp in Jordan.

Six years later, as her eldest daughter reached adolescence, Asmaa reflected on her own deprivation of education, which inspired her to launch an initiative to train teenage girls to read aloud to children. This initiative aimed to create a future filled with opportunities that Asmaa herself lacked at their age.

Asmaa's initiative, Let's Read was selected by the UNHCR's Innovation Fund from among 3,300 applications received this year, with only 26 projects chosen. Asmaa's project stood out among them. The initiative aims to provide educational tools for youth in the Zaatari refugee camp, with a special focus on girls and women.

As the world continues to grapple with the complexities of refugee crises and displacement, initiatives like «Let's Read» serve as a beacon of hope, emphasizing the importance of innovative solutions and collaborative efforts in paving the way for a brighter future, even in the most challenging circumstances.





For Asmaa, We Love Reading served as the bridge that brought her back to the path of her dreams, empowering her and reinforcing the sense of «I can» within her. This transformative feeling has grown among many ambassadors who, through organizing read-aloud sessions and reshaping the thinking patterns of their communities, have realized that they have the power to do and change more than they ever thought possible.

This is the philosophy of We Love Reading, which is rooted in research and scientific studies in collaboration with global institutions and research universities. Asmaa's story deserved to be told and has inspired many through the documentary to search for their path through social work, which We Love Reading considers a duty for every individual—every person is capable of change through simple means.

The documentary "Neighborhood Storyteller" is presented by The Big Heart Foundation, directed by Alejandra Alca, and produced by HOME storytellers, a non-profit organization dedicated to producing films about sustainable solutions for refugee issues. The documentary has inspired audiences to engage in We Love Reading training and adopt its methodology. It has received 52 official selections in 25 countries and 11 awards, and is available with subtitles in different languages.

The documentary was officially selected for the New York Women's Film Festival, reached the semifinals at the Flickers Rhode Island International Film Festival, was a semifinalist at the Atlanta Film Awards, and reached the finals at the Dublin Independent Film Festival.

Coinciding with the release of the documentary, Asmaa's story was also embodied in the children's book "My Mama's Magic", developed by the Children's Literature Department at We Love Reading, and available in both Arabic and English.





# 1 Million Asmaas Initiative

## - Organizing a Free Screening of the Documentary:

Due to the overwhelming demand for We Love Reading training and the communities across the world requesting screenings of the documentary, We Love Reading, in partnership with Home Storytellers, has launched the «Million Asma» initiative to unleash the potential within individuals. This initiative is linked to the documentary \*Neighborhood Storyteller\*, which offers a free screening opportunity followed by specialized training in the science of reading aloud to children. The goal of the «Million Asmaas» initiative is to encourage individuals and institutions to engage in enriching our communities, nurturing a love of reading among our children, and emphasizing the role of every individual in addressing the issues around them.

## - Accessing We Love Reading Training for Free:

We Love Reading has always been a collective movement, expanding its impact endlessly without stopping. We have witnessed the impact of We Love Reading through our ambassador Asmaa Al-Rashed, whose transformation was not only personal but also sparked change in her community. Asmaa's inspiring story is depicted in the documentary \*Neighborhood Storyteller\*, which raised awareness about the need for reading among all who watched her story. This led to the birth of a million new Asmas, all reading, but with different stories to tell.

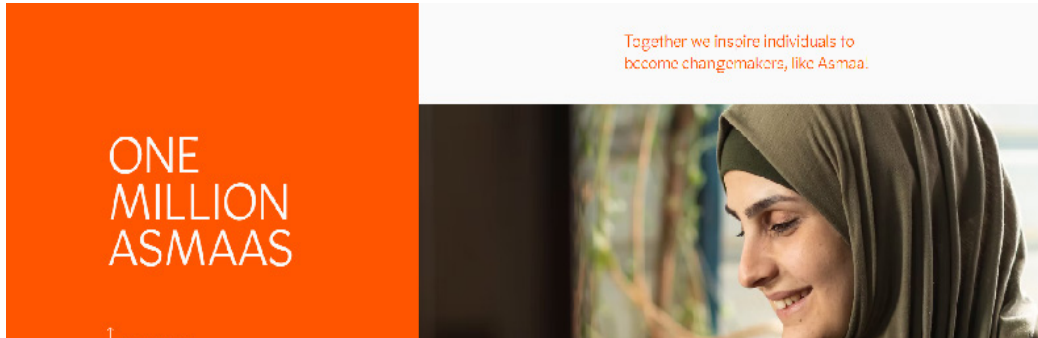
## -Signing the Collaboration Memorandum for Organizations and Individuals:

