

= Sesame Street international co @-@ productions =

Sesame Street international co @-@ productions are educational children 's television series based on the American Sesame Street but tailored to the countries in which they are produced . Shortly after the debut of Sesame Street in the US in 1969 , television producers , teachers , and officials of several countries approached the show 's producers and the executives of Children 's Television Workshop ( CTW ) about the possibility of airing international versions of Sesame Street . Creator Joan Ganz Cooney hired former CBS executive Mike Dann to field offers to produce versions of the show in other countries .

The producers of these shows developed them using a variant on the CTW model , a flexible model of production based upon the experiences of the creators and producers of the US show . The model consisted of the combination of producers and researchers working together on the show , the development of a unique curriculum , and extensive test screening of the shows . The shows came to be called co @-@ productions , and they contained original sets , characters , and curriculum goals . Different co @-@ productions were produced , depending upon each country 's needs and resources . They included both dubbed versions of the American show and versions created , developed , and produced in each country that reflected their needs , educational priorities , and culture . For example , the first HIV @-@ positive Muppet , Kami , from the South African co @-@ production Takalani Sesame was created in 2003 to address the epidemic of AIDS in South Africa , and was met with controversy in the US . By 2006 , there were 20 co @-@ productions in countries all over the world . In 2001 , there were more than 120 million viewers of all international versions of Sesame Street , and by the US show 's 40th anniversary in 2009 , they were seen in more than 140 countries .

= = History = =

A few months after the 1969 debut of Sesame Street on PBS in the US , producers from Brazil , Mexico , Canada , and Germany requested that the organization responsible for the show 's production , the Children 's Television Workshop ( CTW ) create and produce versions of Sesame Street in those countries . Even before the American show 's debut , the CTW established an international division , which oversaw its licensing in other countries . According to Gregory J. Gettas , the division immediately developed four main licensing policies : ( 1 ) like the American version , all foreign versions had to be broadcast without commercials ; ( 2 ) any changes would have to meet high production standards , which protected the CTW 's proprietary interests ; ( 3 ) all versions had to reflect the country 's cultural values and traditions ; and ( 4 ) all changes would have to be approved , initiated , and supervised by a local committee working with the CTW .

Many years later , co @-@ creator Joan Ganz Cooney recalled , " To be frank , I was really surprised , because we thought we were creating the quintessential American show . We thought the Muppets were quintessentially American , and it turns out they 're the most international characters ever created " . Mike Dann , a former CBS executive whom Cooney had hired as a CTW vice @-@ president and her assistant , was assigned to field offers from other countries to produce their own versions of Sesame Street . Dann 's appointment led to television critic Marvin Kitman stating , " After he [ Dann ] sells [ Sesame Street ] in Russia and Czechoslovakia , he might try Mississippi , where it is considered too controversial for educational TV " .

By summer 1970 , Dann had made the first international agreements for what the CTW later called " co @-@ productions " . 38 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation television stations broadcast Sesame Street to Canada 's English @-@ speaking provinces . The Armed Forces Radio and Television Network agreed to air the first 130 episodes of the US @-@ made show for children of military personnel serving in 16 countries , including Iceland , Greece , Ethiopia , and South Korea . During his tenure at CTW , Dann also made agreements with several Caribbean nations , Mexico , Australia , Japan , the Philippines , France , Israel , and Germany . He later told author Michael Davis , " I was aggressive and I knew people around the world " . During the same period there were discussions about broadcasting the US version in England or producing a British version of Sesame

Street but British broadcasters found the show too controversial and rejected the idea . The American version was broadcast throughout the UK on a limited basis starting in 1971 , but went off the air in 2001 .

