As I close out my first year as Sesame Workshop’s CEO, I am energized by this organization, proud of what we have accomplished, and excited about our future. In a year of mounting disruption, we have achieved great impact and demonstrated our relevance time and again.

The world is filled with increasingly complex and difficult issues for children and families. But as challenges grow, so do opportunities to deliver our mission. With the growth of media and our expanding network of partners, we have more ways to reach families who need us, we can create different types of content, and we can respond to emerging crises faster than ever—all with real impact and at scale.

Today, neither commercial businesses nor government entities can take on these major challenges alone. Solutions require the mission focus and innovation of forward-looking nonprofits to bring these groups together. And in a society divided along so many ever-solidifying lines, Sesame Workshop, as ever, unites.

Our amazing staff has risen to the occasion and persevered through uncertainty, obstacles, and personal challenges. We have supported them and adapted how we work, and we are stronger because of it.

To maximize our impact as a nonprofit, however, we also need tremendous supporters. We are grateful every day for you, as we do our best to create positive change in the world—in the year ahead and into the future.

With great appreciation,
Steve Youngwood
Chief Executive Officer

The past year has brought unprecedented challenges for us all: a pandemic that doesn’t seem to end, economic pressure for those who can least afford it, the need for social change at home, and conflict and crises abroad. These events have touched everyone—but we know that children have been impacted the most.

In 2021, we continued to use the power of media and Muppets to reach children around the globe with quality education. Seeing an uncertain and sometimes scary world through the lens of a child, we helped children cope with the evolving challenges of COVID-19. We helped adults have honest conversations with their children about race and racism. And we delivered critically needed learning to displaced children in the Middle East, Bangladesh, East Africa, and Latin America.

As Afghanistan’s government unraveled, we worked closely with our Afghan colleagues, helping to evacuate many who wanted to leave. And today we are delivering much needed learning materials in Dari and Pashto to Afghan families who have fled their country.

We could not have done any of this without the dedication of our Sesame team, our partners and donors, our Board of Trustees, and friends like you. For your ongoing support, our heartfelt thanks.

Our mission to help children grow smarter, stronger, and kinder has never been more needed. We can’t slow down now.

With enormous gratitude,
Sherrie Westin
President

NOTE FROM OUR LEADERS

Creating a smarter, stronger, kinder world for children takes all of us. When we come together, we change the future.
SEE THE IMPACT WE’RE MAKING TOGETHER

In a roller-coaster year, the Workshop was there to guide, comfort, and empower families at home and around the world.

We couldn’t do it without friends like you. Thank you.

4 LARGE-SCALE SOCIAL IMPACT INITIATIVES

and several new projects developed with philanthropic support

15,461 NEW DONORS came forward to help us build a better world for children
MEET OUR NEWEST FRIENDS

**TAMIR**
Eight-year-old Tamir lives with his family on Sesame Street. He enjoys tee ball, basketball, and drawing superheroes. As part of the Power of We club, he joins with friends to share their feelings and make a better world!

**WES**
Five-year-old Wes loves school, playing pretend, and bringing other kids into his imaginative worlds. Wes and his family are Black. Their experiences help caregivers and kids talk more openly about race and racism.

**ELIJAH**
Elijah is a meteorologist, a runner, a cook, and most importantly, Wes’s dad. He’s there for Wes and his friends to help them deal with big feelings, like when kids at school treat others unfairly because of their skin or fur color.

**JI-YOUNG**
Ji-Young is a spunky 7-year-old girl who loves to shred on her electric guitar. She’s always up for fun with her friends and family, and is very proud of her Korean heritage.

A STREET WHERE FAMILIES FEEL AT HOME

75% of parents have deep trust in Sesame Street, higher than any other preschool entertainment brand.

80% of parents agree that Sesame Street is educational, and the majority believe it prepares their child for school, higher than any other preschool entertainment brand.

99% brand awareness among parents.

HERE, THERE, EVERYWHERE: REACHING CHILDREN IN 150+ COUNTRIES...

8 IN 10 PARENTS throughout Mexico love Sésamo

3.5 MILLION South African kids ages 0–7 with 91% of viewers tuning in each week.

17 MILLION children ages 2–8 across the Middle East and North Africa.

...AND COUNTING

12,626 children, parents, and providers participated in our content testing and research.

