

# ***Watch, Play, Learn Toolkit* Reference Group**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

**Sesame Workshop** Founded in 1969 as an independent non-profit organization based in New York, Sesame Workshop has a unique track record of developing innovative solutions to learning crises, not just domestically in the USA but also in developing contexts and increasingly in humanitarian crises. Sesame Workshop offers educational media to both in and out of school pre-primary age children and is present in more than 150 countries around the world. It provides pedagogically rigorous early childhood education content for almost two hundred million children with the goal of helping them become smarter, stronger, and kinder. Sesame Workshop has been focusing on planning, designing, and implementing educational videos and interventions in refugee contexts around the world.

The ***Play to Learn*** initiative is a multi-partner grant funded by the LEGO Foundation to support early childhood development programming in humanitarian settings, specifically reaching refugees and host communities. It commits to creating actionable evidence from monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) projects. Solutions promoted include playful learning experiences for children to boost socio-emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Programs in different cultures have been tailored together with the local communities and parents, caregivers, and teachers have been trained to deliver effectively play-based learning.

***Watch, Play, Learn*** (WPL) is a set of engaging and globally relevant content designed as part of *Play to Learn* for children aged three to eight years old. They are part of Sesame Workshop's broader humanitarian initiatives that deliver early learning and nurturing care to children and caregivers affected by conflict and crisis. The five-minute animated videos enable broad reach and increase equitable access to early learning opportunities. They are designed to promote ECD outcomes in the domains of Math, Science, socio-emotional learning, and child protection, health, and safety. Whether adapted to a new crisis setting or introduced in already-existing protective services, the WPL videos aim to be globally implementable and at the same time adaptable to diverse contexts and conflict settings.

Sesame Workshop is currently wrapping up **three pilots** in Bangladesh, Colombia, and Kenya to build evidence around the key hypothesis that *WPL* content can be adapted to suit different contexts. Through learning from the pilots, Sesame Workshop will understand the contextual variables that affect outcomes; identify adaptations in implementation that could guarantee scalability and greater impact; identify new possible outcomes; and gain an overall measure of perceived impact of the pilots on intended users.

## Scope of Work

With the aims of making early childhood development in emergencies more accessible to vulnerable children and families everywhere, Sesame Workshops seeks to convene humanitarian and early childhood development programmatic experts to participate in collaborative workshops and provide strategic analysis and recommendations for the improvement and use of WPL resources in ECDiE programming.

This reference group will work closely with Sesame Workshop team members and two external consultants to carry out the following:

1. Participate in an initial meeting to learn about the *WPL* resources, the real-time learning from the pilots and gain an understanding of the landscape.
2. Participate in a series of workshops, ranging from three to five sessions from December 2023 through April 2024, to review existing and new WPL resources, share expertise, and provide feedback and recommendations aligned with the principles of equity and inclusion.
3. Identify possible opportunities for *WPL* partnerships for implementation and funding and distribution to maximize impact.

## Reference Group Membership

The *Watch, Play, Learn* Reference Group stands to make an impactful contribution to the sector by providing thought leadership on the future of a uniquely designed set of resources with the potential for ready deployment in crisis and conflict contexts. The Reference Group also serves as an opportunity for sector professionals to come together with others on a shared topic of interest, especially with those who may be typically outside of the norm of humanitarian and Early Childhood Development programming (teachers unions, social work partners).

The reference group will consist of five to seven members, each participating in an individual capacity. Members should possess subject matter expertise in Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE), with experience in policy, practice, or lived experience, and can help navigate the tension between best technical practice and implementation feasibility. They should demonstrate a commitment to advancing the well-being of young children living in crisis-affected contexts, along with familiarity in delivering interventions in education, child protection, health, safety and/or nutrition for young children. The total required time for participating in the reference group, including independent review, is 12-15 hours. The Sesame Workshop team will make a deliberate effort to ensure inclusion and representation.

Potential reference group members who are interested in participating are invited to express their interest by sending an email to Leslie Cuellar ([leslie.cuellar@sesame.org](mailto:leslie.cuellar@sesame.org)), providing their CV, letter of interest, a requested honorarium for participation and availability from December 2023 through April 2024.