Organizations and individuals are invited to register for the opportunity to sign a collaboration memorandum and receive a free screening, whether individually or by organizing a screening for your community or institution joining our partnership. After the screening, the audience will have the chance to join the We Love Reading online training and receive a certificate for completing the training in reading aloud. They will also gain access to an unlimited community of We Love Reading ambassadors in 71 countries around the world.

After applying, we will guide you in organizing the screening and implementing the We Love Reading program.

**-Together, we inspire individuals to become changemakers, just like Asmaa!**





## 1. Robert Bosch Academy Spotlights We Love Reading and «The Neighborhood Storyteller» in Empowering Marginalized Groups.



The Robert Bosch Academy, an institution of the Robert Bosch Foundation dedicated to fostering collaboration on global issues, recently hosted an event aimed at amplifying the voices of marginalized groups through civil society initiatives. A stage talk took place featuring Alejandra Alcala, director of «The Neighborhood Storyteller»,

and Asmaa Rashed, protagonist of «The Neighborhood Storyteller» and ambassador of We Love Reading.

The discussion, moderated by Prof. Rana Dajani, founder of We Love Reading and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy, highlighted the pivotal role of programs like We Love Reading in empowering marginalized group.

## 2. Cross-Border Collaboration Interest



From the screen to the audience, we became closer with our stories and ideas.

Since its launch in late 2024, the «\*Million Asma\*» initiative has witnessed tremendous interest, with cooperation agreements signed with several institutions and organizations around the world, including in the UK, Turkey, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Malawi, Egypt, and numerous organizations in Jordan.

These agreements were made to organize exclusive screenings of the documentary, attended by groups of women and men in an atmosphere full of inspiration and enthusiasm.

The star of the documentary and We Love Reading ambassador, Asmaa Al-Rashed, joined the audience to discuss the film and share thoughts and ideas about her journey of change. Following the screening, in collaboration with institutions, attendees move on to the second phase of the initiative by receiving We Love Reading training and joining the ambassador network on the WhatsApp community. The team continues to follow up and stay in touch with them, sharing their stories and helping them overcome any challenges they may face.

## OUR RESEARCH

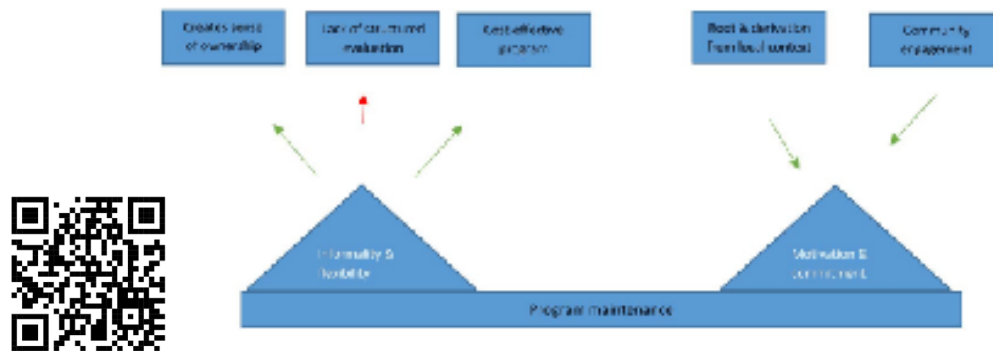


Figure 1. The balance between two relevant factors in order to achieve long-term program maintenance.

### 1. Exploring Factors Related to the Development and Implementation of a Local Intervention Program for Syrian Refugee Children

A recent study has been published exploring the impact of We Love Reading (WLR) on Syrian refugee children in Jordan. The study sheds light on factors crucial to the development and implementation of a local intervention program for Syrian refugee children.

