



**SAMUEL CENTRE  
FOR SOCIAL  
CONNECTEDNESS**

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

**PARTNER ORGANIZATION:**

Indigenous Climate Action

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Indigenous Divestment Toolkit

## **Partner Organization: Indigenous Climate Action**

Since 2015, Indigenous Climate Action has existed as a unique organization run by and for Indigenous peoples working on issues of climate change. We began programming in 2016, and hiring staff in 2018. Guided by a Steering Committee of diverse Indigenous peoples, we have successfully grown and yielded new programs and projects to meet the needs of our communities in addressing the climate crisis.

ICA has 5 pathways to guide our work: Hosting Gatherings, Producing Resources & Trainings, Amplifying Voices, Supporting Indigenous Sovereignty, and Nurturing Healing Justice. For us, Indigenous climate leadership is a movement that ignites the power that all Indigenous communities hold to step into decision making spaces and demand necessary systemic change. We envision a world with sovereign and thriving Indigenous Peoples and cultures leading climate justice for all. Our work is deeply relational and involves the development and implementation of strategies, tools and resources created with, by and for Indigenous communities, with the goal of uplifting Indigenous voices, sovereignty and stewardship of the lands and waters for future generations.

Learn more at: [www.IndigenousClimateAction.com](http://www.IndigenousClimateAction.com)

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

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

Indigenous Climate Action works as a remote team and will accept remote Fellows.

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

This project aims to develop a unique toolkit for Indigenous communities and peoples to empower their efforts to defend their lands and territories through Indigenous-led divestment strategies. ICA's divestment program is engaged in divestment campaigns across the globe that support Indigenous peoples' rights, Indigenous peoples' lands, and territories.

Divestment is the opposite of investment. It is the process of taking out funds from coalitions, businesses, assets, or projects. Indigenous communities have unique rights, as outlined by the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), that need to be honored, respected and applied to all industries. For example, a fossil fuel company, or companies that forcefully remove and evict Indigenous peoples' from their homes, lands or territories without free, prior, and informed consent. This is considered to be a violation of Indigenous peoples' human rights as outlined by UNDRIP, and can lead to the project's divestment from banks, partnerships, and or sponsorships. The Indigenous rights-based fossil fuel divestment strategy is different from mainstream climate movement divestment strategies. Instead of focusing heavily on carbon emissions and climate impacts, this Indigenous-led strategy uses the power of Indigenous rights as they are described by colonial law (UNDRIP) and Indigenous responsibilities to protect the land as instructed by Indigenous legal orders to push

corporations to divest from the fossil fuel industry. It positions Indigenous sovereignty, title, and opposition, as a financial risk that banks and insurers can understand and write down on their balance sheets. It recognizes Indigenous rights and title for what they are: powerful tools for transforming the economy from extraction to regeneration, from life-threatening to life-affirming.

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

In the last two decades, social movement organizations have used divestment strategies in response to the climate crisis to interrupt fossil fuel development and to erode the social license of the fossil fuel industry. Globally, fossil fuel divestment has moved more than \$40T in financial investment out of the fossil fuel industry (Stand.Earth, 2021).

Indigenous people on Turtle Island have been using divestment strategies to protect our lands by blocking financial investment in tar sands extraction, pipelines, arctic drilling, and beyond. Indigenous organizers have waged successful divestment campaigns for almost two decades, using an Indigenous rights-based framework to both defend Indigenous rights and lands, and disrupt the flow of capital to the fossil fuel industry. As a result of these campaigns, numerous North American and international banks have divested from specific fossil fuel projects, particular fossil fuel types (ex: coal, tar sands), and some have ended all financial investment in the fossil fuel industry (tarsandsdivest.org, 2022).

Through a multimedia or community-action project that will further inform our divestment program, our goal is to support communities in learning about Indigenous divestment strategies, the fiscal power that Indigenous communities hold, and to offer practical tools to empower communities to enact their own divestment strategies.

The impacts of the extractive fossil fuel industry that is driving climate change extend beyond direct environmental changes. Many Indigenous communities within or in close proximity to extraction zones now have lower life expectancies, higher rates of cancer and autoimmune diseases and increasingly more restricted access to their traditional territories. These are only a few of the impacts that the climate crisis and the fossil fuel industry have brought to our communities. In order to defend our homelands and our rights as Indigenous peoples to live on them, we must stop fossil fuel extraction and build regenerative, Indigenous economies to replace this harmful industry.

## **Section 3: Guiding Questions**

The audience of the project will be Indigenous peoples, communities and Nations in so-called Canada but may reach Indigenous groups beyond the borders. Our secondary audience tend to include ENGO's, government, academics and policymakers.

**Our guiding questions for an incoming Fellow are:**

- What makes Indigenous-led divestment strategies unique?
- How can Indigenous people use their unique rights to impact the funding of industrial projects?
- How can Indigenous peoples use their fiscal power to impact the funding of industrial projects?
- What resources are available for Indigenous communities to enact divestment strategies?

- How can ICA support communities in leading divestment strategies and campaigns?
- The Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness believes every person has the right to belong, and that a connection to 'place' is one of four crucial parts of belonging. What role does a connection to 'place' play in Indigenous divestment and resistance strategies?
- How does supporting Indigenous communities in enacting their rights and connection to the land build belonging?

## **Section 4: Key Deliverables**

- **1 blog post** (500 – 1,000 word), posted to SCSC's website
- **A Community Engagement Initiative (CEI)** in support of the Final Output
- **A Final Output(s)** - To be determined with the ICA & SCSC Team
  - Required: one 25 – 35-page research report supported by primary and secondary source data.
  - A toolkit created for community use
- **A Final Presentation** with the cohort
  - Partners are expected to attend the final presentation & support the dissemination of key research findings.

## **APPLICANT INFORMATION**

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

**Preference will be given to Indigenous applicants. Applicants are invited to self-identify in their cover letter.** The ideal candidate for this project should have:

- A post-secondary degree in a related field (e.g., education, social sciences, political science, or political economy) with a minimum 2 years of related experience OR equivalent experience in a related field.
- Knowledge of federal/provincial/territorial organizational climate and Indigenous rights policies and issues.
- A clear understanding of the intersections of Indigenous rights and colonial policy.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Be familiar with the values of anti-oppression and creating spaces that are inclusive.
- Comfortable with building new relationships and navigating the diversity of opinions and tensions that can exist in a community.

### **Additional assets:**

- Experience working with Indigenous-led organizations and structures that challenges systems of colonization, white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism is an asset.
- Fluency in an Indigenous language is an asset.

## 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 offers 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)