As of 2006 , there were 20 active " co @-@ productions " . CTW vice @-@ president Charlotte Cole , in 2001 , estimated that there were more than 120 million viewers of all international versions of Sesame Street , and by the show 's 40th anniversary in 2009 , they were seen in more than 140 countries . In 2005 , Doreen Carvajal of The New York Times reported that income from the co @-@ productions accounted for US \$ 96 million . Cole stated , " Children 's Television Workshop ( CTW ) can be regarded as the single largest informal educator of young children in the world " . Studies conducted on the effects of several co @-@ productions ( Mexico in 1974 , Turkey in 1990 , Portugal in 1993 , and Russia in 1998 ) , found that viewers of these shows gain basic academic skills , especially literacy and numeracy , from watching them .

In 2001 , the Workshop introduced Sesame English , a series focused on teaching children and their families the basics of the English language and on familiarizing them with some aspects of American culture . As of 2009 , it aired in several countries , including Japan , Korea , and Italy . In 2003 , in response to the epidemic of AIDS in South Africa , the co @-@ producers of Takalani Sesame included the first preschool AIDS / HIV curriculum . They created the first HIV @-@ positive Muppet , Kami , to confront the stigma of HIV and AIDS in South Africa . According to the documentary , The World According to Sesame Street , the reaction of many in the US surprised Sesame Workshop . Some members of Congress attacked Sesame Street , Sesame Workshop ( previously , the CTW ) , and PBS . According to co @-@ producer Naila Farouky , " The reaction we got in the US blew me away . I didn 't expect people to be so horrible ... and hateful and mean " . The controversy in the US was short @-@ lived , and died down when the public discovered the facts about the South African co @-@ production , and when Kofi Anan and Jerry Falwell praised the Workshop 's efforts .

Gettas explained what he called " Sesame Street 's unprecedented appeal abroad " was its broad appeal and adaptability to other cultures . Gettas stated , " Here is a program that speaks to them in their own language , on their level , and with respect for their intelligence " . According to Cooper Wright , the Sesame Workshop 's vice @-@ president of International Co @-@ Productions in 2006 , the " mission " of the co @-@ productions was to " help children reach their highest potential " . The producers were further galvanized to accomplish this goal after the events of 9 / 11 . Cooney stated , " Our producers are like old @-@ fashioned missionaries . It 's not religion they 're spreading , but it is learning and tolerance and love and mutual respect " .

= = Production = =

The earliest international versions were what then @-@ CTW vice @-@ president Charlotte Cole called " fairly simple " , consisting of dubbed versions of the show with local language voice @-@ overs and instructional cutaways . Dubbed versions of the show continued to be produced if the country 's needs and resources warranted it . They utilized a variant of a flexible model called the CTW model , developed by the producers and creators of the original show , to create and produce independently produced preschool television shows in other countries . The Workshop recognized that the production model developed in the US , which reflected its needs and culture at the time , served as a framework for other countries that wanted to repeat it . Its inherent flexibility was attractive to producers in other countries , who saw the model as " a methodological approach that is neither doctrinaire nor culture @-@ bound " that could be used to achieve different results in different countries . According to the 2006 documentary , The World According to Sesame Street , the producers of the co @-@ productions repeated the " experiment " undertaken by the original US show , but adapted it to each specific situation . In 1969 , the producers of the original show depended upon government and foundation funding , but as Sesame Workshop CEO Gary Knell stated in 2009 , the US funding model would not necessarily be effective in countries with different economic and political structures . All co @-@ productions share elements with the American show , but because of their different needs , no two are exactly alike . According to Gettas , the producers

of the programs would " rely on variants of the CTW model to help them create programming that faithfully reflects the linguistic , cultural , social , or religious diversity of their native lands " .

The need for preschool education in each country was assessed through research and interviews with television producers , researchers , and educational experts , which paralleled what the producers of Sesame Street did in the late 1960s . Then they convened the experts in a series of meetings , held in the individual countries , to create and develop a curriculum , the show 's educational goals , and its set and characters , as was done in 1968 in the US . Finally , they held a series of meetings , both at the CTW offices in New York City and in the individual countries , to train the co @-@ production team in the CTW model . Writing seminars were also held in New York .

