



**SAMUEL CENTRE  
FOR SOCIAL  
CONNECTEDNESS**

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

**PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

HelpAge Canada

**PROJECT TITLE:**

The Canada HomeShare Program: Housing That Connects Us

## **Partner Organization: HelpAge Canada**

Founded in 1975, HelpAge Canada emerged from a group of volunteers addressing the lack of representation for older persons in Canadian charitable organizations. Originally named "Help the Aged Canada," it has evolved into a registered charity dedicated to promoting healthy aging. In 1983, HelpAge Canada joined forces with organizations in Colombia, Kenya, India, and the UK to establish HelpAge International, forming a global network supporting older people.

As the sole Canadian organization exclusively focused on older persons, HelpAge Canada employs a holistic approach to healthy aging. Collaborating with community-based seniors' services organizations, it tailors solutions to meet the specific needs of communities and the older population. By working closely with these frontline organizations, HelpAge Canada gains valuable insights into the priorities of older people in Canada, shaping its strategic program development.

HelpAge Canada's mission involves supporting community-based initiatives both domestically and internationally, striving to enhance the lives of older individuals and their communities. Through innovative programs and collaborations, the organization aims to empower vulnerable, isolated, or lonely older people, contributing to a world where everyone can age with dignity. Their vision is to create a world where all older persons lead secure, healthy, active, and dignified lives.

**Learn more:** [www.helpagecanada.ca](http://www.helpagecanada.ca)

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

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

HelpAge Canada is accepting candidates from across Canada.

HelpAge Canada is headquartered in Ottawa and thus tends to operate predominantly on eastern standard time. To date the team has been working in a hybrid model of working remotely and coming into the office, with some team members residing in Toronto (thus only working remotely). We will be flexible to the location of the fellow given our ability and comfort to work remotely and offer the fellowship in person.

Though the majority of the team is in Ottawa, this fellow will be working closely alongside the Director of the Program (Dr. Raza Mirza) who resides in Toronto. HelpAge Canada works in a hybrid model and will offer that option to the fellow.

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

The Canada HomeShare program, a flagship program of HelpAge Canada, is an innovative community-driven initiative dedicated to facilitating homesharing arrangements to support aging-in-place for older adults. The program matches older adults who may have extra space in their homes with students or other older adults who are looking for safe and affordable housing. In this

sense, older adults who share their home generate additional revenue through the program, thus making their current housing more affordable for older adults. On the flipside, older adults in the program often share their homes at a rate that is below market and this provides student homeseekers or other older adults safe and affordable housing. This comprehensive program is designed to create partnerships, offer educational resources, and ensure the long-term success of homesharing within our communities. Beyond supporting housing affordability, this program incorporates belonging by facilitating connections between older adults and post-secondary students, building meaningful relationships across generations. This intentional pairing contributes to a sense of belonging and social connectedness for both groups, addresses issues related to ageism, social isolation and promotes communities that are increasingly 'age-integrated'.

The Canada HomeShare program addresses social isolation for older adults, and post-secondary students, many of whom are disproportionately impacted by high-rental costs and the loneliness epidemic. This program facilitates crucial intergenerational engagement. The fellow will assist the HelpAge Canada team by creating a report showcasing the benefits and pain points of homesharing in different community contexts (e.g., rural, urban). They will interview participants of the program to understand their experiences, conduct qualitative research on the benefits of intergenerational engagement and facilitate focus groups. Through focus groups, interviews, and complementary research, Canada Homeshare's goal is to support community engagement and development in the long term. This research will help us understand and describe community needs and how HelpAge Canada alongside local community-based seniors' services organizations (CBSS) can further support older persons in these communities to age in place with dignity.

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

The knowledge base on the benefits of homesharing, cohousing and shared accommodations remains thin. The goal of this project and the research to be conducted is to understand the impacts of the HomeShare program on participants, on communities, and on intergenerational solidarity.

- **Conduct qualitative research on the impacts and benefits of intergenerational engagement through focus groups on:**
  - Loneliness
  - Isolation
  - Quality of Life
  - Views on Aging
  - Feelings of connectedness to others
  - Community support
  
- **Engage in evaluation of participants experiences of the program:**

- o The SCSC Fellow will produce recommendations to highlight the opportunities of the program to facilitate intergenerational engagement, to support age-friendly community initiatives, and to address issues related to ageism.
- **Collect and review qualitative and quantitative data:**
  - o The SCSC Fellow using HelpAge's internal quantitative survey instrument will collect data on participants' experiences in the program;
  - o The SCSC Fellow will review and analyze data collected from participant profiles to understand motivations to participate in the program, expectations and anticipated outcomes, and information related to housing needs;
- **A Report that highlights the impacts and benefits of intergenerational engagement through Canada HomeShare:**
  - o The SCSC Fellow will provide an overall final report, including the findings from the qualitative interviews, focus groups and other research.
- **Host a webinar for the Canada HomeShare network:**
  - o The SCSC Fellow will be responsible for leading one educational webinar for the Canada HomeShare network. They will have the opportunity to survey the Canada HomeShare Network

### **Section 3: Guiding Questions**

- How does homesharing contribute to aging-in-place for older adults, particularly those in need of additional social support?
  - o How does housing impact a sense of belonging in a community?
  - o How can aging-in-place support or impact older adults sense of belonging?
- How do issues of housing affordability/unaffordability impact older adults and young people's ability to stay connected, to others, their communities, and intergenerationally?
- What are the benefits for both older adults and post-secondary students participating in homesharing?
  - o What impact does homesharing have on their sense of social connectedness?
  - o How can programs like Canada HomeShare, mitigate the risk of social isolation for both targeted populations?
  - o What are the specific experiences and perspectives of participants in the Canada HomeShare program, and how do they perceive the benefits and challenges?
- How can experiential intergenerational engagement be effectively facilitated through the homesharing model?

- In what ways can HelpAge Canada and local Community-Based Seniors' Services (CBSS) organizations further support older persons in communities to ensure they can age in place with dignity?

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

- **1 blog post** (500 – 1,250 word), posted to SCSC's website
- **A Community Engagement Initiative** (CEI) in support of the Final Output
  - This could involve hosting a webinar for the Canada HomeShare Network and will likely involve conducting interviews.
- **A Final Output**
  - A 25 – 40 page research report supported by primary and secondary source data, addressing the key research questions.
- **A Final Presentation** with the cohort

## **APPLICATION INFORMATION**

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

This project is prioritizing older applicants and there is no upper age limit for this position.

The following skills and experiences will help the fellow excel in the program:

- Graduate-level education or equivalent experience
- Some background knowledge or coursework in aging, gerontology or social studies preferred.
- Experience conducting interviews or working with older adults preferred.

We would be pleased to host an older student (55+), or older person. The candidate can be enrolled in a university or college program as a mature student or can have equivalent lived experience. We hope to further empower this person by highlighting the importance of their lived experiences as an asset to our program and to the cohort of Social Connectedness Fellows.

### **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, adjusted according to each Fellow's geographic location and experience.
  - This project is offering a range of \$22 – 27 CAD per hour.
- 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)