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SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

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PARTICIPANTS:

Opening Remarks:

JEFFREY D. DUNN
President and Chief Executive Officer
Sesame Workshop

Moderator:

REBECCA WINTHROP
Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

SHERRIE ROLLINS WESTIN
Executive Vice President, Global Impact and Philanthropy
Sesame Workshop

EMILY GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT
Fellow, Center for Universal Education
The Brookings Institution

SARA POEHLMAN
Senior Director, Early Childhood Development
Save the Children

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WINTHROP: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for coming. I'm Rebecca Winthrop. I'm the director of the Center for Universal Education here at The Brookings Institution. I am really pleased to welcome you to this event around supporting early childhood development in humanitarian crises, a topic that we feel and the people who work on ECD and humanitarian crises feel needs more attention. We have a range of discourses and debates in the policy circles around education, particularly sort of formal education, primary, secondary, et cetera, but early childhood is crucial and probably needs more attention the world over, but also particularly in these contexts.

I'm really very happy to be co-hosting this with Sesame Workshop. Sesame has been a great partner with us. We, in particular, have been using their research on the impact of their programs in some of our recent streams of work around scaling up quality improvements in childhood learning, from ECD on up. And that's been wonderful to partner with them on that.

In terms of our interest at the Center for Universal Education on this topic we have a broad initiative called Skills for a Changing World that is really becoming a central focus for us here at the Center. The premise being that young people need a whole suite of skills to survive in a rapidly changing world due to global interconnectedness as well as technology, which we see every day here in the U.S., but actually is spreading quite quickly across the globe, across the developing world; and that academic skills are crucial, but not the only thing needed. We need a broad range of skills, from social-emotional skills to critical thinking and problem-solving and teamwork, those types of things. And crucially, early childhood development really lays the foundation for the development of that breadth of skills.

So that's one of the areas that we are doing more work on. We're looking at this question around how to cultivate a breadth of skills, both in formal school environments, in informal learning spaces, through innovation, looking at it with an equity lens, a range of things. And so for us, this topic really fits into this idea of laying the foundations for a breadth of skills and try to make sure that the most marginalized kids have access to that opportunity because that will really be crucial for giving them the ability to develop to their full potential.

So that's our interest in the topic. I will tell you a little bit about our program before I welcome up my colleague from Sesame Workshop, Jeff Dunn, who will tell you a little bit from the

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Sesame co-host perspective about their interest and focus on this topic. We will have Jeff, who is the president and chief executive officer of Sesame Workshop, open up from their perspective, as I just said. I'm only repeating myself twice just to emphasize it here, Jeff. But Jeff has a very longstanding CV. You have the bios of everybody in your program. He's been at Sesame over a year and a half now and comes to it with a very illustrative career in many sectors actually, but particularly in media and children's entertainment.

And then we will have a panel where we will hear from Sara Poehlman, who is the senior director of Early Childhood Development at Save the Children. Thank you, Sara, for joining us. Save the Children is doing a lot of work in this space.

We will also hear from Emily Gustafsson-Wright, who is one of my colleagues. She's a fellow here at the Center for Universal Education.

And then also, happily, from Sherrie Rollins Westin, who's the executive vice president of Global Impact and Philanthropy at Sesame Workshop.

I am sorry to say that Sarah Smith from IRC, who was due to be here, we got frantic texts from her. She's struck on a train that was struck by lightning and literally is stuck in transit, poor thing. So we may get to catch her at the reception if she makes it in time.

So without further ado, Jeff, thanks so much for being here. And please do come up and we are happy to hear about Sesame.

MR. DUNN: So thanks, Rebecca, and thanks to everybody here at Brookings for hosting this today and inviting us down here and for holding this inspirational panel. It's really my pleasure and the pleasure of Sesame Workshop to be here with you. It's such an important issue.

At Sesame Workshop we subscribe to Wordsworth's point of view that the child is the father of the man. Now, for clarity's sake, we often immediately say and, of course, the child is the mother of the woman, as well, because we don't want to be confused about that. But either way, the point really is this: If you want to change the world, we think that the best way to do that is to start by improving the life of a child.

It would, we think, be hard to overstate the moral and the health and the economic consequences of the topic today, you know, today's refugee crisis. Worldwide 60 million people have

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been displaced from their homes and their countries. It's the most since World War II. If you understand nothing else from what comes out of this panel today, I hope that you'll remember this: over 90 percent of brain development happens by the time a child reaches age five and is supposed to start kindergarten; 92 percent by the time a child's supposed to start kindergarten. So it's the preschool years when brain development happens the most, when learning happens the most. And if a child does not have that happen because of stress or trauma, then the difficulties are really life-long and they are the ones that are the most likely to suffer from lack of cognitive development.

So this means that a great many refugee kids are missing out on the stable early learning experiences that most kids get and that are so necessary for cognitive development and to a successful adult life and one where they can contribute to society. So this refugee crisis is not just only an immense individual tragedy, which it is, but the enormity of the scale -- think 30 million kids -- portends profound long-term consequences for the rest of humanity. Anything we can do to help improve the conditions for these young lives that is so important to their cognitive development is good for them, but it is good for our shared future.

At Sesame Workshop we feel a special obligation to help the world's most vulnerable children grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. That's our mission. And we do it by focusing on the years that matter most, the preschool years. We already can and do reach millions of kids, at-risk kids around the globe with our social impact work. And now that we've joined forces with the IRC, the International Rescue Committee, we will be able together to bring educational content and resources directly to these young refugees. We're happy to have that opportunity. We're delighted because it's so critical that those of us who possess the tools to help them actually use them.

So in that vein of sharing tools, I'm also delighted to tell you that following this panel you're all invited to a reception. I guess it's across the hall, correct? To help celebrate the publication of our latest book, "The Sesame Effect," which is the story of our global impact work. If it's true as some pundits have argued that Sesame has been the longest and most important street in the world, then this is the story that helps to celebrate the passion and the work and the accomplishments of the people that made it happen, some of whom are in this room. So we're very happy to be able to share that with you and we hope you'll join us for that.

So with that, let me turn it over to a video that will show you some of the efforts that we've undertaken around the world, the ones we are most proud of and most passionate about. It'll give you a much better visual portrayal of what we do around the world.

So thanks very much and I think this is going to be a great panel and great day. Thank you. (Applause)

(Video shown)

MS. WINTHROP: (Applause) Thank you so much, Jeff, for kicking us off. Those kids are so cute. That was a great video. I hadn't seen it.

