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SESAME STREET CO-PRODUCTIONS:  
PUTTING A GLOBAL SPIN ON EDUCATION

In Lisbon you'd ask for Rua Sesamo, in Norway it's Sesam Stasjon and in Turkey you'd be seeking Susam Sokagi. You will not find it on a road map or in Fodor's. Yet, just about any child in more than 100 countries and territories can tell you how to get to Sesame Street. Now in its 23rd year, this production of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW) delights and educates millions of youngsters not only in its original English language version, but in 13 foreign-languages co-production -- locally produced versions of Sesame Street specifically tailored to the needs and interests of children of different cultures and heritages.

CTW's international producers and researchers work with hundreds of educators and television professionals throughout the world to adapt what is known as the Sesame Street model. This model stresses a process of close coordination between researchers and television producers, early input from educators establishing curriculum goals, and continuous testing of program elements with the targeted audience to refine the product. The results? Television series that are well known not only for their educational effectiveness but also for their entertainment value.

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Sesame Street International Backgrounder (partial)

Each foreign language co-production of Sesame Street is unique reflecting the culture and feeling of the country or region where it is produced. Just like the original English-language production, each co-production features puppets, cast members, animation pieces and live action films. While "Big Bird" is only indigenous to the English-language version of Sesame Street, locally created mythical characters like "Kippy" the porcupine and the camel-like puppet "No'man" who star in the Israeli and Arabic co-productions enjoy celebrity status among the milk and cookies set in their particular region of the world. The co-productions also feature human cast members who, like Maria and Luis and Susan and Gordon in the original English-language production, interact with the puppets.

The co-productions take place in fictional settings and neighborhoods. For example, the Spanish co-production takes place in a realistic "barrio," while the "Sesamstrasse" of the German co-production is a fantasy that is neither indoor or outdoor. The Norwegian co-production Sesam Stasjon is truly unique because it is the only production that uses a train to transport the cast and characters to real and fictional locations throughout Norway.

Regardless of the set, the cast or the characters that populate the international versions of Sesame Street the educational objective is always paramount. Each co-production uses a customized curriculum that emphasizes key areas of child development: Child Capabilities, Successful Learning, Diversity Of The World and other important skills that may be indicative of a particular culture.

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