



PHOTO: RYAN DONNELL/SESAME WORKSHOP

# AHLAN SIMSIM IRAQ

## PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- **Implementing Partners:** Sesame Workshop with sub-awardees Mercy Corps and Save the Children.
- **Duration:** July 2021 - June 2024
- **Total Estimated Assistance:** \$11 million
- **Locations:** All of Iraq; with a special focus on communities that have experienced recent displacement, including religious and ethnic minorities.

## OVERVIEW

As Iraq recovers from years of conflict, communities are struggling to find a new sense of normalcy while both the physical and emotional wounds remain. The legacy of Iraq's latest conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) continues to hinder the country's socio-economic development and has left many children without a stable home, and others displaced. This is especially true for Iraq's ethnic and religious minorities, whose access to good-quality early childhood education was curtailed. Iraqi youth, who make up over half of the population, are unable to find jobs in an economy strained by war and corruption. Frustration can make youth prone to radicalization.

## GOALS

USAID is partnering with Sesame Workshop on Ahlan Simsim Iraq to promote inclusion, mutual respect, and understanding through multimedia educational content for Iraqi children, youth, and their families. Leveraging the trust in and popularity of Sesame Workshop's Arabic language educational show, Ahlan Simsim Iraq will produce culturally tailored and age-appropriate original educational media content for young children and provide services and tools for caregivers and teachers to promote equitable early learning. Ahlan Simsim Iraq will also provide training opportunities to Iraqi youth in audiovisual production and storytelling to increase meaningful participation in their communities and greater tolerance across ethnic, religious, and sectarian groups.

## ANTICIPATED RESULTS

- **Improving children's foundational skills**, including learner readiness and social and emotional learning, and engendering pride and appreciation for their identity and the diversity of Iraqi society.
- **Strengthening the effectiveness of teachers and facilitators** in implementing evidence-based learner readiness and psychosocial support strategies that promote appreciation of diversity and inclusion.
- **Increasing youth's sense of belonging and agency** through soft skills, storytelling, and media training, and opportunities for meaningful and inclusive engagement in their communities and across religious, ethnic, and sectarian groups.