Emily, you've heard what Jeff said right at the get-go about brain development before the age of five being so crucial and then this idea of early intervention being crucial. I like the Sesame tagline because it includes "kinder," which we don't usually talk about, but that's a great thing to include. You're our early childhood specialist here at the Center for Universal Education. Could you kick us off by talking about what the research says around early childhood and the importance of it in children's lives and, in particular, why it would be so important in a humanitarian context?

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Sure. Thanks, Rebecca. First of all, I just want to say I am so excited to be on the stage with Sesame and here on this. I'm a child who grew up in the '70s. The only program I was allowed to watch was Sesame Street, oh, and Mr. Rogers.

SPEAKER: That's good parenting.

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Yeah, good parenting. So it's great to have you guys here.

I'm an early childhood specialist and it's, for me, a thrill that the CEO of an organization has pretty much taken all of my talking points because that really tells you that this message is out there and we increasingly hear business leaders not only of organizations like Sesame Street talking to the importance of early childhood development.

So just to back up a little bit, what is early childhood development? And we're talking about the development of children from conception to transition into primary school, and this includes interventions from antenatal care, healthcare, parenting education programs, education programs, as well as water and sanitation programs, et cetera. And the outcomes that we care about are the development

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of the whole child, like you said, strong, healthy, and kind children. And research shows, as Rebecca mentioned, that this broad range of skills is extremely important, not just the reading, the writing, and the math, but also communication skills, collaboration, perseverance, and those other sorts of skills.

And, as Jeff mentioned, these early years are really when these skills are developed and this is because this is when the brain development is most active, as he said, that 90 percent of brain development occurs before the age of 5. And if these fundamental neural connections are not created in these early years, it's much more difficult to do so later on.

In addition, cognitive and social-emotional development compound one another, this is the concept of skills begets skills. Cognitive skills lead to development of social-emotional skills, lead to the development of cognitive skills. This is really important.

This also means that early inequities in development can lead to further inequities later on in life. And conversely, early childhood interventions are the most effective in improving equity.

What do children need for proper brain development? We know that they need nutrition and stimulation, but they also need protection from adverse childhood experiences. The effects of nutrition and stimulation have been fairly well studied, and, increasingly, scientists are analyzing the effects of violence, neglect, and instability on a child's brain development.

What the science is telling us is that prolonged activation of the stress response systems affect a brain's chemical composition and can destruct the development of the brain architecture, as well as the other organ systems. This reaction is called toxic stress, it is a toxic stress response. And experiencing toxic stress as a child can increase the likelihood of disease and cognitive impairment in adulthood.

There isn't a huge literature looking at the impacts of war and military violence on children's development, but there is some. And not being an expert in the crisis and humanitarian space, it was a nice opportunity for me to take a quick look at that literature.

In a paper looking at the Palestinian experience from 2008 that was published in the International Journal of Behavioral Development, they looked at how traumatic experiences of violence and loss are associated with children's cognitive capacity, intelligence, creativity, and school performance. What they find is that children exposed to severe trauma had concentration problems, low

cognitive capacity, and thus difficulties in processing new information and retaining old knowledge.

These results are in line with earlier research that indicates that information processing, such as attention, recall, and concentration, is vulnerable to trauma while, on the other hand, stable structural characteristics, like IQ and personality, remain fairly intact. So it was evident that not IQ alone, but rather the balance between intelligence and creativity could protect children's mental health from long-term negative impact of military trauma.

What this tells us is that, fortunately, supportive adult relationships, quality ECD programs can mitigate, prevent, or even reverse the damaging effects of this toxic stress response, which, of course, may occur in situations of a humanitarian crisis. This is why the types of quality early childhood programs and interventions like Sesame and many others around the world really have the potential to change the lives of young children.

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks, Emily. And I would imagine, knowing your work as I do, that this also applies perhaps not to the same degree or it might not manifest in the same way, but to kids who are deeply impoverished or living in context of domestic violence or what have you. Is that true?

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Absolutely. There's research from all over the world, you know, in high-income countries showing that adverse childhood experiences have long-term effects on health, on chronic disease. The ACE Study in the United States demonstrates the impact of early childhood adverse experiences on these kinds of factors. The evidence is just incredible, children who had experienced abuse having a higher prevalence of heart disease, for example. To me that's just shocking, right? I mean, they're actually able to show that children who are abused as children have higher incidence of heart disease, so indeed.

MS. WINTHROP: Sara, let's turn to you because I often find this body of the literature incredibly depressing because it's really a small window and there's a lot of kids out there who are living in situations that we wouldn't want any kid to live in. But in some ways, I also feel like it is also a galvanizing call to action. And the call to action is that we need to intervene. And I guess what Emily's saying is that if we intervene with quality interventions, we could stop this. We can mitigate it. We can change the life trajectory of young people.

I know this is something you've worked on for a long time. I know you've worked around

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the world. Can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing at Save the Children for early childhood and particularly for emergencies? I see Rachel McKinney, your colleague in the audience, who's head of emergencies for Save the Children, and I know that you guys collaborate a lot. I'd love to hear how you're tackling it. What are some examples?

MS. POEHLMAN: Yeah, great, thanks for that. And it's great to be here. I'm sorry our colleague for International Rescue Committee – I was actually a former staff long time ago there and have had collaboration with Sesame, as well, so seeing this interest really growing in the interest of children is great.

The humanitarian context is really at the heart of Save the Children's work, as well. We believe that we have to serve the most vulnerable children in all contexts, including the ones that Emily mentioned, which are even in middle- or high-income countries, where you have children who are dealing with an intense amount of stress, as well. I think what we've done really well in Save the Children and as part of the humanitarian community generally intervening to kind of rebuild systems that preexisted in the countries when you have displacement, either internal displacement or displacement across border in refugee settings, as well.

But I think what we're really looking for at Save the Children is to have the kind of integrated programming where we're trying to find even those small entry points to really reach these kids, especially in the zero to three age range. We find that people are like, oh, lifesaving intervention. No, no, they need water, they need health facilities. It's very, very difficult on the ground in such a situation to get people really thinking about play and talk to your baby.

I think one of the things that we're really conscientious about is also the stress of caregivers. This is family members, but this is also the staff that we're expecting to deliver programs. I can speak specifically about post-earthquake Nepal, where all of our staff at Save the Children and the colleagues that we work with at other organizations themselves had experienced the earthquake and the stress and the situation for their own family. So we found that we really needed to address not just the children themselves, but the service providers as well that needed to find that space to interact with children.