The co @-@ productions consisted of unique characters , sets , and curricula designed to meet the needs of their own children . Cole reported that the goal of the co @-@ productions was to provide children in each country a program that reflected their country 's culture , local values , and educational priorities . She stated that this cultural specificity was the reason for the co @-@ productions ' success , popularity , and educational impact . The co @-@ productions combined universal curriculum goals that were common around the world with educational content that specifically addressed the needs of children in each country . Another goal of the international co @-@ productions of Sesame Street was , as executive producer Lutrelle Horne stated in 1987 , the improvement of " the overall quality of a country 's television " . He added , " We give a country a model of how television can be used effectively to address people 's needs " .

US cast members Kevin Clash and Marty Robinson have cast and trained the international puppeteers . At first , Muppet builder Kermit Love constructed the puppets for the new shows in the US . According to Gikow in 2009 , Jim Henson 's Creature Shop , overseen by Connie Peterson , has taken over puppet creation . The producers of Sisimpur , the Bangladesh co @-@ production , created their own traditional puppets because their puppet @-@ making craft is thousands of years old and an important part of their culture . The producers of each co @-@ production developed and built their own sets , live @-@ action videos , and animations in @-@ country . After they developed , produced , and aired the new show , they conducted research to ascertain whether their curriculum goals were met , just as was done in the US after the first season of Sesame Street . According to producer Nadine Zylstra , they faced unusual challenges rarely experienced in the US . For example , riots and conflicts between Serbs and Albanians in 2004 delayed production of the Kosovo co @-@ production for three months . In 2005 , a nationwide strike in Bangladesh temporarily stalled production of their show .

When countries were not able to afford creating original co @-@ productions , the Workshop provided alternatives for them . They created Open Sesame , a series with no specific cultural references in it , and with , as Horne described , " universally acceptable material " . The show was also broadcast in US military bases . The Workshop 's library of Muppet skits , short films , and animations were sold to many countries and were either broadcast in English or dubbed in the local language . According to Gikow , it often served as the basis for the creation of new material for their own co @-@ productions . As of 2009 , the Workshop opened its entire library of episodes , short films , and animations created all over the world so that poorer countries could use and adapt them for their purposes .

= = Co @-@ productions = =

= = = 1970s = = =

The first international co @-@ production of Sesame Street was Brazil 's Vila Sésamo , which first aired in 1972 and had an initial run of two years . Its set consisted of an open plaza . The Muppet Garibaldo was " the centerpiece " of the Brazil co @-@ production and remained popular with viewers when the show was revived in 2007 . Garibaldo 's performer in the revival , Fernando Gomes , became a puppeteer because of the original Brazilian show 's influence . It was broadcast in Portuguese . Also in 1972 , Plaza Sésamo was produced in Mexico . This co @-@ production has

also been broadcast in Puerto Rico and in Spanish @-@ speaking Latin America since 1973 , and has aired on Spanish television stations in the US since 1995 .

In 1973 , West Germany , one of the first countries to approach CTW , began airing Sesamstraße . It has been continually produced since . At first , this co @-@ production incorporated original German animation and live action segments into the US version . Starting in 1978 , its producers began using puppets filmed in their own studio in Germany . The Netherlands ' version , Sesamstraat , began in 1976 . This show has aired in both Dutch and Flemish . In Sesamstraat 's early years , Belgium television participated in its production , so it also aired there . In 2011 , to celebrate the show 's 35th anniversary , the Sesame Workshop partnered with the Vincent van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam to recreate a version of van Gogh 's " Bedroom in Arles " , featuring Muppets from both the American and Dutch shows . France aired Open Sesame in the early 1970s before creating its own co @-@ production . One version , created in 1974 , Bonjour Sesame , was fifteen minutes long and had no street scenes . 5 , Rue Sésame began in 1976 ; its set consists of a courtyard of a building in a small French town .

