



**SAMUEL CENTRE  
FOR SOCIAL  
CONNECTEDNESS**

# **Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness Fellowship Program**

Partner Organization: BAM - Books Art Music Collective

Project Title: Community Safety and Gun Violence in Toronto

# SCSC Fellowship 2023:

## Project Proposal

### Partner Organization: BAM - Books Art Music Collective

Founded in 2018, BAM Collective is Ontario's first youth-led collective that empowers equity-deserving and Indigenous young people through policy, art, innovation, and community engagement. We are a group of young, racialized community organizers and artists based in Toronto, improving the lives of youth through workshops, local activism, and BAM (Books, Art, Music). Operating from a non-partisan and anti-oppression framework, BAM Collective creates impact in several ways, such as:

- Engaging youth in decision-making through roundtables and creative activities. Hosting community art events and workshops
- Raising awareness of crucial issues through online campaigns and conferences
- Uniting local changemakers to effect positive change
- Connecting youth with resources to strengthen communities
- Addressing local and national issues through research Mentorship and coaching for marginalized youth
- Developing training workshops to prepare youth for the workplace.
- Promoting youth and women as advisors and consultants through [BAM - Social Enterprise](#).

Learn more at [BAM Collective](#)

### Location of the Project:

This is a remote position, however, we are looking for someone who is based in the Greater Toronto Area. Fellows may be required to attend in-person events or meetings hosted by BAM Collective in Toronto, Ontario.

In-person Location: 192 Spadina Ave, Toronto, ON M5T 2C2

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

### **Section 1: Description of the Project**

Gun violence has resulted in a sense of fear and trauma in Toronto, with racialized populations being the most affected. The daily tragedy of gun violence has severely threatened community safety and the future of youth. As part of this project, we will examine the impact of gun violence on racialized communities in Toronto, including Black, Indigenous, Newcomer and refugee, and low socio-economic groups. The purpose of the study is to understand the experiences of gun violence in these communities and to identify the specific challenges they face in fostering safety and belonging. The study also aims to recommend solutions based on the experiences of those with lived experience and expertise in the field.

This project will examine 1) historical trends and themes related to gun violence in Toronto, disaggregated where possible by neighbourhood and by factors such as race, ethnicity, class, gender and immigration status; 2) municipal, provincial and federal programs and policies aimed at reducing gun violence; and 3) how gun violence impacts community safety and people's sense of belonging, including whether belonging is an important theme to consider in addressing gun violence.

Fellows can conduct research using qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as primary and secondary sources. Data will be collected on some of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in Toronto, along with the impact on those who live there.

Fellows will;

- Analyze city and police websites and other relevant sources to map trends in gun violence over the last decade
- Conduct a literature review of relevant sources related to gun violence in Toronto, including program evaluations and policy documents specific to reducing gun violence
- Attend and host a BAM event(s) focused on the topic of gun violence to collect community feedback
- Survey affected community members to understand the impact of gun violence
- Interview local field experts and host focus groups

- Apply an intersectional, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lens to research and community engagement.
- Work closely with the Community Safety and Inclusivity portfolio of BAM Collective

## **Section 2: Goals of the Project**

The goal of the project will be to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem of gun violence as it relates to well-being among equity-deserving communities in Toronto and to identify effective strategies for reducing it. This research will also focus on the intersectionality of these communities, understanding how race, ethnicity, class, gender, immigration status and other factors are interconnected in relation to gun violence. The project will also aim to generate insights for policymakers, community organizations, and other stakeholders to address the issue of gun violence and foster safer communities. To achieve this, the fellow will participate in regular activities of the Community Safety and Inclusivity Portfolio of BAM Collective and actively engage in events and community outreach. This engagement will play an important role in this research project, as the project aims to understand the experiences and perspectives of equity-deserving communities in Toronto.

Moreover, there are several ways that the fellow can/will use to incorporate advocacy, policy suggestions, and community engagement to achieve the goals of this project, including focus groups, interviews, surveys, community outreach events (such as workshops on mental health, skills development, community building strategies), information sessions and the incorporation of all feedback into a final report. The aforementioned community engagement will ensure that the perspectives and experiences of racialized communities are central to the research process and that their input is used to inform the development of effective solutions to the problem of gun violence.

