

Social Connectedness Fellowship Program: Motheo Institute Trust

Partner Organization: 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. Motheo Training Institute Trust has been a long-time partner of the Social Connectedness Programme in Southern Africa, seeking ways to centre Social Connectedness as a key component of Early Childhood Development.

Location of Fellow: Fellow must be based in South Africa

Description of Proposed Project:

Finding the link between Intergenerational Trauma, Epigenetics, and Social Connectedness in Early Childhood Development. In the context of early childhood development, the community plays an important role in fostering a supportive environment for children to flourish. Parents and the society at large are an important figure in children's lives and development. Motheo Training Institute Trust has been working with ECD Practitioners, Social Workers and Parents to help children deal with family disruptions and trauma specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. While there is more literature and study on trauma, and Epigenetics "DNA methylation" and little literature that focuses on Social Connectedness as a key enabler that creates a better, and a secured future for children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Fellow would conduct further research into the link between **Intergenerational Trauma, Epigenetics, and Social Connectedness in Early Childhood Development** particularly in low-resource communities across South Africa.



The Fellow will also liaise with ECD Practitioners, Parents, and Social Workers to gather their perspectives, experiences and analyse key points about overcoming trauma and Chronic Isolation during these times.

The key considerations for the research project overall include: How can children be helped to overcome trauma in low-resourced communities? How can adults and Motheo Institute better support children in various ECD setting in the context of overcoming trauma? What is the benefit of ECD to children from a Social Connectedness lens?

Key Skills/Competencies Required:

- Preferred education background in psychology, social work, education, or development studies
- 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

Key Deliverables:

1. A 25 -35 page final report or guide detailing the link between intergenerational trauma, epigenetics, social connectedness, and chronic isolation; research may consist of a literature review, community interviews, or data analysis.
2. At least one brief/memo version of the final report that can be shared with local partners
3. A blog article to be published by SCSC and cross-posted by Motheo.
4. Community event with local partners. This can be online or in-person depending on the state of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Goals:

As an academic institution, this Fellowship programme helps not only our Institutions' mission and but the entire country. All academic research project products and or reports conducted on Early Childhood Development is distributed to all partners that include NGO's, CoP's, and other Private entities interested in Early Childhood Development projects. These documents are accessible to the public in various websites published under "ECD knowledge hub", which is targeted and beneficial to academia arena and communities which are the disadvantaged.

Contact Details:

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