The final two co @-@ productions of the 70s , both made in 1979 , occurred in Kuwait and Spain . The Kuwaiti show , Iftah Ya Simsim , which ran until 1990 , was the first of its kind in the Arab world . It used Modern Standard Arabic ( MSA ) , and was broadcast in 22 Arab countries . The show continued to be well @-@ known decades after it went off the air . It returned in 2013 , and had similar goals and objectives as the original version , including the use of MSA . Barrio Sésamo , made in Spain , featured a snail character who was able to hide a thousand and one things in her shell . One of the show 's Muppet characters , Dr. Valentin Ruster , was based upon Dr. Valentin Fuster , a native Spaniard who worked at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City . Dr. Fuster 's likeness was created to educate children in Spain about exercise and eating healthy .

== 1980s ==

Sweden 's version of Sesame Street , Svenska Sesam ( 1981 ? 1983 ) , was originally a single season full co @-@ production , but did not integrate puppets . Dubs have aired before and after . Israel filmed its co @-@ production , called Rechov Sumsum , in 1983 . It was the first co @-@ production to devote an entire section of its curriculum to educating children about mutual respect , which was a priority due to " profound political tension in the region " . Its curriculum , which was based upon their viewers ' needs , differed from many other countries and exposed Israeli children to children from different cultures . The show 's counterpart of Big Bird was a hedgehog named Kippi .

Also in 1983 , the Philippines created Batibot , the first fully bilingual ( Tagalog and English ) version of Sesame Street . In 1989 , Susam Soka?? , a co @-@ production filmed in Turkey , featured versions of Big Bird and an " exuberant little @-@ girl Muppet host " named Simi . There have been three versions of Sesame Street in Portugal , including one co @-@ production created in 1989 . Rua Sésamo was also broadcast in the Portuguese @-@ speaking nations Angola , Mozambique , Guinea , Cape Verde , and São Tomé . Play with Me Sesame is the title of the current version .

== 1990s ==

Norway 's co @-@ production , entitled Sesam Stasjon , began filming in 1991 . Three co @-@ productions premiered in 1996 , in Russia , Canada , and Poland . Russia 's version , Ulitsa Sezam ( ????? ???? ) , debuted in 1996 . No longer on the air , one of its curriculum goals was to prepare Russian children to live in a " new open society " . Poland 's Ulica Sezamkowa has been since replaced by dubs of various Sesame Workshop programs and has changed its name to Sezamkowy Zakątek . Canada aired Sesame Street Canada , a combination of locally produced and US @-@ made content from 1972 to 1996 . A French @-@ dubbed version was shown in 1975 , which demonstrated the producers ' commitment to bilingualism , one of their curriculum goals . In 1996 , a half @-@ hour program called Sesame Park was produced by the country 's public broadcasting corporation and consisted of more content created in @-@ country . The series featured a polar

bear , an otter , a female bush pilot , and a girl in a wheelchair .

In 1998 , the Chinese co @-@ production of Sesame Street , Zhima Jie , was created . An auto mechanic became the head writer of this show , broadcast in Mandarin Chinese , because there were few people with experience in writing for children in the country . It has aired in 40 local markets , comprising forty percent of all Chinese homes . Its curriculum emphasized aesthetics . The Chinese puppeteers were trained by Kevin Clash and Carroll Spinney . Also in 1998 , a fifteen @-@ minute version of the Israeli show was dubbed in Arabic and renamed Shara 'a Simsim ; this Palestinian co @-@ production promoted children 's sense of national identity .

= = = 2000s = = =

In 2000 , Egypt 's co @-@ production , entitled Alam Simsim ( ????? ) , began to air throughout the Arab World and was broadcast in Arabic . Its curriculum focused on literacy , math , cognitive and social skills , girls ' education , the environment , and health . The show was sponsored by its patron , Egyptian First Lady Suzanne Mubarak . A study conducted in 2004 showed that the show 's efforts to educate Egyptian children about health were substantially influential .

