

Request for Proposals

Final Global Evaluation of *Watch, Play, Learn* Pilots

February 2022

1. Purpose of the evaluation

Sesame Workshop's Play to Learn Project is commissioning a global evaluation that will synthesize and distill or compare and contrast findings from across three pilot interventions that use a new type of content (*Watch, Play, Learn* video segments) in Kenya, Colombia, and Bangladesh, as well as some data and information from the use of the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos in other projects beyond Play to Learn. The pilot interventions are currently being designed, and will all complete no later than August 2023. The information will inform Sesame Workshop's plan and strategy for using the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos and similar global media content in future partnerships that focus on serving children affected by conflict and crisis. The global evaluation report must be delivered by December 2023.

2. Background on the Play to Learn Project, the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos, and pilot interventions

Sesame Workshop and its partners were awarded a \$100 million grant from the LEGO Foundation for the Play to Learn Project in 2018 in order to support new early childhood development programs for millions of children affected by the Rohingya and Syrian refugee crises. The 5-year program leverages the power of learning through play, providing communities affected by refugee crises access to vital early learning opportunities. One objective of the Play to Learn Project is to create globally-relevant content that can be used to support quality early childhood services in humanitarian settings: the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos.

Usually global libraries of educational content have all of their unique songs, words, games, stories, characters, or objects stripped out, so that what remains is culturally neutral. Using an adapted design process and guided by a team of global advisors, Sesame Workshop identified universal play materials and games and created a universe and characters that children from different backgrounds consistently found engaging, relevant, and comprehensible (based on the results of formative testing). These videos build on Sesame Workshop's demonstrated ability to create educational content that is culturally relevant and engaging in countries around the world¹, and cover science, math, social and emotional, and child protection, health, and safety concepts especially relevant for young children affected by crises or conflicts. The videos are being dubbed in Spanish, Arabic, Rohingya, and Swahili. For more on the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos see this [fact sheet](#).

In 2022-2023, Sesame Workshop is partnering with a variety of humanitarian implementers in Kenya, Colombia, and Bangladesh in order to pilot the use of these videos in pre-existing programs. Sesame Workshop hypothesizes that globally-relevant, play-based, child-facing media content like the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos can increase equitable access to playful early learning opportunities across a range of sectors in a humanitarian response (e.g. health, nutrition, cash, child protection), if there is a contextually appropriate distribution approach. These pilot programs will be the first step to generating data around this hypothesis in order to understand whether the videos can deliver on the promise of a

¹ For evidence of the impact of Sesame Workshop's content in other settings, see Mares & Pan (2013).

ready-to-use content that can reduce missed opportunities for early learning in humanitarian emergencies.

3. Global Evaluation Framework & Questions

The global evaluation framework for the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos is based off of the [OECD-DAC evaluation criteria](#). The table on page 3 presents the full menu of evaluation questions that Sesame Workshop is interested in answering. The questions will be made further precise, refined, and contextualized once the pilot interventions are designed.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos useful and relevant to partners? To facilitators, caregivers, or children? 2. What do others see as the strengths or weaknesses of Sesame Workshop as a partner?
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To what extent do the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos support or contribute to shared goals of this sector’s response? 4. Are the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos coherent with local standards or policies for early learning? If not, in what ways did it limit their usefulness? 5. Are the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos used as the primary means of instruction, a tool to reinforce an existing curriculum or program, as a supplement to an existing curriculum or program, or another option? (also links to Impact) (Morris et al. 2020)
Efficiency: Cost	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. What are the unique and common cost ingredients across pilots? 7. What are the fixed and variable costs of acquiring new users through these distribution platforms? 8. What are the implications of the costs to acquiring new users if we were to implement this pilot project in new locations? For a new population? 9. Were there financial costs to any documented unintended consequences? 10. What non-financial costs are there to using the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos?
Efficiency: Timeliness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Are we able to provide the pilot intervention to all end users in a timely way in this context? 12. If end users were reached at different times, what kinds of users did we serve early versus late? How did this contribute to equitable (or inequitable) reach or use? 13. What factors seem to determine timely delivery?
Operational efficiency in conflict or crisis-affected settings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. In what ways was our pilot project an efficient way to provide early learning opportunities to young children affected by conflict or crisis? (Korin 2021) 15. In what ways were the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos an efficient way to reach the most marginalized children and their families affected by conflict or crisis? 16. How user-friendly were the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos (or the technology we used for distribution) by (a parent, a caregiver, a teacher, a facilitator, a staff person)? 17. In what ways did we successfully address connectivity or technology barriers? (Korin 2021)
Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. What did we learn about each pilot’s theory of change? 19. To what extent or in what ways did our pilot project help the sector to reduce missed early learning opportunities for young children? 20. Were the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos successfully used to improve equity in outcomes for young children? What factors enabled success?
Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. What operational, technical, or other aspects of the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos make them easy or hard to scale? 22. Have the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos been integrated in a way that makes them easy to systematize or make part of a routine in the future?