Among the many interventions designed to improve educational and developmental outcomes of Syrian refugee children, the study primarily focuses on the factors that helped WLR Ambassadors to commit to and sustain their read-aloud sessions. It further discusses how these factors could be applied to other interventions for long-term sustainability.

The study identifies key insights about WLR as a community-led, shared book-reading program developed in Jordan by a Jordanian-run NGO. Through the analysis of 21 semi-structured interviews with individuals who either developed the WLR program or were involved in its implementation.

The results show that participants emphasized that achieving a balance between two main factors helped with the long-term maintenance and sustainability of the program: the informality and flexibility of the program on the one hand and creating the necessary motivation and commitment in volunteers on the other. Future programs that wish to attain long-term sustainability may benefit from creating a more engaging and incentivizing structure of motivation for their volunteers.

Bakhti, R., Mareschal, I., El Kharouf, A., Dajani, R., Qtaishat, L., von Stumm, S., & Hadfield, K. (2024). Exploring Factors Related to the Development and Implementation of a Local Intervention Program for Syrian Refugee Children. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*.





## 2. Effectiveness of a community-led shared book reading intervention in Syrian refugee children: a randomised controlled trial

A recent study published in Scientific Reports magazine assessed the impact of the “We Love Reading” (WLR) program—a community-led shared book reading program, developed in Jordan and implemented by the Taghyeer Foundation, led by Prof. Rana Dajani. It was designed to promote children’s love of reading, empower participants to become changemakers in their communities, the study assessed the impact of the program on Syrian refugee children in Jordan. Conducted as a pre-registered, wait-listed randomized controlled trial, the study involved 322 mother–child dyads, with children aged 8–4. The trial measured the program’s impact on children’s literacy, attitudes toward reading, and family relationships.

Data were collected at two points: before the intervention and immediately after, approximately 3.5 months apart. The study revealed that mothers reported a slight improvement in their children’s attitudes toward reading, with the difference approaching statistical significance. In conclusion, the study shows that the We Love Reading program shows promise in improving mother-reported attitudes toward reading but did not lead to significant changes in children’s literacy, their own attitudes toward reading, or overall family relationships. To enhance the effectiveness of literacy programs, more interactive or intensive approaches may be needed. Further research is necessary to fully understand how shared book reading programs can best support the development of displaced children.

Hadfield K, Al-Hamad M, Dajani R, El Kharouf A, Michalek J, Qtaishat L, von Stumm S, Mareschal I. Effectiveness of a community-led shared book reading intervention in Syrian refugee children: a randomised controlled trial. *Sci Rep.* 2024 Aug 17;14(1):14141. doi: 10.1038/s-024-41598-9-68903. PMID: 39090188; PMCID: PMC11294350.



### **3. Volunteer programs, empowerment, and life satisfaction in Jordan: mapping local knowledge and systems change to inform public policy and science diplomacy**

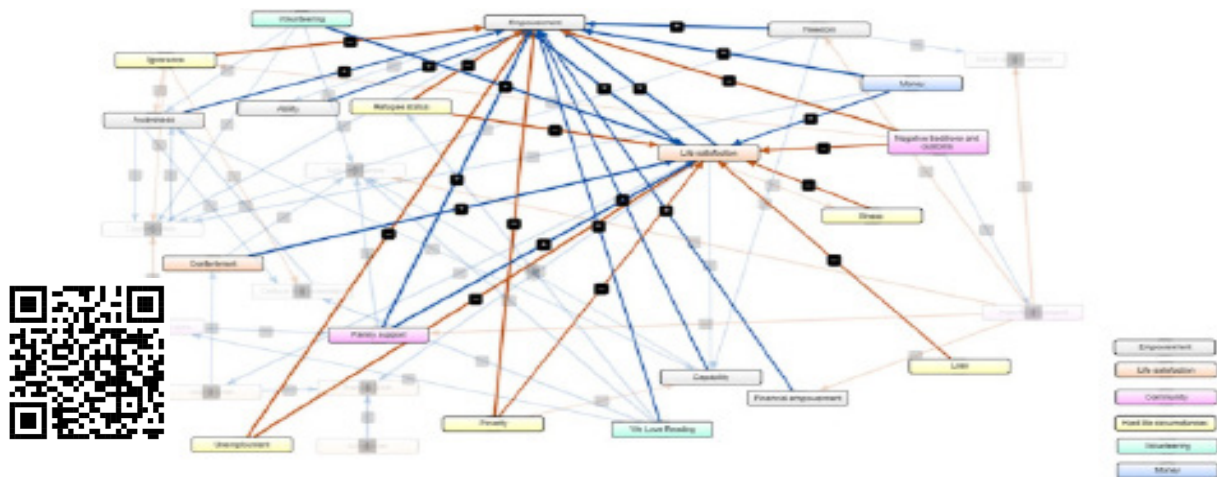
A recent collaborative study conducted by Yale University, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), and Taghyeer sheds light on the nuanced perceptions of empowerment and life satisfaction among Syrian and Jordanian women residing in Amman, Jordan.

