

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Developing a play-based measure to assess children's sense of inclusion and belonging**

Sesame Workshop is request proposals to support the development of a play-based measure to assess children's sense of inclusion and belonging, with a particular focus on children living in crisis and conflict affected settings. This work is funded under Sesame Workshop's Play to Learn project, funded by the LEGO Foundation. In 2018, Sesame Workshop and its partners, BRAC and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), were awarded a \$100 million grant from the LEGO Foundation to support 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.

#### **Overview**

Research shows that understanding and valuing one's identity – and the identities of others – can help children develop into more confident and accepting adolescents and adults. Having a healthy positive identity is critical for children's development, particularly social and emotional development (Bennett & Sani, 2004). Feeling positive about one's identity is associated with greater self-esteem and tolerance and with better outcomes in adolescence and adulthood. Having a positive sense of pride in who you are can be a protective factor in the face of discrimination and other adverse experiences (Marcelo & Yates, 2019).

Related to discrimination, there is an expansive body of social science research that indicates that children do see identity differences and make meaning of those differences from a very early age (c.f. Aboud, 2008; Hirschfeld, 2008; Katz, 2003; Patterson & Bigler, 2006; Winkler, 2009). The research also indicates that healthy social development—including a strong appreciation of individual and group identity factors---can be influenced (both positively and negatively) by home and peer interactions, as well as in community and school experiences.

#### **The importance of understanding and measuring children's sense of inclusion and belonging in humanitarian contexts**

The preschool years are vital to prevent the onset of bias and prejudice by fostering healthy identities and providing environments that support a sense of belonging for every child. Communities transformed by migration struggle to maintain the links of social cohesion necessary for successful integration and appropriate child development. Strains on scarce resources, fear and prejudice can result in serious tensions between displaced and host communities. Exposure to discriminatory practices and rhetoric can impact children's wellbeing, the development of positive identities and the ability to participate fully in learning experiences.

Despite the critical importance of measuring these two distinct but interrelated concepts in young children, there remain critical gaps in availability of validated developmentally appropriate play-based measures specific to preschool-aged children (3-6 years) to test their sense self-concept and appreciation of diverse identities in their peers. Existing measures for these constructs often rely on child interviews, and/or sorting tasks that rely on physical markers of difference (Williams & Steele, 2016; Williams, Steele, & Lipman, 2016; Williams & Steele, 2019; Jia, Lang, & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2016; Marsh, Ellis, & Craven, 2002). The value of direct child

assessment measures for use in monitoring program quality and impact is that they facilitate a more accurate and relevant understanding of child development.

An additional gap in existing measures is their relevance for diverse global communities, including humanitarian contexts. Existing measures have tended to be validated in or for Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) contexts. There is a critical need to better understand and assess children's sense of self and appreciation of diverse identities across the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. This need is even more pronounced for children whose communities have been transformed by conflict and displacement. While there have been efforts to develop contextualized programming in humanitarian settings to support children's sense of self and appreciation of diverse identities – the building blocks of social cohesion (Williams 2019), the need for developmentally appropriate play-based measures to assess changes in knowledge and behavior through remains across the spectrum of classroom assessment, program monitoring, and impact evaluation.

### **Development of the measure**

Given these gaps, we seek a research partner to support the development, pilot, and validation of a play-based developmentally appropriate measure to assess children's sense of self and appreciation of diverse identities.

For the initial development and pilot of this measure, we will leverage existing programming in communities in Colombia and Ecuador, inclusive of Venezuelan migrants and Colombian and Ecuadorian host communities, that focuses on strengthening children's positive identities, sense of belonging, and skills and dispositions towards inclusion and peaceful coexistence among refugee and host communities.