4. Existing sources of information

Each pilot intervention will have a monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan (available upon request). The purpose of the global evaluation will be to synthesize, distill, compare, and contrast what we have learned about the relevance, sustainability, coherence, efficiency, and effectiveness of the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos across a variety of contexts. Our goal is that the evaluators will have adequate information to work with in order to focus and limit the amount of new data collection that may be needed.

Beyond the pilot programs, Sesame Workshop is also using the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos in other projects and broadcasts serving children affected by conflicts or crises. Data from these other projects will be made available to integrate into the final evaluation as well.

The below list gives an overview of existing sources of information. Sesame Workshop is releasing a bid for this evaluation early in the design process for pilot interventions in order to assure that any other required information can be collected prospectively through the monitoring and learning system that each pilot will design.

- 4.1 Assessments across a variety of settings used to inform the design of the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos and the design of the pilot interventions (e.g. needs assessments, mapping studies)
- 4.2 Formative research on the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos (for overall development & language dubbing)
- 4.3 Quantitative and qualitative monitoring data on the following categories (this will vary for each pilot intervention)
 - 4.3.1 Reach
 - 4.3.2 Service disruptions
 - 4.3.3 Participation or engagement
 - 4.3.4 Quality and relevance
 - 4.3.5 Equity
 - 4.3.6 Distribution technology
 - 4.3.7 Child-level outcomes
 - 4.3.8 Caregiver-level outcomes
 - 4.3.9 Provider-level outcomes
 - 4.3.10 Context monitoring indicators
- 4.4 Content or curriculum mapping report or notes and educational framework for the *Watch, Play, Learn* videos
- 4.5 Notes and outputs from the design process, including the problem statement, hypotheses, and theory of change
- 4.6 Technology scoping and user testing notes or reports
- 4.7 Cost data. The pilot projects will each have a budget and financial report, as well as a list of ingredients for use in costing exercise; however, it is not yet determined whether financial reports and budget will be organized according to the ingredients list, or the donor format.
- 4.8 Program reports (quarterly reports)
- 4.9 Data from real-time learning reflection meetings
- 4.10 Final monitoring and learning report (one per pilot)
- 4.11 An impact evaluation on the math and social and emotional learning *Watch, Play, Learn* videos from Colombia

5. Evaluation methods

Sesame Workshop expects that multiple, mixed methods will be necessary in order to answer questions across all of the evaluation criteria. The table below outlines the minimum expectations that Sesame Workshop has for each set of evaluation questions as well as potential methodologies. The evaluator should propose methods as fit their expertise, capacity, and proposed budget. Sesame Workshop will evaluate RFP’s in part based on whether they satisfy the minimum expectations. Sesame Workshop encourages evaluators to use existing data where possible given the budget and the likelihood that travel will be constrained due to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2022-2023. It is unlikely that all evaluation criterion should receive the same level of time and effort.

Evaluation Criteria	Data availability	Minimum Expectations
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End-users: review of existing satisfaction data or needs assessment data - Partners: existing data from real-time learning sessions, new data from key informant interviews or anonymous surveys 	Data on relevance should reflect the perspectives of the end-users of the <i>Watch, Play, Learn</i> videos in the pilot interventions (whether children, caregivers, or facilitators) as well as the partner organization. All evaluation questions must be answered if data are available.
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and analysis of sector standards, curriculum, or other program standards, content review report (from the content showcase/curriculum workshop) - Key informant interviews with staff and partners (new data) 	Data on coherence should be gathered through review and analysis of existing humanitarian response plans, sector standards, or curriculum/education sector standards as relevant. All evaluation questions must be answered.
Efficiency: Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial costs: drawn from financial reports, with analysis using insights from implementers - Non-financial costs or costs of unintended consequences are data that would not necessarily be found in project documents and require new data collection 	Data on cost should be gathered from financial reports and may need to be categorized into relevant cost ingredient categories. This will require new analysis in order to answer the questions as well as structured sessions with implementers. The evaluator should make clear their understanding of the calculations needed to answer questions 6-7 and propose an approach to calculations required for question 8 in the bid. Context-specific drivers of cost should be clearly integrated into the approach to respond to question 8. Cost data on documented unintended consequences may be calculated or estimated. Non-financial costs can be newly identified or pulled from project records. All evaluation questions must be answered.