We're working right now on an ECD and emergencies resource manual that's really kind

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of the how-to. You find those small entry points where you can really reach children, especially in the zero to three age group, through health services, protection mechanisms, and other means. If you're doing a food distribution and you've got a group of mothers or fathers who are waiting there, that's a ripe opportune moment to really talk about child development and take advantage of some of these opportunities, as well.

So in terms of Save the Children's work, the other piece that we're really looking at is to fill some of the evidence gaps to figure out what is it that works for children, especially in the prolonged contexts where you can't just keep mitigating the effect. It's not like an emergency arrives and you have, you know, six months of intervention and then you're done. We know that we're facing more and more prolonged emergencies where we have to build the resilience of children and not just take kind of a therapeutic approach, but help them develop the social and emotional skills that are really going to help them survive in these situations of chronic violence or really prolonged emergency contexts, as well.

So some of those are the areas we're looking at. We have some really interesting research actually going on in Nepal as we speak. I think we have data collectors in the field where we're taking the international development and early learning assessment, which is an assessment tool that Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee actually are using in countries along with a number of other partners. And we're looking at the protective factors and the resilience within families and we're looking at areas where you have children not affected by earthquake, children who were somewhat affected, and then very deeply affected areas, and looking at interventions across that spectrum to try to figure out what is it that we need to do differently when children are facing these shocks and this kind of stress.

We actually just had a training, some joint work with the International Rescue Committee in Lebanon, where we're both looking at children in the areas where we intervene, using the same tools. And one of the shocking findings, the preliminary findings that are coming out, for example, we're finding that even gross motor development is one of the lowest levels we've ever seen. I imagine children don't even have the space to go out and play and move around. And I suspect that this impact of stress is actually creating a situation where even the motivation of children to be able to go out and move around and engage is being damaged by this kind of situation.

I think we've done really well in terms of pre-primary and early learning, but this kind of zero to three work, considering what we know today about brain science, I think is going to be really critical for both Save the Children and our large humanitarian community really going forward to make that difference.

If you think about the intergenerational impact of these issues and what we're facing right now with 60 million people affected by emergencies, you consider how many of those are small children that are -- if we're not intervening, what is the world that we're going to be facing in the next generation, as well? When I think about that on a global scale and a national level and when we do intervene and we show pictures of the brain and what happens to a child, you can actually see the impact on even decision-makers and policymakers saying, wow, we didn't know.

So I think there's a lot of space to happen in terms of awareness raising that actually intervention, just to play and talk to children and create the space for them to relax from the kind of stress that they're facing, is probably one of the greatest lifesaving interventions you can have because you're talking about the brain development that's going to continue on for the whole life of that child.

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks, Sara. I'll come back to you afterwards because I'm really curious about this idea of intervening -- finding, you said, the small moments or windows of opportunity, such as parents are waiting with their kids for food distribution in a line perhaps hours on a day. One of the things we've been talking about here at Brookings is really how can you leverage informal learning environments? And I think emergencies are ripe with them, but also in more stable contexts and this idea of what do you do in trapped spaces where actually kids do spend a long period of time waiting in clinics, bus stops, whatever. So I'd be curious to come back to you after we turn to Sherrie. You know, are there other examples of working in "trapped" spaces?

Sherrie, over to you. I assume you agree with what Sara said in terms of the importance of play, the importance of stimulation. I'd be really curious to hear from you if you could talk a little bit about how Sesame helps catalyze that around the world. A lot of people know about Sesame Street for the television program and you guys are much, much more than that. I've been very impressed with the breadth of your work and the rigor of your research. Could you tell us a little bit more?

MS. WESTIN: I'd be delighted. I'm glad you got a chance to see the video first because

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I think it does help you understand most people, to Rebecca's point, think of Sesame Street as a domestic television show. But when you see the work we're doing, particularly around the world, I think you get a sense of the depth and breadth of our work because today we are so much more than television. You know, using every media we can, whether it's mobile, radio, every distribution platform we can to reach children in need.

But secondly, while Jeff says we're the longest street in the world, which I love, it's important to understand that we're not just sort of broadcasting or exporting the domestic version of Sesame Street. I think what makes us so effective is we're going into countries, we're partnering with the local experts, with the ministries of education. We're finding like-minded partners and we are creating content that is designed to meet the needs of the children in that country, in their language, in their culture, but also within their circumstances and addressing specific needs. That may be different in Afghanistan than South Africa or Bangladesh. There are certain commonalities, of course, but there are also unique challenges.

And I will say to your point about becoming a catalyst, you know, one of the things Sesame Street does very well is looking at difficult issues from a child's perspective. So we're able to address issues giving children the ability to see themselves in certain circumstances, and to help build the tools for resilience. We are out helping children grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. And I know that sounds lovely, but it's actually true. Everything we do is based on that whole child curriculum, which is giving children the basic literacy, numeracy, but also helping those social and emotional skills that you talk about that are so important. And that's about strength and resiliency and coping skills, as well as empathy and understanding.

What we've also found is because in most of these countries we're reaching caregivers and parents at the same time that we're reaching children, we're able to be the catalyst. We're able to provide tools to parents for them to engage with children.

I think both of you mentioned that, that the brain development also makes it very clear that the antidote to this toxic stress, what helps mitigate the damage that toxic stress and ACEs cause in a child's brain development is engagement with a parent or a loving adult, a caring adult. So that's what's called buffering, and that's what's absolutely necessary to help a child be able to overcome those

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challenges, to develop the coping skills, the emotional regulation, the resilience. And I think what's so rewarding about the work we do is we are able to reach children in circumstances that can be very difficult, where there may be no other means of quality preschool education, but also helping to address and give them the tools as well as those caregivers in order to help children deal with these issues.

I will say, I don't want to go too long, but I will say we just recently announced a partnership with the IRC. And I'm very sorry that Sarah Smith couldn't be here. I think she's still sitting in Philadelphia on a train. But we decided to partner with IRC. We've done work with Save the Children in Bangladesh and Liberia, and we partner with any number of NGOs in different circumstances. But we thought with IRC their experience in reaching displaced children and families, their direct service combined with our proven educational content, could be a powerful combination.

And if you think of all the things you've talked about, about toxic stress, and you think of what these families must be going through, that you have situations where even the caregivers or parents are so stressed that it's hard for them to understand the importance of that engagement, that playful learning, so for us to give them the tools and the knowledge and the understanding of what's necessary for those children I think is a very powerful place for us to fill a very -- a huge void and play a very meaningful role.