190,263,134 users reached by our social media content.

6,417 minutes of content produced.

56 cookies (and one gingerbread house) eaten by Cookie Monster.

41 languages spoken in our COVID-19 content, reaching children in 102 countries.

100+ times Elmo said “love” on-air.

To date, Ahlan Simsim has reached over 17 million children ages 2–8.
Our latest research into family attitudes around race, the Family Reflections on Racism study, shows that children can’t turn a blind eye to racism—and neither should the adults in their lives.

LEARNING WHAT FAMILIES NEED NOW

Adults who want to teach children about race may not know where to start. This year we opened the door with age-appropriate language and tools to connect families around a sensitive issue with our ABCs of Racial Literacy resources and various Coming Together broadcast specials.

TOUGH CONVERSATIONS, MADE EASIER

Military families bring unique experiences to the topic of race. Created with their input, our targeted racial justice resources equip parents to talk to children about racism in the context of their communities and values.

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Military families bring unique experiences to the topic of race. Created with their input, our targeted racial justice resources equip parents to talk to children about racism in the context of their communities and values.

NEARLY 1/2

of parents who have not discussed racism with their child DO NOT feel entirely prepared to do so. Our new resources are designed to help.

500+

PRESS STORIES

about Coming Together

2,000+

PARTNERS

helped us make an impact for military families.

“This content can be really helpful to my family. We are a bilingual family and I want my daughter to see we are not the only ones… Show pride in it!”

Mother of children ages 5 and 8
Year two of COVID-19 was anything but “back to normal.” The pandemic continued to disrupt classroom learning and routines for millions of children, while confronting families with new uncertainty around safety and vaccines.

To help families everywhere weather this crisis—and come out the other side stronger—we created Caring for Each Other, a multimedia hub to keep children and families around the world learning, connected, and healthy.

With generous help from our global partners, the Workshop is building a rapidly growing library of content accessible in over 100 countries. Our PSAs, toolkits, activities, and reassuring lessons are reaching families on television, online, and on mobile devices to spark playful learning and help families breathe deeply together in a stressful time.

Elmo and his dad, Louie, are at the heart of our global public service campaign, created with the CDC and the Ad Council to let adults know that COVID-19 vaccines are here—and can help get us back to what we’re missing most.

As the pandemic evolved, so did our support. With major funding from LEGO Foundation, as well as partnerships with SC Johnson, Viatris, and the Walton Family Foundation, we launched playful videos and free-to-use content that spark kids’ curiosity and model healthy routines.

We didn’t let a fast-changing pandemic slow down our work. Sesame returned to the studio to create new seasons of Sesame Street, The Not-Too-Late Show with Elmo, Ghostwriter, Helpsters, Takalani Sesame, and Ahlan Sims, along with numerous specials and town halls.
WELCOME SESAME

Today more than 82 million people around the world have been displaced from their homes. Nearly half of them are children. Over the past year, a perfect storm of challenges, from the COVID-19 pandemic to new conflicts and crises, has further isolated these vulnerable families.

For them, Sesame Workshop created Welcome Sesame. More than a greeting, Welcome Sesame is an all-out push to bring belonging, acceptance, and comfort to displaced children and families from Latin America to South Asia to Africa.

Building on our pioneering humanitarian efforts in the Middle East, we’re rapidly adapting and expanding our work with innovative new programs, platforms, and partnerships. Our playful lessons and support land in families’ hands in refugee camps, on migration routes, and wherever else they’re needed, nurturing hope for sunnier days ahead.

I can see the happiness that lies beyond his smile whenever we get ready to go to the (Ahlan Sìmsì) center. Thank you for this great feeling you’ve given me. My greatest dream has come true for now.

Mother of internally displaced family living in Northwest Syria

GROWING RESILIENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Building on our trusted Ahlan Simsim brand, two grants deepen our support for kids affected by conflict. Efforts include teacher training, child-facing media, and youth empowerment funded by USAID Iraq and Arabic-language storybooks and videos funded through USA for UNHCR.

