REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Ahlan Simsim Iraq Production
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Summary

Sesame Workshop (SW) is seeking creative, innovative, and engaging production company to produce multimedia and educators’ training content throughout Iraq for the USAID-funded project, Ahlan Simsims Iraq (“Project”). The Project aims to increase resilience capacities among children, families, and communities impacted by conflict and violence, through creation of and participation in inclusive early childhood development and education (EDC/E) opportunities.

SW invites Proposals from interested production companies and organizations in Iraq. Proposals will be evaluated against technical evaluation criteria listed below in Proposal Requirements section, and by value for cost.

Project Overview

Sesame Workshop (SW), the educational nonprofit behind Sesame Street and its local adaptations throughout the world, including Ahlan Simsims in the Middle East, has partnered with USAID to help increase resilience capacities among children, families, and communities impacted by conflict and violence. In partnership with USAID/Iraq, over the course of the 3-year activity starting July 1, 2021, SW will implement Ahlan Simsims Iraq project. Ahlan Simsims Iraq will leverage the SW and, in particular, the Ahlan Simsims’s unique approach combining locally driven, crisis-sensitive and age-appropriate interventions to achieve overall goal and strategic objectives. Using this combination of original multimedia content that promotes inclusion and reflects the diversity of Iraqi society, direct services that reduce the vulnerability of children, and youth engagement programming that lays the foundation for self-efficacy and participation, Ahlan Simsims Iraq will help USAID reach its goal to contribute to a stable, sovereign Iraq that is able to respond in a timely and transparent manner to the needs of its citizens.

The Overall Goal for the Ahlan Simsims Iraq is that families and communities impacted by conflict and violence create and participate in inclusive ECD opportunities and have increased resilience capacities that help to counter malignant influences.

This will be achieved through four Strategic Objectives (SO)* as follows:

- **SO1**: Children have improved foundational skills including learner readiness, social and emotional learning, and mutual respect and understanding
- **SO2**: Facilitators2 have improved effectiveness
- **SO3**: Youth have increased assets, agency, contributions, and access to an enabling environment
- **SO4**: The project has improved quality and relevance through the use of data and evidence

*See the Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 for more details including Illustrative Interventions and Results Framework.

Sesame Workshop Role

Sesame Workshop (SW) will lead a consortium of partners to deliver on the project goals and strategic objectives. Together with partners SW will lead on project direction and technical aspects of project design, monitoring, evaluating and learning. SW is seeking production company(s) to help deliver on SO 1, 2 and 3, through the production of engaging and educational content for children, families, professionals and communities. SW has had a presence in the Middle East for over 40 years, working in Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Turkey, and the Gulf region. There is strong Sesame brand awareness in the Middle East, particularly with our current Ahlan Simsims series throughout the MENA region and former series, such as Iftah Ya Simsims (United Arab Emirates) and Hikayat Simsims (Jordan).

For more information, please visit: [https://www.sesameworkeplace.org/](https://www.sesameworkeplace.org/) and [https://www.sesameworkeplace.org/what-we-do/shows/ahlan-simsim](https://www.sesameworkeplace.org/what-we-do/shows/ahlan-simsim)
Invitation for Proposal

Sesame Workshop (SW) is seeking creative, innovative, and engaging production company or organization in Iraq to produce multimedia and educators’ training content throughout Iraq for Ahlan Simsim Iraq project. The Project aims to increase resilience capacities among children, families, and communities impacted by conflict and violence, through creation of and participation in inclusive early childhood development and education (EDC/E) opportunities.

It is our intention to select the appropriate production company/organization shortly after the review of the proposal and aim to identify local creative talents and organization(s) to produce content in Iraq.

SW invites Proposals from interested production companies and organizations in Iraq. Proposals will be evaluated against technical evaluation criteria listed in Application and Submission Information, and by value for cost.

If you wish to participate, please respond by Monday, January 10, 2022, with your itemized Proposal.

Creative Guidelines

The Project’s multimedia and educators’ training video content will align with the Strategic and Educational Objectives of the program (a brief summary of Educational Objectives provided below) and will include newly produced 26 Live Action Films (LAF’s, mini-documentary style films), variety of Muppet and mixed-media formats from Ahlan Simsim, and 5 training videos for facilitators/educators working with young children, ages 3-8.

In the proposal, please identify creative approach to delivering on the production of the listed multimedia and educator’s training deliverables to help deliver on SO1, SO2 and SO3, through the production of engaging and educational content for children, families, professionals and communities living in Iraq. Please refer to and consider in the proposal the Brand Attributes, Summary of Educational Objectives, and Target Audiences outlined in this RFP, as well as outline your understanding of the needs of the children and their caregivers throughout Iraq, including KRI.