And the only other thing I was going to add to what you said is -- both of you have talked about the long-term, absolutely devastating results if you're losing a whole generation of children, but also those children who experience toxic stress are far less likely as parents to be able to help their own children mitigate those circumstances. So it becomes a sort of really long-term, devastating ripple effect.

MS. WINTHROP: Sherrie, how do you -- and, Sara, same question for you, how do you in a humanitarian context create that buffering that's needed, whether through bolstering a parent or a caregiver? What exactly do you do?

Sara will be able to talk to that. You haven't started your partnership with IRC, but you certainly have your Afghanistan program. You know, how do you do that? What does the program look like?

MS. WESTIN: Well, when you look at -- maybe it's easier to give you an example. It's a domestic example, but I think it gives you a sense of what we do.

One of the things we did here in the United States that I think has been so well-received and so powerful is that about 11 years ago, almost 12 years ago, we started a program designed to help military families with very young children cope with the challenges of deployment. At the time I think around 750,000 families were dealing with multiple deployments with very young children, and there were literally no tools to help those youngest members of the family cope with those issues.

So in working with the military -- we always bring in any number of advisors and counsels to really make sure we're doing it right, we created tools. It was distributed through the Military OneSource, so it went to all military bases. But it was, to give you a sense, like DVDs and storybooks and guides for parents. And in this DVD, Elmo's dad has to go away for a very long time. So if you're two years old and you're dealing with a parent being deployed and, all of a sudden, you know, Elmo's a rock star and you see that Elmo's going through the same thing you are, that's very comforting for a child to understand they're not alone.

At the same time, that becomes a huge catalyst. I mean, we did research afterwards with families and often the father in particular didn't talk about this issue, particularly with children that young. They just think they're too young when, in fact, absolutely not. That's actually exactly what they need.

So we saw in our research that by having a father with a three-year-old, two-year-old watching this, it became the catalyst for them to talk about the issue. And, of course, we always have the materials, tools, and guides to accompany this. But it gives you a little sense of how you can create the content that resonates with a child, but use it as a catalyst to train the parent or give them the tools to be addressing the issue.

And that was just one small piece of it, but I think it gives you a sense of how we can address these issues, various different issues or circumstances, so that it is engaging to a child, a child sees and can relate to it, but you're also empowering that parent and even helping to guide that parent in the best ways they can help them cope.

MS. WINTHROP: Sara, over to you. Can you walk us through an example? I'd be curious about the trapped spaces idea, an example with trapped spaces, such as the waterline or whatever. And also, my other question for you, the sort of second question, is ECD and emergencies, how is it -- the programming, the intervention, is it different fundamentally from ECD in very poor

communities or not poor communities, and what is that difference?

MS. POEHLMAN: Those are good questions. Maybe let me give a couple of very concrete examples from country contacts. I think the first one I'll go back to the situation in Nepal because it's something that we're just working on quite intensely at this point in time. We had preexisting programs in Nepal that were kind of traditional community preschools and things, doing really play-based kind of emergent literacy and math works and kinds of content that organizations like Sesame work on, as well.

And we saw that after the emergency that, first of all, we needed to help staff and caregivers understand what were some of the warning signs. So one of the first things is helping people who are intervening understand what to look for in terms of stress. So we had a quick distribution as we were working with the humanitarian responders to say, you know, young kids are deeply affected by this. Here are some of the things to look for.

Programmatically, what we did is we actually integrated a lot of activities around art and dance and music into our regular programs that we knew were really going to address some of the social-emotional issues that happen when children are in these kinds of situations of stress, as well. Sometimes it's actually pretty simple in terms of the buffering. The biggest thing is play. Do the things that make you relax.

I'll talk about another type of context which is in Zaatari refugee camps in Jordan, which I visited last year, and the staff said at one point they were receiving 10,000 people a day in the refugee camps. Save the Children would actually, every evening, go into a recruitment process and recruit hundreds of new staff and say, okay, please report to work tomorrow morning. And you can imagine the kind of intensity of what was going on. And obviously, there's a limitation in space, there's a limitation in resources.

So what they're doing there is they have these programs that are really adapted to, first of all, getting children to express the situation that they lived through and be able to bring out some of the shocks and the issues that they have faced in terms of being on the move and being displaced. But because the coverage is very limited and we know the importance of caregivers, the children get an opportunity to stay in the preschool center only about five months and then we work with usually mothers

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groups to be able to do kind of a preschool in a bag to learn a number of different materials. Like if you can imagine just a little plastic bag. They're sewing dolls, they're learning about some of the fundamentals of child development.

Talk about a trapped space, a refugee camp is a perfect example where mothers who also maybe didn't have income-generating opportunities from home, now they're in this camp setting where they're idle and that really kind of tends to deepen the stress. So giving mothers the opportunity to learn, to play and to also bring down their levels of stress, and talk to others who've been through a similar situation.

I want to give to these trapped spaces a couple of other examples. One that I can think of, this is some many years ago experience in working in nutritional crisis in the country Niger in West Africa, in the Sahel, one of the poorest countries in the world that has these chronic issues, but simply going to a nutritional recuperation center where you see little babies who are really just skin and bones and it's so disturbing. Parents are coming there with their small children and they're sitting there watching them on intravenous drugs and getting Plumpy'Nut and all of these things that are really medical interventions, and what do I do?

So we simply got a large donation of toys and brought the toys there, gave them to parents to be able to do it with their children, and being able to make your child smile, feeling empowered that as a mother I'm in this horrific situation watching my child waste away, but I can engage them. And that is the kind of buffering we're talking about. Take a toy, take a red plastic cup, you know, put your finger in it, put some water in it, do whatever you need to be able to really get that child interacting and really activating their brain and giving that opportunity to deal with some of the kind of stress.

I want to talk a little bit, also, about a long-term situation. When we did IDELA in Rwanda, we actually came through some of the lowest levels of social-emotional development in children that we found across any country. And when you think about finding that hard evidence on the intergenerational impact that you were talking about, that parents are not able to play and support the learning of their own children, and we have really simple interventions where we just have parent groups and we show them games and activities they can do as part of their daily routine engaging with children. Very simple things: play with your child, sing to your child, talk to them. If you have books, you can read

to them, like simple picture books.

Try to teach them something new. It can be anything, like how to get water from a well, very, very simple things. It doesn't necessarily matter the kind of activity, but the number of activities, if you do it every day, you're seeing these incredible gains in children getting like three times higher in terms of their language skills, their pre-numeracy skills, as well as their social-emotional development. So there's really simple ways to make it easy for parents. And anybody who's ever had a small child probably knows they're not always that easy to manage, but when they're engaged in fun activities and learning, their behavior is actually much better.

