



**SAMUEL CENTRE  
FOR SOCIAL  
CONNECTEDNESS**

**Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness  
2024 Fellowship Program  
Project Proposal**

**PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

Human Rights Watch

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Inclusive Adaptation: Championing Disability Rights  
in Climate Relocation Strategies

## **Partner Organization: Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights Watch defends the rights of people worldwide. We scrupulously investigate abuses, expose the facts widely, and urge those with power to respect rights and secure justice. Human Rights Watch is an independent, international organization that works as part of a vibrant movement to uphold human dignity and advance the cause of human rights for all.

Human Rights Watch is a leading defender of fundamental rights and freedoms worldwide. With support from our partners, we strive to realize a world where every human being can live with dignity, equality, and justice. We catalyze change by gathering the facts, proposing effective policy solutions, and broadcasting our message to the world. We are adding new technologies, partnerships, and approaches to build on our time-tested methodology: investigate, expose, change.

Learn more at: [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)

## **Location of the Project: Remote**

Applicants from anywhere in the world are invited to apply. Applicants must be able to work hours that align with the New York-based HRW team and the Toronto, Canada-based SCSC team (Eastern Standard Time).

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

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

The climate crisis poses an unprecedented threat to human rights around the world, and people with disabilities are often among those most adversely affected. While a handful of nongovernmental organizations are working on the effects of extreme weather events extensively, there remains limited data on the effects of climate-related planned relocations on people with disabilities.

At the same time, since 2021 Human Rights Watch has highlighted the impact of climate change on people with disabilities in Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Germany, and Spain. Our findings have been consistent across all our research: people with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by climate change and extreme weather events, from severe impacts on their physical and mental health to increased risk of death. People with disabilities also face greater issues accessing warnings and emergency information. Those who manage to escape and reach refugee camps or shelters often face barriers to accessing sanitation, food, medical assistance, and education. We work with disability rights and climate change activists, experts, and scientists to understand what needs to change.

The Social Connectedness Fellow can expect to help us build on our existing work to better understand how climate displacement and planned relocations disproportionately affect people with disabilities.

The fellow will collaborate closely with the lead Human Rights Watch researcher to identify government plans and actions that move individuals and communities away from climate related disasters to safer areas and how these plans and actions are inclusive of the rights of people with disabilities. In our targeted interviews, the fellow will specifically document the impact that planned relocations have on people's sense of belonging and social connectedness. Finally, the fellow will also work closely with the researcher to identify and propose solutions and concrete steps that governments can take to support communities planning relocations to move in a disability-rights-respecting manner and to implement disability-inclusive measures for community members who wish to stay in place.

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

With climate change causing increasing slow- and fast-onset disasters—including rising sea levels, typhoons, and flooding—communities and governments around the world are turning toward “planned relocation” as a strategy to avoid future displacement. However, we do not have data on how planned relocation impacts people with disabilities and whether they are included in government planning, policies, and programs. Our aim is to fill that gap, build coalitions, and push policymakers and funders to adopt inclusive measures. By conducting this research, the Fellow will examine whether governments' plans and actions consider the specific rights and needs of people with disabilities, including access to information, services, inclusive education, and health care.

This project will specifically look at relocation plans in the Philippines, and possibly one other country in Asia, as decided by the Lead HRW Researcher. The Fellow will be expected to create a visual map of the respective relocation plans.

## **Section 3: Guiding Questions**

The Fellows research will be guided by the following questions and overarching categories.

### **Understanding relocation:**

1. Develop a visual map of planned relocation plans in Philippines and possibly another country in Asia.
2. What are the real and perceived reasons that prompted the relocation?
3. What laws, policies, or other normative instruments address the existing planned relocations in Philippines?

### **Understanding the impacts on people with disabilities:**

4. How are these laws, policies or other instruments disability-rights-inclusive?
5. Do people with disabilities agree and want to move or do they wish to stay?
6. How does the planned relocation impact the sense of belonging and social connectedness for people with disabilities?
7. Who funds the planned relocation? Are their additional financial or administrative supports available to people with disabilities?
8. What good practices exist?

## **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 project will likely involve interviewing academics, activists, representatives of organizations and others to provide expert interviews on planned relocation
- **Final Outputs**
  - The Fellow will create a 25 – 35-page research report for SCSC summarizing the findings and analysis of the projects research questions and drawing from the research compiled in the HRW Memo.
  - For HRW, the Fellow will create a comprehensive memo composed of desk-based research on existing policies and practices on planned relocation in the target countries. The memo will also include a list of academics, activists, representatives of organizations and others involved in this space.
  - Create a visual of disability-inclusive planned relocations in 1-2 countries, or if possible, regions, based on desk-based research.
- **A Final Presentation** with the cohort

## **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

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

- The ideal candidate will be enrolled in, recently finished graduate level studies, or have equivalent work experience in law, policy, or environmental studies
- A well-developed understanding or background in disability rights;
- A background or interest in climate change, particularly as it affects marginalized groups;
- Strong research and writing skills in English;
- Strong initiative, time management and project management skills.

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

The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness (SCSC) Social Connectedness Fellowship empowers young people and people with a variety of different types of lived experience to partner with groundbreaking organizations from around the world to carry out innovative research on social isolation and belonging.

SCSC defines belonging as connection to the 4 Ps: people, place, power, and purpose. This is to say that belonging comes through our relationships with other people as well as through our rootedness in nature, our ability to influence social, political and economic decision-making, and our capacity to find shared meaning and purpose in our lives. The Fellowship offers a unique opportunity to apply the lens of Belonging, thinking intersectionally, and holistically about the problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

These are paid positions, starting on **May 6, 2024**, and ending on **September 27, 2024**. From **May – August the position is full time, 35 hours per week** and in **September the hours are reduced to part time, 10-20 hours per week**.

#### **SCSC Offers:**

- Competitive wages, \$15-28 CAD per hour, adjusted according to each Fellow's geographic location and experience.
  - Purchasing power and location will be heavily considered.
- Opportunity to work with national & international community partners
- Capacity building, skills development, & mentorship
- Ability to network, and be part of an international cohort
- All Fellowship works are published on the SCSC website
- The Fellow's work will be supported by regular supervision meetings with both organizations, and a 1-week long orientation at SCSC.

#### **Program Requirements:**

- Be able to work at least 4 hours per day (in alignment with the 9-5 workday) in Eastern Standard Time to ensure overlap with the Toronto-based team.
- Be ready to engage in regular online meetings, check-ins, capacity building sessions, and work remotely.
- Ability to take initiative, manage their time effectively, work independently, and draw from different resources to support their work.
- Have a passion for research and building a more inclusive, belonging-oriented world.

#### **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 all equity-seeking groups, such as immigrants, Black and Indigenous communities, people of color, women, young people, 2SLGBTQ+ community members, people with disabilities, and people who have been justice-impacted to apply.

**Please tell us if you need accommodation throughout the application process and we are happy to support you.**

You can email any accommodation requests to [scfellowship@scscglobal.org](mailto:scfellowship@scscglobal.org)