HELP FOR CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

For the millions of families migrating out of Venezuela, we’re deploying digital tools families can access at points along their route. Our Jardín Sésamo mini PCs and the Sésamo Chatbot on WhatsApp deliver early learning to children who may miss school for months at a time.

SOWING SEEDS OF INCLUSION

With a grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, we aim to reduce prejudice and increase appreciation for diversity among children, their caregivers, and education practitioners in Colombia and Uganda.

PLAY TO LEARN IN BANGLADESH

Last year we debuted the first Rohingya Muppets, Noor and Aaz, 6-year-old twins who live in Cox’s Bazar, the world’s largest refugee camp. Their playful example helps children in these camps offset the negative effects of trauma and imagine a different life ahead.

SUPPORT FOR AFGHANS IN TRANSITION

Families who fled Afghanistan after the government’s fall—as well as those who remain—face an uncertain future. We’re distributing our content in Dari and Pashto to global resettlement sites, bringing lessons and nurturing care to children at a critical moment.
This work wouldn’t be possible without the support of our partners and supporters at every level. Here are just a few.

**LEGEND FOUNDATION**

The LEGO Foundation’s continued investments across our social impact portfolio have been key to our success in reaching children and families this year. Funding from LEGO helped us scale up learning through play in early childhood development centers in Mexico. We also unveiled our first Rohingya Muppets as part of the LEGO-funded Play to Learn Humanitarian Program supporting refugee children and families in Bangladesh.

**PNC FOUNDATION**

A partner to Sesame for 17 years and counting, PNC, through its philanthropic initiative PNC Grow Up Great®, has supported an array of programs to give little learners their best possible start in life. This includes new resources to prepare kids for school and beyond, as well as a forthcoming program to address racial justice by instilling children with an early foundation for kindness, fairness, and mutual respect.

**HILTON FOUNDATION**

With a visionary grant to Sesame Workshop, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation is building more inclusive and peaceful communities in regions impacted by migration and displacement. Building on Sesame Workshop’s work in crisis contexts, this grant will fund pilot programs in Uganda and Colombia that will work to instill a healthy sense of personal and group identity among children and the grownups in their lives.

**SC JOHNSON**

Sesame’s global collaboration with SC Johnson is focused on healthy, connected, and full of curiosity. work, our partnership is powering new multilingual resources COVID-19 Caring for Each Other creating a healthier, more sustainable world for this and future generations. That includes new resources to prepare kids for school and beyond, as well as a forthcoming program to address racial justice by instilling children with an early foundation for kindness, fairness, and mutual respect.

**SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS**

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Mz Prayer
Jessica Whitney
Janice Woodard
Salka Woodward
Nicole Woolsey

Autism awareness is deeply important to our family, and Sesame has been front and center with their commitment to research, education, and kindness. We are blessed to support this spectacular work.
Benita Romano and Florence Ann Romano

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Avery Jordan
Khadijeh Jordan
Yumi Lee
Lizzy M
Joseph Manella
Match My Match
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"Autism awareness is deeply important to our family, and Sesame has been front and center with their commitment to research, education, and kindness. We are blessed to support this spectacular work."
Benita Romano and Florence Ann Romano
Sesame Workshop remained financially strong in FY 2021, generating $10.4M in operating income and a $109.8M increase in overall net assets. The Workshop continues to benefit from highly diversified sources of funding, including the generous support of individuals, private foundations, government agencies, and corporate underwriters. Revenue from these sources totaled $74.0M, representing 37% of total revenues, and includes new commitments to fund our programs and activities around the world with a focus on racial justice, humanitarian response, health and hygiene, traumatic stress, and the importance of play.

Revenues generated from the distribution of our media content and the licensing of our characters and brands decreased by 22% to $123.7M. The decrease is a result of the timing of delivery for our educational series to the Apple TV+ service. Excluding this impact, all other distribution and licensing revenues increased by 13% in FY 2021. The income generated from these sources goes directly into the creation of educational content as well as substantially covering our fundraising and administrative costs.

