



Helping Children Affected by Crisis to Learn, Grow, and Thrive

“Welcome” is more than a greeting. It’s the sense of belonging, security, and hope that too many children are denied. More than 400 million children live in areas currently affected by violent conflict,ⁱ and 35 million children around the world have been forcibly displaced from their homes.ⁱⁱ Evidence shows that prolonged adversity in a child’s earliest years can impede development and result in devastating long-term consequences for their educational success, as well as their physical and mental health. The ripple effects of a generation denied early childhood development (ECD) threatens to trigger a cycle of instability and poverty that can affect larger community goals like social cohesion, resilience, and equity.ⁱⁱⁱ

The good news is that the research shows that if we can reach children with quality ECD we can improve their skills to overcome adversity and help to build a brighter future. For over 50 years, Sesame Workshop has harnessed the power of media and Muppets to reach millions of children in more than 150 countries, improving learning outcomes in basic literacy and numeracy while also instilling social-emotional skills and strategies for coping with challenges.

As young children are increasingly impacted by crises around the globe, Sesame Workshop is committed to meeting their needs. Our Welcome Sesame Initiative unites programs reaching children and families affected by crises around the world, from the Middle East to South Asia, East Africa, Latin America, the United States, Afghanistan and now Ukraine.

Return on Investment in Early Childhood Development

Early childhood development (ECD) investments support children from birth to age 8. They cover services that promote nurturing care including health, nutrition, safety and protection, responsive caregiving, and play-based early learning.

Evidence shows that quality support in the early years for young children and their caregivers can provide tremendous returns – up to 13% per year – through improved education, health, and economic outcomes.^{iv}

Welcome Sesame’s ambitious goal is to expand access to quality, playful, inclusive, and context appropriate early childhood development & learning for young children affected by crisis and provide support to the caring adults in their lives.

Welcome Sesame Ukraine Response Snapshot:

Sesame Workshop's Ukraine Response overall goal is to **expand access to quality, playful, inclusive, and contextually appropriate early childhood education for young children affected by the crisis in Ukraine**. Our response is oriented around four strategic objectives:

- Strategic Objective 1: Improved social emotional learning (SEL)
- Strategic Objective 2: Increased opportunities for playful learning
- Strategic Objective 3: Improved inclusive environment
- Strategic Objective 4: Increased positive self-concept

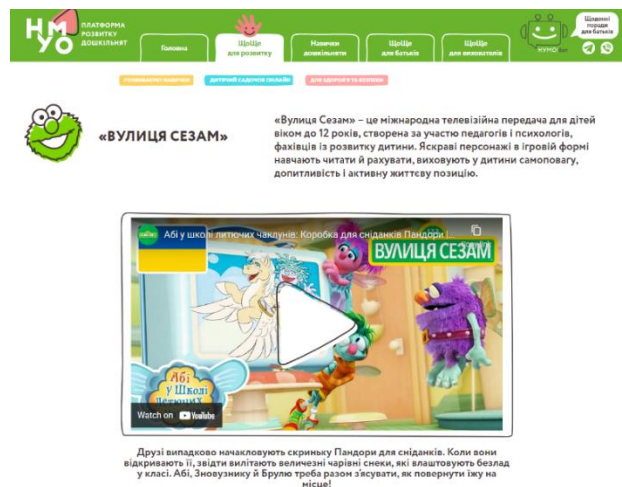
Progress snapshot:

Our Ukraine Response to date has focused on reaching Ukrainian children and caregivers in Ukraine and across the region.

- We have established partnerships to reach children and families by layering and integrating our content, materials and trainings into existing efforts and delivery channels.
- Key partners include: The government of Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science Ukraine (MESU), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of State (DOS), Save the Children, International Federation of the Red Cross, JCC Krakow, EdCamp a Ukrainian NGO network of 40,000 educators -, and UNICEF.

Immediately upon launch, Sesame Workshop ensured existing Ukrainian content was made publicly available for children.

- Existing non-Ukrainian content was reviewed for cultural relevance and **translated and dubbed into Ukrainian** for distribution on [YouTube](#).
- To date, SW has rapidly adapted 76 age-appropriate videos in Ukrainian and Russian language covering the topics of Social Emotional Learning and Math, which have been posted online on YouTube for open use.
- As of Jan 2023, these videos have generated 11.7M views in total and 167,000 hours watched. These videos are now uploaded and available on the Ministry of Education and Science Ukraine's e-learning platform NUMO (see right), as well as UNICEF's learning passport.
- Additionally, Sesame is working directly with early learning educators in Ukraine and providing trainings and facilitator guides to support teachers on the use of the content with children in their classrooms.



Sesame Workshop Ukraine Response videos featured on the Government of Ukraine's official e-learning platform,

For more information on Welcome Sesame and our Ukraine Response, contact Lesley Bourns, VP of Humanitarian Programs: Lesley.Bourns@Sesame.org

ⁱ Peace Research Institute Oslo, “Children Affected by Armed Conflict, 1990-2019,” 2020.

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/%C3%98stby%2C%20Rustad%20%26%20Tollefsen%20-%20Children%20Affected%20by%20Armed%20Conflict%2C%201990%E2%80%932019%20-%20Conflict%20Trends%206-2020.pdf>

ⁱⁱ https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/_figures-at-a-glance.html

ⁱⁱⁱ Brown, T.T., Jernigan, T.L. “Brain Development During the Preschool Years”. *Neuropsychology Rev* 22 (2012).

^{iv} García, J.L., Heckman, J.J., et al. “The Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program”
NBER working paper (2016)