We had one example of a lady who had triplets and she was breastfeeding. You know, that's the only means for nutrition in the village where she lives, and she was having such a tough time. And she was using corporal punishment on little babies and things because they were getting into all kinds of things. She simply just gave them bowls and cups and spoons while she was feeding one to the other two so that they had something to play with. And she's say that we made her life so much easier by just helping her be able to occupy her children so that they can play rather than getting into the kind of mischief that leads to this more kind of abusive behavior that Emily raised as one of those things that is actually causing and reinforcing the toxic stress.

So those are some simple examples.

MS. WINTHROP: Thank you. Sherrie --

MS. WESTIN: If I can give you one other example?

MS. WINTHROP: Yeah, go ahead.

MS. WESTIN: Because it reminded me, when you mentioned Zaatari. Zaatari is the largest refugee camp on the border of Syria and Jordan. We just did a mobile viewing in Zaatari where we brought our characters from the Jordanian production. And I can't remember if it was in this video, if photos, images from it was or not, but that is such an important point. When you think about the Muppets and you think about Sesame, it is so playful. It is joyful. And the feedback -- and that was only one day. We worked with Mercy Corps; we worked with a number of different NGOs. But the feedback is you hear caregivers and parents saying that this is as important as food and water. You're helping my child to laugh again, to play.

So I think, when you talk about buffering, part of the beauty of having Sesame content is it appeals to both young and old. And these characters are so engaging and they are so playful, but it's just steeped with the curriculum that we're trying to impart, but it does do so in a way that it gives children hope and fun.

MS. WINTHROP: Great. Thanks, Sherrie. Emily, I want to bring you back into the conversation here. A couple questions for you. One is just any reflections and reactions to that?

And then the other is a question really around, you know, what's so strong for me across the panel is that this is deeply urgent, it has intergenerational ramifications, and we need probably a strong advocacy agenda and a funding agenda around it to make it happen. So my first question is reactions, but then it'd be interesting to hear your thoughts around that, you know, funding ideas, advocacy ideas, et cetera.

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Sure. I think what really hits home for me is the need to work with the caregivers. Right? Because the stress that they're experiencing we know impacts the stress of the children and the wellbeing and development of the children, to improve their ability to interact with the children so that the children are able to develop appropriately.

And also, in these settings, what else are they going to do? They're just there, again, it's this trapped space thing. That I think is an amazing opportunity. And that, of course, from a financing perspective is also, as you described, Sara, a way to reach many more children with limited resources in such complex settings.

I've been doing a lot of thinking about the financing of early childhood development over the last few years, and particularly looking at results-based financing. And what that's really about is thinking about those outcomes, the outcomes that we talked about that we care about, so the cognitive and social-emotional development and physical development of these children. And in these critical contexts it's so important to keep an eye on the ball on the development of these skills, et cetera, in these children.

And so I've started to think about what these kinds of results-based financing mechanisms would look like in a humanitarian context. I've been particularly researching social and development impact bonds which are a type of results-based financing, which bring in private funding to

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help shift the focus to outcomes. So outcome funders, donor agencies, foundations, governments pay for outcomes only if those outcomes are achieved. And in this kind of a circumstance, you know, I've been thinking would this be an appropriate tool in a humanitarian context?

On the one hand, yes, in terms of early childhood development; I think a very compelling case. On the other hand, you need to do something fast and the challenges around putting these kinds of programs together, they're potentially lengthy, et cetera.

There are, of course, the sort of impacts of humanitarian crises that last longer, beyond the refugee camps. When children are coming to a new country, a new home country, and are still dealing with the post-traumatic stress syndrome and everything that they've experienced, where programs could be implemented to work with these children I think in that kind of a circumstance.

But I think really the key is it's focusing on the outcomes, using the resources that you have. And the examples that you gave, Sara, are not expensive things, right? These are simple tools, playing with the children, et cetera. So I think that those are the key things.

MS. WINTHROP: Do you think this type of both early childhood and sort of a humanitarian and refugee context would be a good place for a social impact bond, A? And B, in case there's people in the audience who are not in the weeds on what a social impact bond is, just maybe, just in case, could you explain it a little bit?

I mean, my big takeaway is these mechanisms are really a way to unlock new sources of financing, so you have a lot of NGOs and nonprofits and providers who go after the same set of dollars, aid dollars, usually foundation dollars. This is a way to unlock new sources of financing and it also -- because from a practitioner or provider standpoint when you say "results-based financing" it's not necessarily they don't get any money to deliver. The implementers get funding, it's just the sort of payment at the end is slightly different.

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Right. So first of all, I'll describe social and development impact bonds a little bit more clearly. A social impact bond is, as I said, a way for private investors to invest in often a preventive social service, like a high-quality preschool program. And they provide funding up front. Then an outcome funder, like a government or a donor agency, agrees to repay those investors their principal plus some interest. For the investors it's an opportunity to get both a social and

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financial return. Then for the outcome funders, the government or donor agency, it's an opportunity to only pay for outcomes. If those outcomes aren't achieved, if children are not improving in their cognitive development or their social-emotional development, then the outcome funders don't pay basically. So it reduces the risk for them.

MS. WINTHROP: So basically the private investors take the hit, which they're fine to do because they're investors and they know they're going to win some, lose some. Okay.

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Exactly. The private investors take the hit and they can lose part or all of their investment. So this is attractive to service providers in that it provides up-front funding for them. It takes the financial risk off of their backs. And for early childhood development it really makes sense because it's a preventive intervention, which may have huge costs later on.

As I said, in a humanitarian crisis, I think that, again, it's important to be focusing on these outcomes and there clearly are circumstances where that upfront funding is needed and may not be available. But I think that there are definitely some complexities around putting this together.

Sara's been following this research quite a bit, I know, and we've had lots of conversations about this. And I think that it could work. But I would be curious actually to know if there has been any outcomes-based financing in humanitarian crisis situations in early childhood because I don't know of it and would love to hear.

MS. POEHLMAN: I think there's definitely an urgency to bring more investment in early childhood and humanitarian contexts. I mean, knowing what we know and the long-term impact, I think we need to build more evidence and I think that's one area where this idea of kind of results is. We need to be able to build that evidence.