The following production deliverables for the Project should be included in the proposal:

Multimedia content:
- Packaging of 52x15min episodes of Ahlan Simsim Iraq for broadcast and digital distribution consist of the following:
  - Ahlan Simsim existing content: variety of short formats and segments with Muppets and Animations.
  - Ahlan Simsim Iraq original content: 26 x up to 7min compilation with existing and originally produced content.
- Production (all stages) and dubbing of:
  - 26 x 2-3min LAFs (mini-documentary style and song segments) produced throughout Iraq
    - 3 LAF’s produced by August 2022
    - 10 LAF’s produced by October 2022
    - 13 LAF’s produced by July 2023
  - 26 x 1-2min Animations and graphic elements (ex. transitions) production in collaboration with talent from Iraq and wider MENA region, leveraging Ahlan Simsim animation library elements
    - 13 Animations by October 2022
    - 13 Animations by July 2023
- Promotional content creation for tune-ins (TV, radio, digital platforms), B-rolls, and BTS needs
- Dubbing into at least 2 languages/dialects (note which you have capacity or are able to deliver)
- Delivering mass media episodes and compilations

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- 26 episodes by December 2022
- 26 episodes by August 2023

**Educator’s Training Videos:**
- 5 x 5-minute facilitator and educator training videos
- Dubbing of training videos into at least 2 languages/dialects (ex. Kurdish, Turkmen)
- Delivering education training videos by December 2022

Prior to the commencement of production on the Project, SW will provide onboarding for the selected production company, to ensure training in SW model and established production approach, with expectation of building on the existing strong storytelling, creative and technical production expertise of the selected production company.

SW will also hold Curriculum, Creative, and Writers Workshops in Iraq in late January/early February to:

1. Finalize ECD curriculum for the Project (a brief summary of Education Objectives is provided below)
2. Identify creative topics for the production of 26 LAF’s/songs and select themes for the 52 episodes
3. Establish the writing process to deliver storylines for the production of all the video content

In your proposal, please note your ability to participate in these Workshops and possible contributions, ex. creative talent (writers, composers, actors, musicians, producers, play therapists, etc.).

Please note, Sesame Workshop will not be responsible to facilitate any Visa, access letter or local authority approvals for the Production Company, for implementation of any of the proposed tasks / activities.

**Brand Attributes**

Please consider Sesame Workshop’s brand attributes in your proposal’s development:

**Real:** A relevant and honest presentation of emotions that also respects the emotions of others

**Heartfelt:** A welcoming environment where people care about one another and are encouraging, hopeful, and open

**Simple:** Visuals and language that are uncomplicated, uncluttered, and direct

**Furry:** Loveable, huggable characters that are central to any presentation

**Funny:** Funny, silly, surprising situations, characters, language, and ideas that engage the audience

**Summary of Educational Objectives**

The Project will focus on essential early childhood development concepts and create a curriculum that increases the following skills among children:
- Social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Mutual Respect and Understanding (MRU)
- Appreciation of own identity
- Appreciation of other identities (or lack of negative views of other identities)
- Conflict resolution skills
- Perspective-taking skills

**Target Audiences**

- Children ages 3 to 8 living in Iraq
- Parents and adult family members of children ages 3 to 8
- Facilitators/Educators of early education services for children ages 3-8
• Youth 15-29
• Special focus on communities that have experienced displacement and children from marginalized communities, including religious and ethnic minorities
Proposal Requirements

Sesame Workshop (SW) invites on-the-ground creative production organizations and/or production companies to submit a Proposal for its consideration.

Proposals must follow all provided instructions and meet all terms and requirements in this RFP, as outlined in the Proposal Submission Information and the Disclaimers and Terms of this RFP sections of this document.

Proposals may be accepted on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions. Each initial offer should contain the Offeror’s best terms from a price and technical standpoint.

Proposal Submission Information

Your Proposal shall consist of the following items:

- A written creative proposal for the production deliverables of content outlined in the Creative Guidelines. *(up to 3 pages)*

- A brief description and assessment of the current media landscape in Iraq, as it applies to the needs of young children and their caregivers. *(up to 1 page)*

- An itemized cost estimate and a production timeline, both of which reflect all the requirements of the entire process, including development, all stages of production, and delivery for distribution.

- Company information, including key staff and bios, descriptions of relevant projects you have been involved with, client references, samples of prior similar and/or relevant work, and a summary of your production process and capacities.