South Africa aired Takalani Sesame , also in 2000 ; it focused on AIDS education with the creation of the first HIV @-@ positive Muppet , Kami , who was declared a UNICEF " Champion for Children " in 2003 . The show reached almost 70 percent of children in urban areas and almost 50 percent in rural areas , and its viewers had improvements in HIV / AIDS knowledge , attitudes , and communication . In 2007 , it began airing in almost all of the country 's official languages , and its Muppets were used in health educational campaigns . In 2008 , the show began to focus on diversity within South Africa and technology . Takalani Sesame 's tenth anniversary in 2010 was marked by a series of workshops in South Africa focusing on the future of the show and the needs of the country 's children . Research conducted about the show 's affects showed that viewers gained in four major areas : basic knowledge , blood safety , discrimination , and numeracy skills . They also improved in life skills , such as safety , sounds , nature , emotions , and self @-@ esteem .

Hikayat Simsim premiered in 2003 in Jordan . According to its producers , its goal was to " promote respect in the face of conflict " . The show also focused on literacy , numeracy , health and hygiene , emotions , road safety , and the environment . Afghanistan temporarily aired its first version of Sesame Street , called Koche Sesame in 2004 , to help rebuild its educational system . Although this production filmed its own live @-@ action films , it used Muppet segments filmed in the U.S. , which were dubbed in Dari , one of the country 's two main languages . The show 's producers donated 400 education kits , which included a message from President Hamid Karzai , to schools , orphanages , and TV stations across the country . Its curriculum focused on encouraging awareness of other cultures , increasing opportunities for women and girls , and fostering children 's interests in education .

In 2005 , Sisimpur aired in Bangladesh . This co @-@ production 's goal was to improve school achievement and decrease drop @-@ out rates for children before the third grade . This difficult co @-@ production , which was beset by political difficulties and severe flooding that delayed production , was depicted in the 2006 documentary , The World According to Sesame Street . Also in 2005 , the producers of the Kosovo co @-@ production ( Rruga Sesam / Ulica Sezam ) chose to present the languages of the region more evenly . Instead of showing words on screen , children were challenged to label objects verbally , thus learning that there are different ways to say the same thing . The Workshop worked in conjunction with UNICEF to produce this show , to aid in the peace process between Albanians and Serbs . One of its goals was to demonstrate to Albanian and Serbian children that their counterparts were like them .

In 2008 , Cambodia produced Sabai Sabai Sesame , a dubbed version of the original US show . It aired twice weekly , and emphasized basic literacy , numeracy , and social skills . Northern Ireland 's production , which was broadcast throughout the U.K. but was " rooted in everyday life in Northern Ireland " , was called Sesame Tree , and was set in and around a whimsical tree . The show 's

curriculum focused on mutual respect and understanding . Also in 2008 , Jalan Sesama , the Indonesian co @-@ production , premiered . Its focus was the country 's rich diversity . Denmark created Sesamgade in 2009 , which contained elements of Play With Me Sesame and locally produced segments with Elmo .

= = = 2010s = = =

Nigeria produced its own version of Sesame Street , called Sesame Square , in 2010 . Previously , they aired the US version . Funded in part by a grant from the US government , the show focused on AIDS , malaria nets , gender equality , and yams . It also featured the HIV @-@ positive Muppet Kami from the South African co @-@ production .

After an absence of ten years , and almost 30 years after the 1983 movie Big Bird in China , 53 eleven @-@ minute episodes of Sesame Street 's Big Bird Looks at the World , filmed in Mandarin Chinese , debuted in early 2011 in China . Inspired by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake , the program emphasized emergency preparedness . In the first week of December 2011 , a Pashto and Dari @-@ language version called Baghch @-@ e @-@ Simsim was launched in Afghanistan , and in the same month Pakistan began airing its own Urdu @-@ language version , called SimSim Humara , which was supposed to run for three years . In June 2012 , the United States terminated funding for SimSim Humara due to serious allegations of corruption by the local Pakistani puppet theater working on the initiative .