



The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
Social Connectedness Fellowship Application
Research Project #5 - Motheo Training Institute Trust

The Social Connectedness Fellowship provides students and recent graduates with the opportunity to carry out research, writing, analysis, and outreach related to overcoming social isolation and building social connectedness. Fellows are paired with partner organizations that work to build belonging and social inclusion across a variety of thematic areas—climate change, disability and older people’s rights, refugee integration, inclusive education, placemaking and urban design, and much more.

Project Details:

Partner: [Motheo Training Institute Trust](#) is a South African-based Public Benefit Trust that operates as a Multi-Training Centre, offering quality Early Childhood Developmental (ECD) services and other developmental studies throughout South Africa. The Organisation trains ECD practitioners in a formal, accredited ECD programme. The Motheo Training Institute Trust has been a long-time partner of the [Social Connectedness Program](#) in southern Africa, seeking ways to centre social connectedness as a key component of Early Childhood Development.

Location of Fellow: Fellow must be residing in South Africa

Project Description:

Are you interested in strengthening early childhood development by engaging the wider community?

In the context of Early Childhood Development, the community plays an important role in fostering a supportive environment for children to flourish. Parents are an important figure in children’s lives and development. Motheo



Training Institute Trust has been working with social workers and parents to identify ways to strengthen social connectedness in the context of ECD. While there is literature examining the importance of various support mechanisms (like grants and services) to help parents be more actively engaged in ECD, little literature focuses on the context of social connectedness as a key enabler of greater parental involvement.

A Fellow would conduct further research into the resources and supports that can help parents be more actively involved and engaged in early childhood development, particularly in low-resource communities across South Africa. The Fellow will also liaise with practitioners and parents to gather their perspectives and analyze key points about barriers and best practices to parental engagement. Key considerations for the research project overall include: what's working in the parental involvement space? How can ECD practitioners and Motheo Institute better support and engage parents? What is the benefit of ECD to children from a social connectedness lens?

Key Deliverables:

1. Final report or guide detailing the link between social connectedness and ECD, and recommendations to strengthen parental involvement in ECD initiatives
2. At least one brief/memo version of the final report that can be shared with local partners
3. Two blog articles
4. Community event with local partners

Key Skills/Competencies Required:

- Preferred academic background in psychology, social work, education or development studies, or equivalent work/life experiences.
- Strong research, analytical and writing skills.
- Knowledge of participatory and reflective research methodologies.



- Group facilitation skills.
- Understanding and experience in community work.
- A self-starter who can take initiative.
- Diverse African languages is an asset.
- Must be residing in South Africa.

How to Apply:

All applicants must fill out the [Google Form application](#) by March 7, 2021 at 11:59 pm EST. Applicants can apply for 1 or 2 projects. In addition to answering the standardized questions, applicants must also answer a specific question for each project that they are interested in. Specific question for Research Project #5 - Motheo Training Institute Trust:

1. a) What are some of the key contributors of parental involvement toward the well-being and connectedness of children in their early childhood development stage?
b) How do you think this Fellowship can contribute to the greater research and community of practice within Early Childhood Development?

(Max 250 words for both parts)