Evaluation Criteria

Sesame Workshop intends to accept the Proposal (and if need be, multiple Proposals) that offer the “best value” in terms of creative and technical requirements and expertise, such as quality of sample works, cost, and past performance. Therefore, the following criteria will be taken into consideration:

- Creative drive and quality of the proposal as it aligns with the project’s objectives outlined in the Project Overview section of this document
- Production capacity as well as range and depth of experience in children’s and/or family programming and creative storytelling
- Cost estimate of the proposed concept
- Financial stability of the organization (as evidenced by number of years in business, third-party relationships, etc.)
Submission Dates and Contact

All Proposals in English are due via email by **January 10, 2022**. Please submit your Proposal to:

Estee Bardanashvili: estee.bardanashvili@sesame.org

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DISCLAIMERS AND TERMS OF THIS RFP

1. Sesame Workshop will not compensate Offerors for preparation of their response to this RFP. All expenses incurred in the preparation of the Proposal in response to this RFP is at your sole cost and responsibility.

2. Sesame Workshop will not be responsible to facilitate any Visa, access letter or local authority approvals for the Offerors and selected Production Company, for implementation of any of the proposed tasks / activities.

3. This RFP does not guarantee a resulting contract and Sesame Workshop is under no obligation to Offerors unless and until a written agreement is signed by Sesame Workshop and Offeror.

4. Sesame Workshop may withdraw or amend this RFP at any time.

5. This RFP may result in one or more contracts for parts of activities.

6. Sesame Workshop may request additional rounds of responses based on more detailed instructions or requirements.

7. Information provided by Sesame Workshop in connection with the RFP process, including this document, is confidential to Sesame Workshop. Proposals produced under this RFP belong to Sesame Workshop. Any distribution of such Proposals must first have written authorization from Sesame Workshop.

8. Unforeseen changes in funding or the Project may result in rescission of an award prior to signing a contract.

9. Offerors are not entitled to any compensation or payment for any submission to Sesame Workshop or Sesame Workshop’s use of such submission for any purpose. Offerors acknowledge that Sesame Workshop in good faith will have the sole discretion to determine whether any compensation is due to offerors for use of any submitted materials. Offerors recognize that any creative materials, concepts, ideas and techniques that are disclosed to Sesame Workshop may be similar or identical to, in whole or in part, to creative materials, concepts, ideas and techniques already developed, in development, or to be developed in the future by Sesame Workshop.

10. Offeror will retain a copy of its Proposal and hereby releases Sesame Workshop from any liability for loss of, or damage to the copy of the Proposal that is submitted to Sesame Workshop.

11. All intellectual property and related materials provided to offeror by Sesame Workshop shall remain the sole and exclusive property of Sesame Workshop and no license is granted to Offeror other than as may be necessary for Offeror to prepare and submit its Proposal hereunder. Offeror understands and agrees that Sesame Workshop is entitled to use any part of the Proposal which is not concrete or does not itself constitute protectable and/or copyrightable property without compensation to the offeror.

12. No work may be subcontracted out on this proposal, unless otherwise agreed to by Sesame Workshop.

13. Any contract to be entered into between Sesame Workshop and an Offeror will be for work provided solely as work-made-for-hire, with ownership and all rights belonging to Sesame Workshop.

14. The cost estimate and proposed timeline and all other terms and conditions stated in your Proposal must remain valid for 180 days from the date of delivery of the Proposal to Sesame Workshop.
About Sesame Workshop

Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street, reaches over 180 million children across more than 150 countries with educational content designed to help them grow smarter, stronger and kinder. Using a range of contextualized multimedia and print materials, Sesame Workshop education programs improve outcomes in literacy, numeracy and social emotional learning, as well as health and hygiene behaviors. Early education programs, enriched with engaging multimedia content, equip children with the knowledge and skills they need to enter school ready to learn and provide them the foundation from which to continue their learning and reach their highest potential. Sesame Workshop creates quality education content that both children and adults love and learn from, and that can be flexibly adapted and integrated into existing and new programs.
FORM FOR INTENT TO SUBMIT

Name of Submitting Entity: ___________________________
Address: __________________________________________
Principal Contact: _________________________________

Submitting Entity has received a Request for Proposal from Sesame Workshop regarding production for Ahlan Simsim Iraq project. By signing below and submitting this form, Submitting Entity acknowledges that it intends to submit a proposal and that it agrees to all of the terms contained in the Request for Proposal.

______________________________________________
Signature of Authorized Signatory for Submitting Entity
APPENDIX 1: PROJECT GOAL OBJECTIVES AND ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVENTIONS

Please note all interventions included are illustrative and are to be revisited and redefined with partner organizations once partner(s) are selected. Concept Notes can include illustrative types of interventions that relate to and build upon the illustrative interventions listed in Appendix 1. These interventions are illustrative only and are not meant to limit applicant creativity.