Total operating expenses were $188.3M in FY 2021, a decrease of 11% over FY 2020, also reflecting the timing of program delivery. The share of operating expenses spent on programmatic activities was 83% in FY 2021. Overall, net assets without donor restrictions increased by $117.0M, partially offset by a $7.2M decrease in net assets with donor restrictions.

Sesame Workshop maintains a strong balance sheet which provides flexibility to invest in mission-critical initiatives and to provide long-term reserves to ensure the sustainability of the organization in times of economic uncertainty. As of June 30, 2021 Sesame Workshop had operating cash and long-term investments totaling $431.6M and total net assets of $471.0M, including $58.8M with donor restrictions.

Sesame Workshop relies on the support of individuals, foundations, governments, and corporations to fund programmatic activities that target the most vulnerable children, including our Sesame Street in Communities, racial justice, autism acceptance, and military families programs in the United States, as well as our international programs in India, Africa, Bangladesh, and the Middle East. Because of our unique business model, with significant revenues from distribution and licensing, we are able to invest our grant and contribution revenues directly into expanding these initiatives.
### Statement of Activities*

**FY 2021**  
**Without Donor Restrictions** | **With Donor Restrictions** | **Total**  
---|---|---  
**Revenue**  
Program Support | 14,138 | 59,903 | 74,041  
Distribution Fees and Royalties | 87,902 | - | 87,902  
Licensing | 35,845 | - | 35,845  
Investment Return Designated for Operations | 824 | - | 824  
Net Assets Released from Restrictions | 67,069 | (67,069) | -  
**Total Revenue** | **$205,778** | **($7,166)** | **$198,612**  
**Expenses**  
Program Expenses  
Media and Education | 62,844 | - | 62,844  
Global Social Impact | 70,422 | - | 70,422  
Creative | 8,065 | - | 8,065  
Strategy and Research | 4,930 | - | 4,930  
Public Awareness | 9,811 | - | 9,811  
**Total Program Expenses** | **156,072** | - | **156,072**  
Support Expenses  
Fundraising | 6,173 | - | 6,173  
General and Administrative | 26,012 | - | 26,012  
**Total Support Expenses** | **32,185** | - | **32,185**  
**Total Expenses** | **$188,257** | - | **$188,257**  
**Operating Surplus** | **$17,521** | **($7,166)** | **10,355**  
**Increase in Net Assets** | **$116,990** | **($7,166)** | **$109,824**  
**Net Assets, Beginning of Year** | **$295,162** | **$65,967** | **$361,129**  
**Net Assets, End of Year** | **$412,152** | **$58,801** | **$470,953**  

### Statement of Financial Position*

**FY 2021**  
**Assets**  
Cash and Cash Equivalents | 37,899  
Receivables | 46,563  
Programs in Process | 66,715  
Investments | 393,679  
Intangible Assets | 28,382  
Property and Equipment | 20,460  
Other Assets | 4,602  
**Total Assets** | **$598,300**  
**Liabilities and Net Assets**  
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses | 61,402  
Deferred Revenues | 54,999  
Deferred Rent Payable | 11,546  
**Total Liabilities** | **127,347**  
**Net Assets**  
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions | 412,152  
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions | 58,801  
**Total Net Assets** | **$470,953**  
**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** | **$598,300**  

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*In thousands*
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DONATE TODAY

At a pivotal moment for children and families, your support means the world. Every donor and every dollar helps fuel our mission—from bringing life-saving lessons to migrant families on the move, to creating more inclusive communities here at home.

For the generosity of our supporters at every level, thank you.

Make a tax-deductible donation by visiting:
sesameworkshop.org/donate

Or, text:
SESAME to 21000

If you prefer to make a donation by check, please make it out to “Sesame Workshop” and send it to:
Sesame Workshop
P.O. Box 21609
New York, NY 10087

For information about donor-advised funds, giving stock, matching gifts, and planned gifts, please contact major.giving@sesame.org

2021 IMPACT REPORT

SHARE YOUR STORY

Have Sesame Workshop’s tools and resources made a difference? Share your story with us at yellowfeatherfund@sesame.org

FUNDRAISE

Anyone can raise funds for Sesame Workshop! Start your own campaign to support our work. For information, visit sesameworkshop.org/fundraise

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