Utilizing fuzzy cognitive mapping (FCM) sessions, a participatory approach allowing for the visualization and measurement of participants' understanding and causal logic, the study engaged 37 women in exploring their conceptions of empowerment and life satisfaction. Through this process, the women articulated diverse dimensions of empowerment, encompassing cultural, financial, psychological, and social aspects. Similarly, life satisfaction was described as rooted in contentment, acceptance, and fulfillment, often derived from faith and gratitude for life's blessings.

The participants identified various factors influencing empowerment and life satisfaction, establishing both positive and negative connections among them. Tangible elements like financial stability and family support, as well as abstract concepts such as self-confidence, were considered significant factors. By assigning relative weights to these connections, ranging from 1- to 1+, the women provided insights into the relative importance of each factor.

The study revealed that volunteering, particularly through the We Love Reading program, played a crucial role in enhancing women's psychological and cultural empowerment. By participating in this program, women gained opportunities to educate themselves and actively contribute to their communities, fostering a sense of agency and fulfillment. Additionally, improvements in education, employment, and financial resources were found to positively impact women's empowerment and overall life satisfaction.

Panter-Brick C, Qtaishat L, Eggerman JJ, Thomas H, Kumar P, Dajani R. Volunteer programs, empowerment, and life satisfaction in Jordan: mapping local knowledge and systems change to inform public policy and science diplomacy. *Front Sociol.* 2024 May 9;1371760;30. doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2024.1371760. PMID: 38873342; PMCID: PMC11170447.



#### 4. Does volunteering impact refugee women's life satisfaction, empowerment, and wellbeing? Experimental evidence, local knowledge, and causal reasoning.

This research evaluates the impact of volunteering programs on the life satisfaction, empowerment, and wellbeing of Syrian refugee women in Amman, Jordan. Using systematic methods, the study assessed the We Love Reading program, which trains volunteers to read aloud in local communities.

Through a randomized cluster trial involving 105 participants, the study found significant improvements in life satisfaction over a year. Through using thematic analyses and fuzzy cognitive mapping which clarified how life satisfaction and empowerment are affected by the different factors and their impact on the over all system, volunteering appeared to positively impact both of them and promote social inclusion and wellbeing among refugee women.

The research underscores the need for culturally-relevant methodologies to understand the effectiveness of volunteering initiatives like We Love Reading program and their potential to generate social change. Additionally, the study identifies key meanings of empowerment as discussed by the women during the session including ability, proof of existence, freedom, self-confidence, and determination, as well as key meanings of life-satisfaction including adaptation, acceptance, and contentment. Women have also identified critical factors contributing to empowerment, life satisfaction and wellbeing of Syrian refugee women.

Overall, the research offers valuable insights into how volunteering can impact the lives of Syrian refugee women, emphasizing the importance of local contexts and women's perspectives in designing effective volunteer programs aimed at enhancing empowerment and wellbeing.

Panter-Brick C, Eggerman JJ, Jefferies P, Qtaishat L, Dajani R, Kumar P. Does volunteering impact refugee women's life satisfaction, empowerment, and wellbeing? Experimental evidence, local knowledge, and causal reasoning. *Soc Sci Med.* 2024 Apr;347:116735. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.116735. Epub 2024 Mar 2. PMID: 38552338.



## Father Involvement and Child Development: A Prospective Study of Syrian Refugee Families

A recent study delving into Syrian refugee families with young children sheds light on an intriguing yet concerning aspect of parental dynamics. The research found that fathers in these families often perceived themselves as deeply involved parents, contrary to their wives' perspectives.