I think one of the challenges is that oftentimes we have this idea of build back better, right? A humanitarian context provides the opportunity to do things differently and, hopefully, to build things that weren't necessarily there before. But you have a context where there may not have been interventions before, there not be a strong kind of technical capacity to be able to implement things. So you have all of these foundational things that you have to build before you can actually reach that point where you're getting results.

The other point that I might raise in terms of how we look at financing these kinds of

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interventions is oftentimes humanitarian contexts are constantly shifting. I mean, we had an earthquake in Nepal. None of the community preschools yet have had funding to be rebuilt. We do have some funding to do kind of quality interventions for children, but then India closed the border and it created an economic crisis and there was no means even for us to be able to easily go on field visits. We started renting taxis. The implication of that for staff, their safety in terms of travel, I mean, there are all of these things that we can't easily account for. And we have to have that adaptability and flexibility to be able to respond to the real situation of children, but also the context that we're working in.

I think the real challenge is that children don't have a voice to tell you what they need, so the constant kind of interaction and being able to see and being able to speak with the adults is so important in being able to do the things that are going to really create the impact and the results that we're looking for, as well.

I would take other kind of contexts, like Latin America, our work in El Salvador, for example, where there's fantastic programming from prenatal up into transitions and pre-primary. But because of the situation of chronic violence there, our teams on the ground are really thinking how do we do this? What do we do to respond? They do have funding to be able to do programs from family play groups for the very, very little kids and book rotation clubs and older siblings coming to read to children, all these fantastic things. They're like, but what do we do in the face of this violence? What are the things that we need to do to adapt our programs differently?

And I think that considering what we know, again, about the brain research, we need to figure out in those kinds of very prolonged contexts and contexts where you're dealing with high amounts of community violence, you know, children witnessing atrocities that we have to be able to quickly adapt a lot of those programs to that situation. And sometimes that means doing something new and building new capacity and bringing in expertise from other countries that can help inform some of that work, to really help them kind of go through what is it that we need to do differently considering the situation of children?

MS. WINTHROP: I know, Sherrie, you want to come in. Emily, you want to come in. But can you wrap it back into Q&A? Hold your comments. I had one last question on financing for you and then we'll open it to the floor for questions from all of you, and you guys will insert your comments at that

point.

Sara, one last question on financing, I don't know the answer. I know that 2 percent of humanitarian aid goes to education. Is that primary, secondary? Does that figure include ECD? Do you know?

MS. POEHLMAN: Doubtful. I don't know.

MS. WINTHROP: Someone in the audience will probably know.

MS. POEHLMAN: In Sub-Saharan Africa you're dealing with 12 percent pre-primary coverage, so even if you do have a tiny sliver of funding that's going to that, you're not reaching 88 percent of the children. And we know the most vulnerable children are not in preschool. So even if it was the whole objective of reaching those children who we know are going to be most vulnerable, most impacted by the risks of -- you know, the most at risk for toxic stress are not in those services even if there is funding going into them.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay, great. Let's open the floor and then we'll bring you guys in when you respond. Questions, comments? Please raise your hand. And we have two here in the middle. And please, just introduce yourself.

SPEAKER: Thanks. So I will say first and foremost that Snuffleupagus was and still is my favorite Sesame Street character. (Laughter) I completed fieldwork in the Haiti and the Dominican Republic with an NGO on the basis of school feeding programs. And I remember sitting with a three-year-old girl with Down syndrome, watching Plaza Sésamo. And I was wondering if we look at the connections between school feeding programs and how they contribute to academic development, how school feeding programs contribute to overall cognitive development, physical development, even cognitive centers within the brain, if there's intersectionality, if there's adjacency between the interventional programs that you all are offering or that you're discussing, as well as with the school feeding programs, is there a two-pronged or a multi-pronged approach that can work to create massively more effective programs or create different outcomes?

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks. And there was one across the aisle.

MS. CHEROW: Hi, Evelyn Cherow, Global Partners United. That was a nice segue to my many notes here.

I want to bring to your attention that the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities, which is housed at UNICEF, has an early child development task force, about 150 of us are members. And they'll be meeting next week when the U.N. Conference of State Parties meets on the convention on the rights of people with disability, which has been focused primarily on human rights, but there is now an even greater emphasis on violence against children with disabilities, the lack of food and nutrition provided in humanitarian contexts.

And the clear need, because the research in children with disability has always been clear, that we have to identify these children as close to birth as possible and provide appropriate intervention. So I once had Queen Noor say to me when I said I was impressed with what Jordan was doing in early child development, she had written the preamble to three or four reports, I said what about children with disabilities? And she said it would be so important to work in the refugee camps. So I'm heartened to hear about that.

But World Bank and UNICEF just announced an early child development alliance initiative, so I'm wondering if that will be helpful with the financing mechanisms. And I was also happy to be here a couple of months ago where they talked about social impact bonds, and two examples were in programs for children and people with disabilities.

So if you could address some of that, I'd be really excited. Thank you.

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks. Thanks so much. Emily, to you and then you, Sherrie, because I know you had outstanding comments to bring in. And then any responses on school feeding or disabilities.

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: All of us in the ECD community are very hopeful that the World Bank-UNICEF partnership is able to identify where all of the players in this space can best contribute in complementary ways, so in areas around disability. I think each of the organizations have their particular strengths, I think we're all hopeful that that will indeed move the needle.

Thank you for mentioning the event on impact bonds. I'm glad you were there. There is, in fact, an impact bond that's in development for prosthetic limbs for individuals who have lost their limbs in conflict areas. And that's really interesting and a great point. You know, this impacts children and, of course, their ability to get to school or early childhood programs, et cetera. So that's really important and

I'll stop there.

MS. WESTIN: I have so many disconnected thoughts, but the point I was going to make earlier, thank you for remembering, was simply to your point about evidence. Our partnership with IRC is designed with many objectives, but one of them is while we'll be offering and leveraging evidence-based programs, this is not a short-term problem. We all know it's a long-term issue. And one of our other objectives is to make sure that we are building in serious research so that we're testing both formative and summative on all of those programs we offer, so that we can also contribute to a body of evidence on what works in terms of these crisis situations and in these settings. So that's a really important aspect of our work to be adding to the bank of evidence that others will be able to benefit from, as well.

The other thing I will just say is I do find -- and I don't believe that -- I mean, I think the 2 percent education is everything and very little of it ECD. But I do think the fact that we're having this conversation and the fact that there is this more recent brain research is helping make the case for investing in early. You know, at Sesame we've always focused on the early years, so I want to say you all are finally catching up with what we've known all along.