The Overall Goal for the Project is that families and communities impacted by conflict and violence create and participate in inclusive ECD opportunities and have increased resilience capacities that help to counter malign influences.

**Strategic Objective 1:** Children have improved foundational skills including learner readiness, social and emotional learning, and mutual respect and understanding

**IR1.1:** Improved social and emotional skills:
- Leverage and integrate Ahlan Simsim and other Sesame Workshop existing ECD curriculum with explicit lessons on SEL
- Reinforce with Ahlan Simsim Iraq multimedia content
- Deliver SEL lessons in facilitated interventions with direct services partners

**R1.2:** Improved Learner Readiness
- Leverage and integrate Ahlan Simsim and other Sesame Workshop existing ECD curriculum explicit lessons in pre-literacy and pre-numeracy
- Integrate existing ECD curriculum with problem solving, critical thinking, task persistence, initiative and curiosity
- Reinforce with Ahlan Simsim Iraq multimedia content
- Deliver learner readiness in facilitated interventions with direct services partners ECD centers

**IR1.3:** Increased appreciation for identity, self and others
- Revise SW Mutual Respect and Understanding (MRU) curriculum
  - Convene Curriculum Advisory of early childhood education specialists from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise including psychosocial professionals, teachers, academics to develop a localized curriculum that increases the following skills among children:
    - Appreciation of own identity
    - Appreciation of other identities (or lack of negative views of other identities)
    - Conflict resolution skills
    - Perspective-taking skills
  - Draft revised curriculum
  - Prototype and iterate
- Integrate existing ECD curriculum with explicit lessons on MRU
- Reinforce with media
- Deliver MRU curriculum in facilitated interventions with direct services partners ECD centers

**Strategic Objective 2:** Facilitators have improved effectiveness

**IR2.1:** Teachers implement evidence-based learner readiness and psychosocial support (PSS) strategies
- Train teachers on pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and social emotional skills
- Provide ongoing mentoring and support to teachers

**IR2.2:** Increased appreciation for diversity and inclusion
- Train teachers Conduct training to improve ECD skills that highlights recognizing bias, child safeguarding, positive discipline techniques, holistic development approach and play-based learning
- Provide ongoing mentoring and support to teachers
Strategic Objective 3: Youth have increased assets, agency, contributions, and access to an enabling environment

IR3.1: Improved soft skills (to be determined by assessment findings)
- Develop youth training package on soft skills (determined by key assessments) and PSS support
- Train youth soft skills
- Provide ongoing mentoring and support

IR3.2: Improved skills in storytelling and media capacities
- Train youth in media creation throughout all stages of media creation and production process
- Pair youth with production professionals for mentorship

IR3.3: Increased meaningful and inclusive engagement within their communities and across religious, ethnic and sectarian groups
- Youth participate in mentorship program within their communities and across religious, ethnic and sectarian groups
- Create an online platform as a basis for youth to develop social networks and share their media products including videos, podcasts and stories

Strategic Objective 4: The project has improved quality and relevance through the use of data and evidence
[Note: This Strategic Objective will be part of Sesame Workshop’s scope of work. Offerors need not include this Strategic Objective in their proposals]

IR4.1: Internal and external strategic collaboration informed by key assessments findings, curriculum workshops, and partnership management
- Use strategic collaboration to inform partnership approach and selection
- Assess quality of partnerships over time
- Promote efficiencies using learnings from assessments

IR4.2: Learning from monitoring and/or evaluation informs outputs and delivery
- Conduct key assessments and use data to inform activity design, curricular framework, and strategic collaboration (internal and external) (see Table 5)
- Conduct formative testing on child-facing videos and facilitator TLM package and content and use data and learning to feedback into curriculum and content refinement to ensure content is engaging and effective
- Co-design child-facing intervention through curriculum seminar, creative workshop (detailed in Tables 1) and co-design TLM development and training with advisories (detailed in Table 2)

IR4.3: Adaptation approach that includes embedded feedback loops to ensure management team adapts with learnings results
- Establish feedback mechanisms to provide information from communities and partners and train partners in monitoring and evaluation approach
- Hold 2-3 “pause and reflect” sessions throughout activity life that are either (1) triggered through context monitoring or feedback mechanisms and/or (2) project management cycle (and fed by monitoring data use of complexity aware monitoring practices to inform adaptation)
For the purposes of this RFP, children are defined as ages 3-8.
For this project, facilitators are defined as individuals who deliver early childhood education and development services and programming to young children, ages 3-8.
USAID defines youth as aged 15-29.