Published in the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, the study uncovered a significant correlation between spousal disagreement over paternal involvement and developmental shortfalls in children's social and emotional learning (SEL). Interestingly, the level of actual fatherly engagement had no discernible impact on these outcomes.

The findings underscore the critical role of family dynamics in shaping children's well-being during forced displacement. Disagreement between spouses over caregiving roles not only strained maternal mental health but also detrimentally affected children's SEL, crucial for effective coping and learning.

The study's implications extend beyond Syrian refugee families, suggesting that interventions targeting parental communication and caregiving negotiation could significantly enhance children's mental health and social-emotional development. This insight holds promise for supporting families navigating stressful circumstances, fostering healthier environments for children's growth and well-being.

Garcia, Italo Lopez, Lia CH Fernald, Frances E. Aboud, Ronald Otieno, Edith Alu, and Jill E. Luoto. «Father involvement and early child development in a low-resource setting.» *Social science & medicine* 114933 :(2022) 302.



## Activities of the Research and Studies Department

### 1. We Love Reading Invited to Yale University Colloquium, «Building Peace Across Generations»



The Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs recently hosted a colloquium titled «Building Peace Across Generations», where Lina Qtaishat, projects manager at We Love Reading (WLR), represented the program at the colloquium, which brought together international scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to discuss and identify key issues, case studies, and lessons learned related to intergenerational peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts.

Lina's contribution to the colloquium was as a technical consultant for multiple teams from Yale University (USA), Queen's University Belfast (UK), UPEACE (Costa Rica), and UNDP, in mapping everyday peace factors and drivers and localizing the knowledge using the fuzzy cognitive mapping (FCM) methodology.

### 2. WLR Program Conducts Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping Sessions at Zayed University in the UAE



Lina Qtaishat, research projects manager at the We Love Reading Program, conducted two sessions on the fuzzy cognitive mapping (FCM) methodology with students at Zayed University for both Dubai and Abu Dhabi campuses.

During these sessions, students were guided to map and visualize their understanding of the concepts of agency and life satisfaction. They also engaged in an in-depth discussion about the factors that impact these concepts.

These sessions were part of the social innovation project led by Dr. Dina Tbaishat, in collaboration with Dr. Rana Dajani, the founder of We Love Reading Program. The project aims to nurture changemakers among Emirati women who became WLR ambassadors by fostering the culture of reading aloud to children.

Yale

Fuzzy Cognitive mapping- training video 1

## Introduction to Conducting Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping (FCM)

By Lina Qtaishat  
Research Manager, Taghyeer



Audio Transcript Chat Messages

Q Search transcript

current part, and the area for more and more extensive experience as a as a journalist and researcher especially in the Middle east.

bisa williams 11:01

I'm sorry, Mark, for not recognizing your name. Okay

Lina Qtaishat 11:06

okay

### 3. We Love Reading Program, Conducted a Remote Workshop on Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping.

Lina Qtaishat, Research Projects Manager at Taghyeer, conducted remote workshop on the Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping methodology (FCM) for an audience comprising professors, students, and representatives of an international organizations from Yale University-USA.

The workshop encompassed an Introduction of fuzzy cognitive mapping as an innovative approach for conducting qualitative and semi-qualitative research as well as how to utilize it and use it in different contexts. Lina emphasized that what makes this method unique is its reliance on the input from the research participants concerning the set of factors and actors that form a particular system, their interrelationships and connections, and the numeric positive and negative impacts they may have on each other.

This methodology offers the opportunity to visualize cognitive maps of the participants using graphs that feed into the analysis of the mental models and possible systems of change.



#### **4. Taghyeer and Mercy Corps organized a presentation on research results concerning puberty, presented by anthropologist Delaney Glass**

Taghyeer organization arranged a presentation in collaboration with Mercy Corps, the presentation featured anthropologist Delaney Glass, who discuss her research and findings on hormones, puberty, and the psychological pressures faced by Jordanian and Syrian adolescents.

The event was held at the Mercy Corps office, attended by a group of interested individuals and participants who were involved in the research whose results were discussed.