But in all seriousness, I do think because we're having these conversations about the brain development, about the importance of those early years, and about the effects of toxic stress, that we will see more investment because it is so clear it's where the return on investment is the greatest.

And to try to tackle your question a little bit about the feeding-based programs, one of our colleagues from Latin America, Jorge, is here. And while we're not a direct service provider, we create educational context to reach children, but we absolutely know there's not one solution. It's not just basic learning. It is the resiliency, it's nutrition, it's health; it's why we have curriculum in all of those areas.

And I think it is interesting, though, to note you may be familiar with the study in Jamaica, the Longitudinal Study, where they did do three very distinct groups, one which only had nutritional intervention, the other where parents were encouraged to play with their children, and one that had on intervention. And the outcome for children that was demonstrably more effective was that where it was encouraging the parent engagement and play.

But having said that, we do a lot of work around healthy habits for life. You know, we have the power through these Muppets to not just teach, but to model behaviors and, again, to reach both

parents and caregivers. So nutrition, healthy habits, basic sanitation, you know, in places like Bangladesh and India and Nigeria where we're teaching the importance of hand-washing with soap and water or pooping in the latrine, as our Muppet talks about it.

So I do think those programs are so important, but whenever it can be a holistic approach we know will have the most impact.

MS. WINTHROP: You mean the Muppets don't talk about the oral-fecal cycle? They talk about pooping in the latrine. (Laughter)

MS. WESTIN: We talk about pooping.

MS. WINTHROP: You've done your market research.

MS. WESTIN: We're age appropriate.

MS. WINTHROP: Sara, you have anything to add on disability or school feeding?

MS. POEHLMAN: I do. I'm actually on the advisory group of the new World Bank-UNICEF alliance. They're calling it the ECD Action Network, and we're just right now developing kind of the draft framework that will be shared much more widely with stakeholders, including governments, as well, to get that feedback. I will fight very hard for the equity issues. I think for Save the Children that is one of the key things that we really need to address, and especially looking at it in the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals, which have two things on early childhood.

One says one year of formal pre-primary. The most vulnerable children are not in preschool. We know that. So by default, the SDGs have now set us up to miss the most vulnerable children. So I think we've got to find the ways and means.

But the second is actually looking at the percentage of children who are developmentally on track. And I think building this evidence and showing that with the work of Sesame and the results-based financing, our work with partners around IDELA and actually measuring the impact of programs, the most that we can show is that when children are in these kinds of fragile contexts, they are not developmentally on track and this is where we really need to focus investment. So I'm hopeful that we'll be able to get some traction there.

And the idea, we do know that -- the additive value of multiple interventions. Obviously, the ideal is that we have this kind of integrated programming for children. I think what happens a lot of

times by default, though, people say, oh, feeding, that's easy, we can do that. And what we really need is to actually add on that kind of play and learning and stimulation part because you have the Sphere standards for nutrition. People know how to do school feeding quite widely. It's logistics. You know, everybody cooks, everybody knows how to do it. Cooking demonstrations are another trapped situation, where we want to introduce play with the spoons and the cups for the children while you're sitting here for two hours, doing a cooking demonstration on how to use micronutrient powders in your food.

So I think that from our perspective we need to take into account the science, as well, and make sure that those interventions that are already hitting the kind of hard things that people think they know how to do in terms of the medical interventions, the nutritional interventions that we need to have this add-on that says it's not enough to just to look at the children's physical development. We also have to look at all of these other aspects, which we know have much longer-reaching consequences in terms of their lifelong development, as well.

So, yes, we want to do all of those things at once. Let's make sure that we're also taking on the things that sometimes people find a little harder and not just those easy things.

MS. WINTHROP: Thanks, Sara. Sherrie, I know you want to come back in. Quickly, though, I can't help myself, Sara, when you say the SDGs have almost set us up to fail, to not include those kids. Having been involved in some capacity in the SDGs I would flip it and say because the target is pre-primary for all kids, it's a great advocacy hook to say this is not being met. Countries have agreed to it. This is where we need to focus. That's how I would phrase it.

MS. POEHLMAN: Absolutely, absolutely. I agree. And I hope that the second piece of development on track will help us look, also, when we have those non-formal opportunities, as well.

MS. WINTHROP: Right.

MS. POEHLMAN: It's a great advocacy platform, absolutely.

MS. WINTHROP: Sherrie?

MS. WESTIN: I just want to add one more thing. I realized I didn't address children with disabilities. And one thing I will say that I -- you know, Jeff mentioned that The Sesame Effect, you will each have a copy at the reception, but one of the things I think that book really highlights and is a testament to is when you think of the power of media, a particular popular media. And then when you

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think of the power of these engaging Muppets to model, one of the things we found is that's a huge opportunity to change social norms and to affect attitudes and actually to affect stigma.

And so when I think of children with disabilities, just a few examples come to mind. In South Africa, I think we're definitely the first organization to ever create a preschool curriculum around HIV and AIDS. And we created a Muppet named Kami, who is HIV-positive. And the reason was because we knew if we could reduce the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS, if we could break that culture of silence, that it would be enormously helpful. You have to have education in order to have prevention, and you can't have that if there's not a lexicon with which to talk about these issues.

In terms of other issues in children with disability we recently launched a program called See Amazing in All Children. And it's starting out to focus on autism. It's meant to be broad enough to go beyond. But again, knowing that if we can reduce the stigma surrounding autism -- in the U.S. at least where 1 in 68 children is on the spectrum, which is, you know, sort of astounding.

Also, we know from research that autistic children are five times more likely to be bullied. And so to create content that helps create a better or a deeper understanding of what it's like to be autistic for all children and to help reduce misconceptions so that there's greater empathy, more understanding of what the commonalities are, not just the differences. I feel like there's a powerful role that we can play in helping at least to change cultural norms or societal norms so that those children with disabilities are more accepted.

MS. WINTHROP: Great. Let's go back to the audience. Questions? We have a couple of questions up here, 1, 2, 3, 4. We have about 10 more minutes, so if you can state your name and your question briefly, that would be great.

MS. PEARLMAN: My name is Sophie Pearlman. I am with Public International Law and Policy Group. And so my question is more so in relation to Syria specifically. So for instances of humanitarian crises where U.N. humanitarian aid has been blocked by the government and it is impossible for periods of time to intervene, what could the consequences be for these children who are stuck in situations where aid such as all of the different programs and activities that you've all spoken of cannot be given to them?

MS. WINTHROP: And you're asking about inside Syria?