## **Section 3: Guiding Questions**

1. What have been major trends and themes in gun violence in Toronto, disaggregated by neighbourhood and socio-economic factors such as race, age, gender, class and immigration status?
  - a. How race, ethnicity, class, and socio-demographics are interconnected to create perpetrators or victims of gun violence in Toronto.

2. What are the perceptions, unique causes, and experiences of gun violence among Black, racialized newcomer and refugees (less than five years), immigrants (more than five years), Indigenous, and low socio-economic groups in Toronto.
  - (a). What are the most effective advocacy, policy, and community engagement strategies for addressing and reducing the issue within these communities?
3. What is the role of belonging and social connectedness in fostering community safety and addressing gun violence?
  - a. What are the pillars of a safe community, and what resources and supports are required to realize this?
4. What can be done on a local, provincial, federal and collaboratively between all three levels of government level to reduce gun violence?

#### **Section 4: Key Deliverables**

- 1 blog post (500 – 1,000 words), posted to SCSC’s website.
- A Community Engagement Initiative (CEI) in support of the Final Output
  - This will be co-created with SCSC, BAM and the Fellow during the Fellowship. We apply the term ‘Community Engagement’ liberally to include initiatives that interact directly with people [ex: interviews, focus groups, paint sessions, in-person events] or that seek to engage the public [ex: letter writing projects, podcasts, digital events, awareness raising efforts, photovoice projects]
- A Final Report
  - A 25 – 35-page research report supported by primary or secondary source data. This report will be on gun violence and social connectedness and will provide recommendations.
  - Due to the nature of this project, a community-focused version of the report or a toolkit may also be an effective and complementary tool.
- A Final Presentation with the Cohort

## **Applicant Information:**

### **About the Fellowship/What the Fellowship Offers**

The Fellowship empowers young people, recent graduates, and community leaders to engage in meaningful research and community action. At the Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness our mission is to build connectedness within and between communities through partnerships, research, programming, learning initiatives, and advocacy. Belonging is central to our work, and the Fellowship offers the opportunity to apply the lens of 'Belonging' to intersectional issues, writing, and problem-solving.

**This is a paid full-time opportunity from May 8 – August 28, 2023 [16 weeks]. The Social Connectedness Fellowship is a research and community action summer program focused on understanding & integrating social connectedness.**

SCSC Offers:

- Competitive wages
- Work with national & international community partners
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship
- Meaningful work where your research has an impact

### **Equity Statement:**

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness is an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage applicants to apply even if they do not meet all the criteria. We believe all candidates have something to bring to the organization and the role. If you have skills outside the job description that you think can benefit the project, let us know in your cover letter. We encourage people from equity-deserving groups such as immigrants, Black people, Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, and disabled folks/people with disabilities to apply. Please let us know if you need any accommodation(s) throughout the application and interview process and we will be happy to support you.

### **Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant:**

- Candidate must live within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

- Knowledge (undergraduate, graduate or lived) in one of the following fields: political science, law, public policy, immigration/refugee settlement, Indigenous policy, Public Administration, and/or social justice studies.
- Interest in government advocacy and policy
- Familiarity with gun violence, and systemic oppression in Toronto
- A background or interest in community safety, Immigration and refugee settlement, issues affecting Indigenous Peoples, and public policy.
- A strong understanding of intersectionality and issues affecting equity-deserving groups especially, Black, Indigenous, newcomer & immigrant communities.
- Strong research, communication, and writing skills in English
- Strong initiative, time management, and project management skills.
- Experience or interest in working with youth (over 18)
- Available and committed to attending in-person & hybrid events, and training with BAM throughout the summer.

Asset:

- A thorough understanding of gun violence in Toronto from either lived, academic, or community organizing experiences
- Well connected to the Toronto community
- Trauma-informed care training

Priority will be given to candidates with lived experience and candidates from equity-deserving groups (Indigenous, Immigrants, Newcomers, Refugees, Black, Visible Minorities, Women and Diverse Genders, LGBTQ+, and Disabled People/People with Disabilities).