The research was conducted from 2015 to 2018 with the support and collaboration of Taghyeer, Yale university and Mercy Corps as part of the Nubader project.

During the presentation, Glass discussed several scientific and academic aspects, as well as the research tools used. She also addressed topics such as early puberty and the relationship between nutrition and development affecting certain hormones in adolescents.

Glass pointed out that early puberty should not necessarily be viewed as a problem and discussed the associative factors within specific communities that impact adolescents.

## CHILDREN'S BOOK 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, relevancy to the children's culture and background, language, and age-appropriateness. In creating the books, WLR collaborates with local writers, illustrators, designers, and publishers. All content is reviewed by education consultants as well as consultants within the respective content themes. Thus far, WLR has created 38 children's books covering a variety of themes, including environmental awareness, empathy, gender, non-violence, disabilities, and refugees. As of 2024, WLR has distributed more than 295,000 books all over Jordan.

**We Love Reading has developed 38 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
7. Climate Change



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



In addition to the 38 books We Love Reading has produced a series of guide books on different topics:



**How To Write Children Story Books**





## 1. «Queen of Balloons» Awards the Longlist for the Sheikh Zayed Book Award



The children's book «The Balloon Queen» by author Lina Quteishat has been longlisted for the Sheikh Zayed Book Award in the Children's Literature and Young Adults category, selected from over 4,000 submissions.

The storybook "Queen of Balloons" authored by Lina Qtaishat, illustrated by the Egyptian artist Ali Al-Zaine and produced and published by the We Love Reading Program.

Lina Qtaishat is an architect, a researcher and a projects manager at We Love Reading, with a keen interest in the arts and literature. Her story resonated widely among the program's ambassadors and has received significant attention. The book addresses crucial and modern topics related to climate change and water issues, shedding light on important innovations.

## 2. We Love Reading Publications at the Amman International Book Fair



The We Love Reading section, hosted under Dar Al-Manhal at the 2024 Amman International Book Fair, attracted significant attention from visitors. The program's collection of children's literature, particularly books addressing various issues and challenges relevant to children's lives, garnered notable interest from readers.

This year, We Love Reading participated with over 35 titles. In addition to showcasing the program's publications, the month included special reading events during which numerous books were distributed to ambassadors from around the world who had completed the training.

The current edition of the Amman International Book Fair featured many activities. Through our platforms, we actively promoted the event to encourage ambassadors to integrate their children into cultural movements and explore titles that captivate their children's interests.

## PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA

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.
6. Establishing We Love Reading Libraries.
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's author

Prof. Rana Dajani,

Founder of We Love Reading.

Download the book:



Innovating for learning: How two innovators made access to books and education more inclusive



How do you keep calm and carry on in a world full of crises?



A Journey of an Arab Scientist Who Created Ambassadors of Change.



Agency and Ownership are Key to Sustainability



We Love Reading in Manhajiyat Magazine.

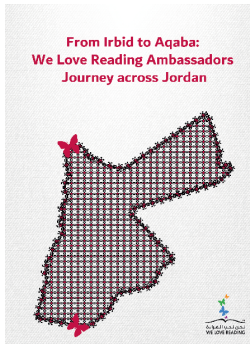


Dr. Rana Dajani | Founder and Director of the "We Love Reading" organization in an interview with Al Araby TV.



## 1- Magazines

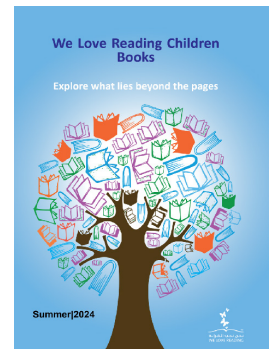
The First Issue: From Irbid To Aqaba: We Love Reading Ambassadors Journey Across Jordan



The Second Issue: We Love Reading in Gaza: Where There are No Children Left to Read to.

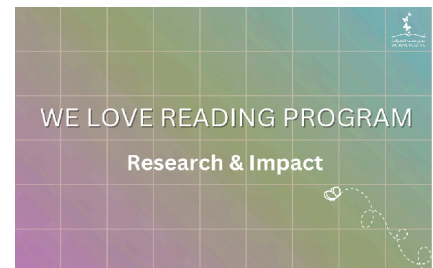


The Third Issue: We Love Reading Children Books: Discover What Lies Beyond the Pages.