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MS. PEARLMAN: Yes.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay. Very difficult question to answer. We have here, then we'll -- right here.

MS. GACEY: Hello. My name is Reshma Gacey (phonetic). I'm from Nepal, a Fulbright scholar in American University. What a good coincidence. I was a former employee at Save the Children Nepal.

MS. WINTHROP: Was she correct in her description of what you did? (Laughter)

MS. GACEY: I won't tell you anything about that. (Laughter) Yes, Save the Children did a wonderful job. We didn't do a lot of Sesame videos. We can actually do that in our ECD centers in crisis.

My question is a lot of international development agencies, particularly INGOs, international NGOs, lack of serious research to understand local contexts. That results in disasters like Haiti and also Nepal. You know, the humanitarian response was not really good in Haiti. It was a disaster in Haiti and it was not that great in Nepal, as well.

So what do you think that the NGOs can do to maximize their funds to locate (inaudible)? Because there are a lot of assumptions being made and there are a lot of (inaudible), but serious research I'm missing.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay, great. Thank you. We have a question here on this side.

MS. RONK: My name is Edna Ronk (phonetic). I've been in the field for a very long time and I want to look at it from a broader perspective. Do any of you work with NGOs that are international early childhood professional organizations, usually with chapters or affiliates in different countries? There are a number of them and I'd be curious to know how they can be. It seems to me they could be helpful in some way.

The second one is how does the United Nations itself, through UNICEF and UNESCO, work with your programs? And does the fact that there are 196 countries that have ratified the convention on the rights on the child and one country that has not, and we're standing and sitting in that country -- does that inform the work that you do in any way? Because the convention is an amazing document and can provide some kind of help.

And the last thing is if you could do something new and add -- not just new, but create something and add it to what you're doing, what would that be if somebody gave you a lot of money and you could choose what you wanted to do?

MS. WINTHROP: Wonderful, thank you. We have a question all the way at the back.

MS. CUNEA: Hi there. Thank you so much for speaking with us today. My name's Jacqueline Zipko Cunea (phonetic). I'm with Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. We, along with the other resettlement VOLAGs, recently hosted the Refugee Youth Consultations in February. And though it's an older demographic, one of the things that the youth really pointed out was that trapped space issue that you were talking about. So from the time that they're given their resettlement letter to the actual time that they're resettled could be three years and they're just lying in wait when we could be doing more in-depth cultural orientation.

So I'm wondering if -- I'm looking at your resource development and dissemination plan with IRC -- if there are any plans to maybe look at a tool similar to what you were talking about with the military and the deployment, explaining that to children. A tool or a plan to insert yourself maybe in cultural orientation where you could explain this to these young kiddos and their parents just how they came to be in a camp perhaps, how the resettlement process is working, not necessarily specific to coming to the U.S., but resettlement in general. Thank you.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay, great. Thank you. Okay, so we have five minutes left and we have a question about humanitarian aid inside Syria. We have a question about empirical research and the ability to localize and contextualize effectively response. We have a question about the U.N.'s role in the CRC, Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have this great question on if you were each given a million dollars or \$10 million, I don't know, 10, whatever. A million is nothing. Okay, \$10 million. What would you do? Which I think maybe you should just all answer that one. (Laughter) And then we have a question, the refugee youth resettlement question.

So don't all of you answer all of them. Pick one. And Sara, I'll start with you and just one, answer a question, and any last thought briefly in a minute, and we'll wrap up.

MS. POEHLMAN: Namaste to you. I think actually Nepal right now is leading the way in terms of how do we generate that real strong evidence around these issues. The research that I

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mentioned, I think, for us is going to be very, very illuminating in terms of how we do this work. There are a few donors out there that are taking this kind of evidence-based and the results-based kind of funding very, very seriously.

And I think at least for us and in our partnership with the International Rescue Committee, the use of IDELA as a tool where we can look at child development in any context or setting whatsoever, so it's really helping us rethink how do we approach all of our programming so that we can really look at that gain and impact for children no matter what the context is and be able to learn from different organizations and different kinds of programs.

So Nepal is actually ahead of the game and I think you'll be coming back here in a year to talk about some of the results of what Nepal has done.

One thing, if I had millions and millions of dollars, follow the brain research. Look at baby play, find the spaces, find every single intervention you can possibly do to support caregivers and babies so that they have that place to play and learn. I would do all kinds of innovations to really be able to figure that out and especially in these kinds of contexts. Save brains.

MS. WESTIN: Well, I'll tackle the Syria one because it seems the hardest, but what I will say is, to answer what happens to those children, I can't even begin to answer, but I will say that it is one illustration of when you can use television and radio regardless of humanitarian efforts being blocked from Syria. We've just recently been approached about whether we will put content on the air, which we can do, to reach children in Syria. So that is one opportunity where we have the means of reaching children who may have no other means of quality education.

And I'm supposed to answer the money one, too? I don't know if I'm supposed to defer to the CEO. (Laughter)

MS. WINTHROP: You don't have to, but you -- Jeff could. Do you have an answer, Jeff?

MS. WESTIN: Well, right now, for sure, I would say we have announced this incredible partnership with IRC, which we feel so optimistic about in terms of the impact we could have. So if I had \$10 million I would put it right into that partnership so that we could begin to create the programming and take it to scale. There are so many places that that could be very useful.

MS. WINTHROP: Emily?

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: Sure. So I think I'll just answer -- the other two panelists answered the other questions. I'll answer the what would I do if I could do anything? Being a researcher and an economist my answer is that I would fund research to build evidence. There are increasingly more funders who are interested in funding, building evidence, but it can be challenging. And in the middle of a crisis or, you know, the priority is getting the services on the ground, and often evaluation and monitoring really come second.

MS. WESTIN: As I mentioned, that's part of this initiative. So if you could fund the IRC's Sesame Workshop research. (Laughter)

MS. WINTHROP: We see why you are in your position, Sherrie. (Laughter)

MS. WESTIN: Just a thought.

MS. WINTHROP: Emily, did I interrupt you?

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: No.

MS. WINTHROP: That's it?

MS. GUSTAFSSON-WRIGHT: That's what I would do.

MS. WINTHROP: Okay, great. Well, thank you. Thank you, all three of you. Thank you, Jeff, so much for being here with us and co-sponsoring the event with us on this important topic. We really hope you will all join us across the hall.

I've taken a look at The Sesame Effect book. It's a great resource. I urge you to take a copy. Join us for the reception and join me in thanking the panelists, please. (Applause)

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