

# PR & Media



Education Minister Yuli Tamir, Alona Abt, and Sesame Workshop President Gary Knell, seated behind Sesame Street characters, Muslim Center, left, and Knell, in the foreground, in Ramallah, West Bank, during his April 2007 visit to Israel.

**Sesame, ssumsum or simsim**  
**Everyone's favorite street returns to TV**

JERUSALEM - Puppet regimes are back in the Middle East. Once again, they're promoting peace, diversity and the importance of brushing your teeth. New episodes of Sesame Street are going on TV in Israel and the Palestinian territories, producers said Sunday, years after the original versions signed off.

Producers tailored the Middle Eastern casts and story lines to the fit the audiences. "Rehov Sumsum," the Israeli version of the show, for the first time includes a Muppet of Arab origin. Its Palestinian counterpart, "Shara'a Sumsim," seeks to offer positive role models to boys in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Advertisement

"It's really about respect and tolerance," said Gary Knell, president of Sesame Workshop, the New York-based nonprofit group behind Sesame Street programming worldwide.

"[The show] opens up a new way to deal with issues of conflict," Education Minister Yuli Tamir education, said at a ceremony in a Jerusalem kindergarten yesterday, "just teaching children how to live together, how to work together with each other despite their differences." The ceremony followed more than a week of meetings Knell had with top political figures in the region, seeking funding and support for local Sesame Street productions.

Earlier in the day he met with Aliza Olmert, wife of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. On Saturday, while in Ramallah to mark the upcoming broadcast of 15 new episodes there, he met with Palestinian Authority senior aide and peace negotiator Saeb Erekat.

The Israeli version enjoyed wide success when first aired in the early 1980s. A lack of funds stopped production of new episodes for more than a decade, but producers relaunched the show last winter.

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 By The Associated Press

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MindSet PR & Strategic Consulting coordinated a multi-faceted series of meetings to further the working agenda of Gary Knell, president of Sesame Workshop, on his April 2007 visit to Israel.

As part of its long association with Sesame Workshop, producer of Sesame Street, the internationally award-winning children's television series, MindSet organized an intensive schedule of professional, fund-raising and public relations meetings for Knell with a range of key Israeli personalities from the worlds of television, politics, business and high-tech.

In addition, the media was invited to the highlight of Knell's visit, a hugely successful joint event at a Jewish/Arab kindergarten in Jerusalem with Israeli Education Minister Yuli Tamir, in which the two launched a new Sesame Workshop anti-violence educational program for children aged 2 to 7 to accompany them as they begin to make sense of their complicated neighborhood.



Education Minister Yuli Tamir , Alona Abt, co-director of Hop!, the Israeli pre-school channel, Gary Knell and friends



Israeli Muppet Avigail and friends



Meeting of the minds