## 2- Reports

The We Love Reading Research & Impact Report is out now, offering comprehensive insights into WLR's research component!



## 3- Policy Brief





## AREAS OF IMPACT AND SDGs

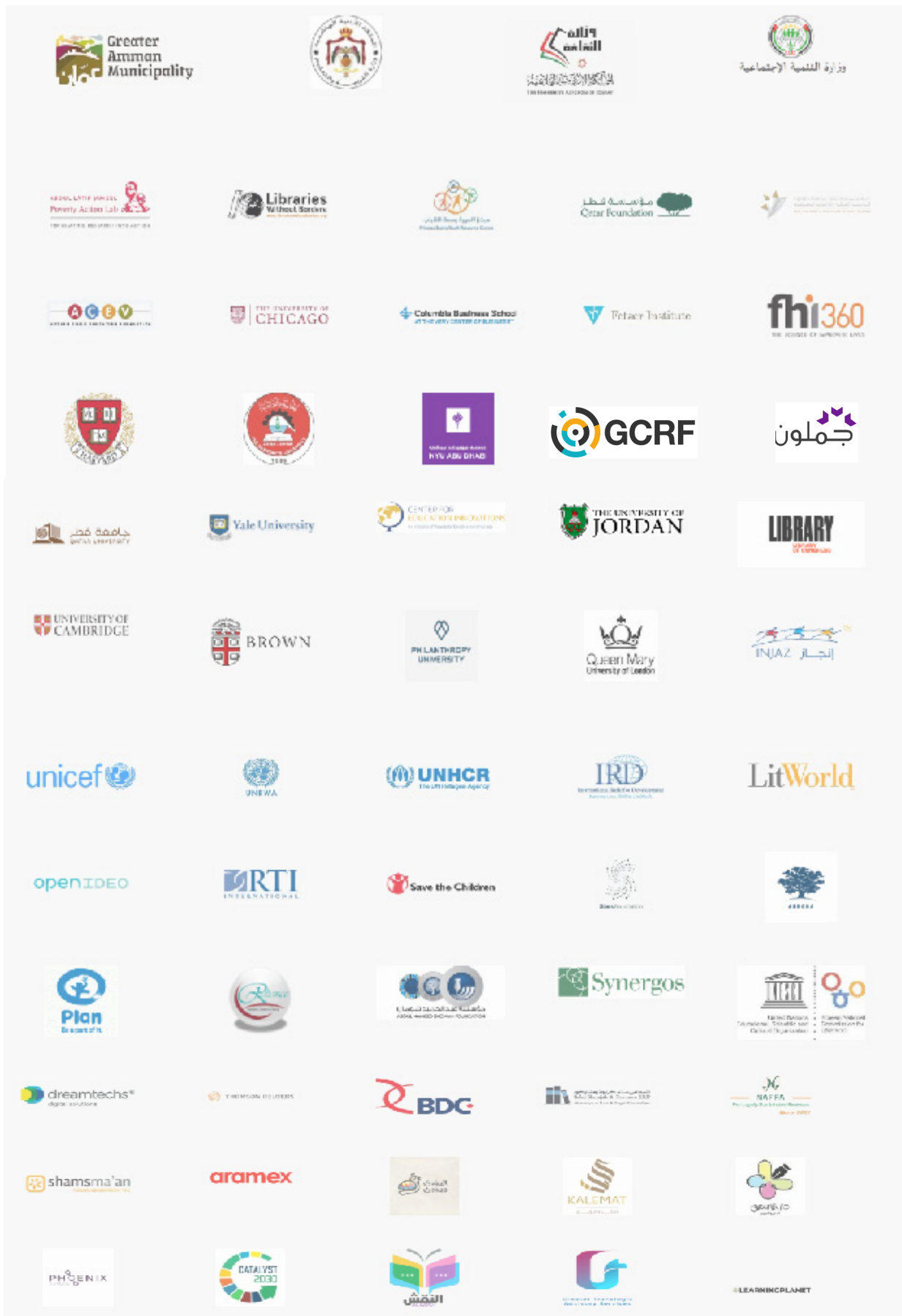
### Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

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



## Partners and Funders

### The Korean Government - UNESCO



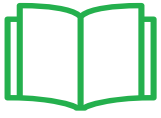
### A Delegation from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO Visited Jordan to Explore WLR Activities

A delegation from the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, led by Ms. Sunkyung Lee and Ms. Yura Oh, recently visited to observe the We Love Reading activities. Throughout their visit, the We Love Reading program team provided a comprehensive overview of the program's conceptual framework and practical implementation.

