

Public Affairs Section

U.S. Embassy, Gaborone, Botswana

March 12, 2012

(#4/12)



Press Release

MULTIMEDIA SESAME STREET CAMPAIGN TO REACH CHILDREN IN BOTSWANA

Botswana children will soon meet their newest neighbors, the furry and friendly Muppets of *Takalani Sesame*, as the longest street in the world continues into Botswana. Sesame Workshop, the non-profit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, has announced that *Takalani Sesame*, South Africa's original co-production of the legendary children's show, will begin broadcasting in Botswana on BTV on Tuesday, March 13. The episodes will air on Tuesday and Thursday at 3pm, with repeats on Wednesday and Friday at 8:30am.

Takalani Sesame is a groundbreaking initiative addressing the education and health needs of children ages 3 – 7 and its distribution is made possible through generous support from the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Throughout the world, including in Botswana, children are susceptible to a range of health problems. Additionally, these countries face challenges in the field of early childhood education. In preparation for the program's release, Sesame Workshop consulted closely with early childhood education experts, as well as government and non-government agencies, including officials at the Department of ICT and Media Services in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development.

Sixty-five episodes of *Takalani Sesame* are scheduled to be broadcast in Botswana. These episodes focus on the following curricular areas:

- Language development and early literacy;
- Health, nutrition and safety;
- Mathematical and scientific thinking;
- Personal, emotional, and social development; and
- Creative and aesthetic development

In addition to the 65 episodes for televised broadcast featuring Kami, Moshe, Zikwe, Zuzu and Neno, a robust outreach campaign will soon compliment the shows educational goals and curriculum. The outreach kit will include:

- An Alphabet Book – A large-sized storybook (known as a 'Big Book') with pages representing different letters of the alphabet. Each page spread will contain a scene with the Takalani Sesame Muppets and objects that can be associated with each word.
- A Math Game – Structured like the game 'Bingo,' the math game will be used to help children associate numbers and other mathematical concepts to pictures on the board.

- Street Scene Posters – Two posters, one featuring an urban street and another featuring a rural setting. Each poster is developed for teachers to use as an integrated learning tool that can be used to instruct children in a range of life skills across multiple content areas.
- A Caregiver Guide – A guide for teachers, parents, and caregivers that will provide ways to use the materials with children in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

“For over ten years, Kami, Zikwe, Neno and all the friends of *Takalani Sesame* have been educating and engaging children in South Africa, and we are thrilled to extend their impact to the children of Botswana,” says H. Melvin Ming, CEO and President, Sesame Workshop. “Sesame Workshop is proud to work with USAID and PEPFAR to distribute a series that will not only introduce children to letters and numbers, but will also teach important lessons about health and the world around them.”

USAID Director for PEPFAR programs in Botswana Joan LaRosa said, “Early childhood education is incredibly important and there is no better vehicle to appeal to young children than the entertaining characters of *Takalani Sesame*. I am very pleased that the program will now be available in Botswana, and I am particularly proud that USAID and PEPFAR are able to support it.”

Takalani Sesame will also begin programming in Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. The program’s expansion is made possible by the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Initial support for *Takalani Sesame* in South Africa was made possible by USAID, Sanlam, SABC Education, and the Department of Basic Education.

Nonprofit educational organization Sesame Workshop has a proud history of serving the needs of children and their families since its flagship program *Sesame Street* premiered in the U.S. in 1969. The international adaptation of *Sesame Street* began in the 1970s, with *Iftah Ya Simsim*, an Arabic co-production which premiered in Kuwait, and *Plaza Sésamo*, a co-production for Spanish-speaking children in the Americas. Today, localized versions of *Sesame Street* are produced and seen in Northern Ireland, Bangladesh, India, China and far beyond.

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