Evaluation Criteria	Data availability	Minimum Expectations
		N.B. Sesame Workshop does not want to calculate the cost per beneficiary, cost per impact, or compare these types of costs across pilots.
Efficiency: Timeliness	May require new data to be collected, though it is possible that data from implementation, procurement, operations, and programmatic monitoring will be enough to respond to the questions. If possible, perceptions of timeliness should be triangulated.	Data on timeliness should reflect the perspectives of both beneficiaries as well as the pilot implementation team. Timeliness should be collaboratively defined and contextually-relevant (e.g. what is 'timely' may differ by context). All evaluation questions must be answered.
Operational efficiency in conflict or crisis-affected settings	May require new data to be collected. If possible, perceptions of operational efficiency should be triangulated.	Answering questions of operational efficiency should reflect the perspectives of key stakeholders from communities as well as project staff. All evaluation questions may not be answerable, depending on the pilot interventions.
Impact	Existing evidence, theory of change/design, and monitoring data could be used to answer these questions.	Answering questions of impact should leverage non-causal methods, such as (but not limited to) contribution analysis, most significant change, outcome harvesting, outcome mapping. Question 17 must be answered and will require some type of contribution analysis or outcome mapping. Questions 18-20 may be not be answerable across pilots.
Sustainability	Data used to answer other evaluation questions may also be used to respond to this set of questions. New data may be needed.	There are many frameworks around scale, sustainability, and innovation (e.g. Mclure, Bourns, & Olbrecht, 2018 ; Obrecht, 2017) as well as EdTech Frameworks (e.g. Bapna et al., 2021) that could be used to frame the approach to responding to this evaluation criterion. The pilots themselves will be small in scale, and so Sesame Workshop expects that the analysis will be in line with the availability of data, rather than expanding into a theoretical exercise. Only relevant evaluation questions must be answered.

6. Team composition and participation

The evaluation team should reflect the skills and expertise needed to carry out the proposed methodologies.

Amongst the evaluation team, the two required roles are:

1. A lead evaluator, responsible for the overall project management and quality, who also serves as a focal point with Sesame Workshop.
2. A systems analyst, who is responsible for the approach and analysis to the questions around cost and sustainability.

All other roles are up to the offeror to propose.

The following types of expertise will be desirable: experience in evaluating programs in humanitarian emergencies, experience working with cost data, early childhood development, education technology, education in emergencies, ability to work in Spanish and English.

The evaluation team should be gender-balanced. Evaluation teams that represent the countries where pilots are being carried out will be scored favorably.

7. Reporting and dissemination requirements

The evaluation team will produce: one global evaluation report, a brief based on the evaluation report that can stand alone, and up to four presentations (that are based on a single deck). The evaluation team will present out to Sesame Workshop and pilot partners, two additional internal audiences at Sesame Workshop, and one public webinar. All written products and the final presentation will be in English. Sesame Workshop will organize translation as needed.

8. Timeline, budget, and logistics

The global evaluation of the *Watch, Play, Learn* pilots must deliver all final products by December 2023. At this point, we anticipate all of the pilots to start by June 30, 2022, though the start dates and lengths of the pilots are variable.

The value of this RFP is **\$120,000-\$206,000**.

This evaluation can be fully remote. The budget for the bid should reflect all required costs and expenses in order to carry out the proposal.

9. Ethics and principles of partnership

Sesame Workshop expects any evaluation team to practice and hold themselves accountable to standard ethical principles that protect the privacy, confidentiality, and safety of participants and the evaluation team, child safeguarding principles (if any data are collected from children), and conflict-sensitivity principles.

Sesame Workshop would work collaboratively with the evaluation partner, serving as a member of the evaluation team if needed, in order to assure the scope of the evaluation can be completed on time and on budget.

10. Application instructions

Please submit your bid to: Anjuli Shivshanker (Anjuli.Shivshanker@sesame.org) by **March 31, 2022**.

The bid should contain the following:

- Proposed evaluation methodology
- Proposed timeline for engagement
- Budget with adequate notes to facilitate review
- Name & resume of lead evaluator, and team composition if relevant. If other team members are known, then their names and resumes should also be attached.
- 1-2 examples of relevant work (can be a report, public presentation, etc.)

Bids will be scored according to: technical quality, feasibility, timeline, and team composition.

Questions

Please see [here](#) for a log of questions and answers about this RFP.