The delegation had the opportunity to participate in a reading aloud session facilitated by Nisreen Abu Malih, the program's ambassador for children at the Gaza Camp Center association. This allowed them to familiarize themselves with the program's participants and witness its ongoing activities. Additionally, Ambassador Israa Al-Masry hosted a reading session at her residence in the Jerash Governorate, engaging around thirty boys and girls.

A luncheon invitation extended by the Korean ambassador was attended by the project manager, Engineer Lina Qtaishat, who provided a concise overview of the program. Ms. Sunkyung Lee, the Director of the Department of International Cooperation Programs, expressed her admiration for the We Love Reading program, noting that it surpassed her expectations in terms of its effectiveness, impact, and the number of children actively participating in reading sessions. She emphasized the importance of such child-supportive programs in societies.

## 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:



Buy our books:



Donate:







Thank you...

Our program's mission to highlight, protect, and promote reading and its impact is more important than ever. However, we cannot do it alone. Your support and participation in our ambassador-led programs around the world make a difference every day. As change-makers, you contribute to reshaping your communities, nurturing a generation connected to cultural treasures through books, and inspiring them to become the scientists and storytellers who will lead the way in building a better future.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission.

## Reading Session in a Tent in Gaza

«Children must learn, even in the heart of the fire, that there are basic needs. Children currently carry the burdens of fetching water, sitting in a tent, fleeing bombardments, enduring sudden displacement, and facing constant instability. All of this can strip the children of their value system, which is the most important thing we possess and keeps us rooted in our land. After more than a year of destruction amidst the silence of the world.»

This is how Hiba Abed, the We Love Reading Ambassador in Gaza, described the situation. Hiba started holding reading sessions for children in Gaza, which she described as spiritual nourishment for them, teaching them from the depths of destruction that the war is fought within their minds and instilling in them a commitment to values, no matter the challenges they face.

Hiba learned about the program as a biology teacher who had attended several sessions led by Dr. Rana Dajani, the program's founder, discussing biology and the role of We Love Reading as an intervention that impacts communities on many levels, as proven by research and studies. Despite being unable to fully access the online training due to Gaza's exclusion from many services, including internet access, and despite the lack of stories and basic living necessities, Hiba used tent fabric to establish a learning center for children. She downloaded a few children's stories available on the We Love Reading website to read to them.

Hiba was profoundly influenced by the philosophy of We Love Reading and its importance at all times and in all places for instilling values in children, releasing emotional anger, and changing children's behavior. She shares: «Children in Gaza are born without access to basic needs, but we cannot abandon our beliefs as well. The meanings of things have changed for children; rain, which once brought joy, has become a source of anxiety and fear of flooding. That is just one of the simplest examples.»

Like the rest of Gaza's residents, Hiba endures all forms of genocide. She says: «We are its generation, its witnesses, and its victims. There isn't a single family that hasn't suffered loss; some have lost every member of their family and all their possessions, leaving them alone to endure grief and pain. But we remain connected to our land, values, and morals. Despite all this destruction, we sought to follow the light, take responsibility, initiate positive change, and save what can be saved even if the home is a tent and the era is one of war.»

Hiba chose to pursue the light amidst the war through read aloud sessions, nurturing her passion for reading, and engaging children. Sometimes it allows them to escape destruction with their imagination; other times, it deepens their understanding of life, identity, and their role on earth. According to Hiba, this strengthens their core values and reshapes their moral framework.





Contact [admin@welovereading.org](mailto:admin@welovereading.org)

[WWW.WELOVEREADING.ORG](http://WWW.WELOVEREADING.ORG)

E-mail : [admin@welovereading.org](mailto:admin@welovereading.org)

Tel : + 962 6 55 30190/2

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

 /WLReading

 @welovereading

 /welovereadingproject