### **Deliverables**

As part of the work, the selected partner will be expected to undertake the following activities:

- Conduct a review of existing measures, identifying strengths and opportunities
- Create a small global advisory of relevant experts in play-based measurement, as well as children's identity development to provide guidance and feedback to
- Develop and pilot measures among the target groups in either Colombia or Ecuador
- Finalize and validate measure, as possible
- Develop recommendations guidance note for adapting measures for additional contexts globally
- Submit for inclusion in the [INEE Measurement Library](#) and the [LEGO Foundation online knowledge base](#), including a toolkit leveraging the recommendations for measurement adaptation for additional contexts
- Convene members of the global advisory along with stakeholders funded under the LEGO Foundation's Measurement Library Initiative for a webinar on lessons learned in developing and adapting play-based measures across a variety of curricular outcomes and contexts

**Timeline:** January 2023-February 2024

## Proposal Components

Proposals shall include a provision for delivery of the following elements:

1. **Research Design:** Proposals shall outline the process and design of the aforementioned deliverables, with particular attention to the following:
  - Composition of advisory members and their role as an advisor
  - Preliminary item development
  - Data collection plan, including cognitive interviews and a description of monitoring and quality control measures for data collection; a description of how researchers are trained and ways in which researchers will ensure that they adhere to the ethical standards of research set forth by the Society for Research on Child Development (<http://www.srkd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>)
    - We expect the evaluation team to obtain IRB approval for this work
  - Data analysis plan that outlines plans for testing mean and variability of each item, inter-item and item-total correlations, and reliability
  - Timeline
2. **Budget:** A detailed budget for the project shall be submitted with the research proposal. The budget shall include separate sections outlining costs associated with each data collection wave.
3. **Key personnel:** CVs or biographic summaries of key personnel.
4. **Examples of relevant past work and references:**
  - A 1-2-page description of similar or comparable studies in which the organization has engaged in the past, or similar work sample
  - Contact information for at least 2 previous clients for references

## Deliverables

Researchers will deliver the following for the evaluation:

1. Findings from review of existing measures, identifying strengths and opportunities, and proposed measurement items that incorporate these strengths and opportunities
2. Summary of advisory board members
3. Draft measure
4. Data analysis plan
5. Endline report: The researcher will submit a draft version of the report of the findings to Sesame Workshop for review prior to the completion of a final report (in English). The report must include an Executive Summary.
6. Topline summary: The researcher will submit a 1–2-page summary of findings with appropriate infographics created for a non-research audience
7. Guidance note: The researcher will submit a guidance for adapting measure for additional contexts globally
8. Summary of key takeaways and lessons learned from webinar with members of the global advisory and stakeholders funded under the LEGO Foundation’s Measurement Library Initiative
9. Data, original instruments, videos, IRB approval document, consent forms, and other material: Researchers will be required to submit an electronic version of data (in SPSS or SPSS-compatible format), as well as original instruments, and any videos made of children during the research sessions. Instruments will be in the local language (if applicable) and English. Quantitative data will be submitted in English and qualitative

data should be submitted in the original language and an English translation. These items will become the property of Sesame Workshop.

**Budget:**

The research proposal should not exceed a **total budget of USD150,000.**

**Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience in conducting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative research and knowledge of media research methodologies
- Experience conducting educational research with young children and families
- Experience conducting research with young children, particularly those in crisis contexts
- Experience working with, adapting, and/or developing play-based measures of learning for young children
- Experience conducting research focused on identity, social cohesion, and/or inclusion and belonging
- Experience conducting research in low-resource contexts
- Experience conducting research in English
- A demonstrated capacity to work in a range of settings and to deliver products in a timely fashion under tight and strict monitoring, management, and deadlines
- The ability to produce high-quality reports
- The ability to conduct high-level analyses such as multivariate analyses and multi-level modeling
- Feasibility of study within budget and time parameters
- Appropriateness of research design
- Capacity to execute proposed study

**How to submit proposals**

Submit proposals on or before **December 12, 2022**, via email to Kim Foulds:

[kim.foulds@sesame.org](mailto:kim.foulds@sesame.org).

Please note the following in the email subject heading: **Proposal for Development of Play-Based Measure of Inclusion and Belonging**

## **Disclaimers**

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. 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.
3. Sesame Workshop may withdraw or amend this RFP at any time.
4. This RFP may result in one or more contracts for parts of activities.
5. Sesame Workshop may request additional rounds of responses based on more detailed instructions or requirements.
6. Information provided by Sesame Workshop about 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 offeror.
10. No work may be sub-contracted out on this proposal, unless otherwise agreed to by Sesame Workshop.
11. 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.
12. The cost estimate and proposed time-line 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.