

**Request for Proposals for an evaluation of *Takalani Sesame*'s mass media content to support male caregiver engagement**  
**November 2022**

Research has shown that playful learning experiences for young children helps foster their development and lay the foundations for them to become creative, engaged, lifelong learners.<sup>1</sup> The capacity of adults – including fathers and other male caregivers in young children's lives - to guide play in meaningful ways can unlock the transformative power of education for young children. Prevailing perceptions, however, that limit men's engagement in play as part of children's long-term healthy development. Those barriers can support the start of gender inequity at home, which can lead to long-term developmental consequences.

Takalani Sesame, with funding from The Oak Foundation, will develop and distribute mass media content for children and for adults to support increased male caregivers' engagement in play to support increased play for children and men, as well as support improved positive parenting and decreased gendered play practices.

**Background**

*Takalani Sesame* has educated and entertained children for over 20 years. *Takalani Sesame* promotes early childhood development and education and addresses critical issues facing families while supporting South Africa's mother-tongue based education policy with television, radio, digital content, and community and classroom engagement in many of South Africa's official languages.

**The Evaluation**

We are seeking a research team to conduct an experimental evaluation of Takalani Sesame's male caregiver content, assessing the changes in the following child and adult outcomes:

- **Children:**
  - Children spend more time engaging in guided play activities with male caregivers
  - Children demonstrate a change in autonomy for choices of play regardless of gender
  - Children demonstrate changes in descriptive stereotypes for boys and girls
  
- **Male caregivers:**
  - Male caregivers experience more confidence and joy in playing with their young children
  - Male caregivers spend time in engaging with their children
  - Male caregivers exhibit more positive parenting practices and nurturing interactions with their young children

Children will receive mass media to view at home, while their male caregiver will receive parent-facing content. The research team will be responsible for delivering the content to

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<sup>1</sup> Brooker, L. and Woodhead, M., eds. (2013). *The Right to Play. Early Childhood in Focus*, 9. Milton Keynes: The Open University with the support of Bernard van Leer Foundation.

participating families. Delivery methods could include provision of content on USBs or DVDs, links to a private YouTube channel, or other ways of effective distribution for participating families.

The interventions will take place over a 12-week period beginning in March 2024. The evaluation team will be responsible for identifying and selecting qualified children and caregivers for a “treatment condition.” We are interested in the option of multiple treatment arms, as well, to assess the value of the individual package of content relative to the complete package:

- TG1: Both child and adult receive content
- TG2: Only child receives content
- TG3: Only adult receives content

The evaluation team will also be expected to recruit a separate but relatively similar set of qualified children and caregivers for the “control/business-as-usual condition” who will not receive content until after the period of the evaluation.

### **Sampling**

We welcome recommendations from the evaluation team on selection of research sites. Content will be available in English, Zulu, Sesotho, Afrikaans, and Ndebele. Preference is for sites located in Eastern Cape, Free State, and Gauteng provinces but we are open to alternative recommendations.

The sampling procedure must consider demographic variables such as socio-economic status, and child age and gender. The analyses will examine the project’s educational impact by SES, child age and gender, and other variables that may be important to the community context. A power analysis should accompany the description of sampling methodology. A comparable control group that is unexposed should also be sampled to allow a basis for comparison.

### **Outcomes and Measures**

The evaluation design should use a mixed methods approach. The measures used in the evaluation must reflect the project’s educational goals and be age- and culturally-appropriate. Researchers must pilot test the measures before fieldwork to ensure their validity and to make certain that other common measurement issues (such as a ceiling effect) are addressed. The evaluation will measure developmentally appropriate outcomes in children and adults as articulated in the project’s curriculum.

The main outcomes of interest for the evaluation are:

- Changes in male caregivers’ knowledge, behavior, and attitude on the value and benefits of play in their child’s development
- Changes in children’s and male caregivers’ time spent engaging with children in a variety of guided play activities with a variety of materials
- Changes’ quality of caregiver/practitioner-child interaction during play activities
- Changes in children’s autonomy for choices of play regardless of gender
- Changes in children’s and caregivers’ descriptive stereotypes for boys and girls

- Changes in male caregivers' use of positive parenting practices and nurturing interactions with their young children

The research team will be responsible for identifying internationally validated measures and adapting them for this evaluation if necessary. New measures must be pilot tested prior to fieldwork. We strongly encourage the use of play-based measures.

### Proposal Components

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

1. **Research Design:** Proposals shall outline the design of a potential study or set of studies including:
  - Sampling strategy, including sample size justification, and a description of how comparison/control groups will be determined and how the sampling will account for any attrition that may occur
  - Research measures
  - Data collection plan, including 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.srcd.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>)
  - Data analysis plan that outlines how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact
  - 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. **Past evaluations and references:**
  - A 1-2-page description of similar or comparable studies in which the agency 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. **Baseline report:** After completing the baseline data collection, researchers will submit a report of findings in English.
2. **Data analysis plan:** Before endline data collection begins, researchers will submit a detailed data analysis plan that describes how data will be analyzed to draw conclusions about the project's impact.
3. **Endline report:** The researcher will submit a draft version of the report of the findings to Sesame Workshop South Africa for review prior to the completion of a final report (in English). The report must include an Executive Summary.
4. **Topline summary:** The researcher will submit a 1-2 page summary of findings with appropriate infographics created for a non-research audience.
5. **Data, original instruments, videos, IRB approval document, consent forms, data 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 South Africa. Note: The researchers selected will have access to instruments used in previous Sesame Workshop South Africa assessments, which can be used as a base for creating questionnaires and other data collection devices for the proposed study.

### **Deadline**

Proposal should be submitted by 5 December 2022.

### **Budget**

The research proposal should not exceed a budget of USD300,000 with a final report due on 31 October 2024.

### **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
- Experience conducting research in low-resource contexts
- Experience conducting research in diverse international contexts
- 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 proposal via email to Fathima Rawat: [Fathima.Rawat@sesame.org](mailto:Fathima.Rawat@sesame.org). Please note the following in the email subject heading: **Proposal for Takalani Sesame Evaluation**. Upon submission of a proposal, bidders will be asked to submit a Contractor Information Form.

### **Disclaimers**

1. Sesame Workshop South Africa 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 South Africa is under no obligation to offerors unless and until a written agreement is signed by Sesame Workshop South Africa and offeror.
3. Sesame Workshop South Africa 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 South Africa may request additional rounds of responses based on more detailed instructions or requirements.
6. Information provided by Sesame Workshop South Africa about the RFP process, including this document, is confidential to Sesame Workshop South Africa. Proposals produced under this RFP belong to Sesame Workshop South Africa. Any distribution of such Proposals must first have written authorization from Sesame Workshop South Africa.
7. Offerors are not entitled to any compensation or payment for any submission to Sesame Workshop South Africa or Sesame Workshop South Africa's use of such submission for any purpose. Offerors acknowledge that Sesame Workshop South Africa 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 South Africa 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 South Africa.
8. Offeror will retain a copy of its Proposal and hereby releases Sesame Workshop South Africa from any liability for loss of, or damage to the copy of the Proposal that is submitted to Sesame Workshop South Africa.
9. All intellectual property and related materials provided to offeror by Sesame Workshop South Africa shall remain the sole and exclusive property of Sesame Workshop South Africa 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 South Africa 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 South Africa.
11. Any contract to be entered into between Sesame Workshop South Africa and an offeror will be for work provided solely as work-made-for-hire, with ownership and all rights belonging to Sesame Workshop South Africa.
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 South Africa.