SAMUEL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness
2024 Fellowship Program
Project Proposal

PARTNER ORGANIZATION:

Synergos

PROJECT TITLE:

Leadership Lessons on Active Citizenry Towards Building Belonging and Connectedness

Partner Organization: Synergos, South Africa

Synergos works for systemic change in South Africa by strengthening collaborative leadership, partnerships and institutions that promote equitable access to basic human rights and services. Our goal is to make a major contribution to the reduction of poverty by working with our partners to increase impact, go to scale, and implement solutions that are sustainable.

In South Africa Synergos is strengthening municipal leadership and participatory governance. The Municipal Leadership and Governance Initiative seeks to strengthen municipal leadership and participatory governance, active citizenry and collective action. Through focusing on strengthening youth leaders, and women's voices, we build a sense of belonging by creating dialogues and opportunities for active citizenry and social connectedness towards collective action. In this approach, we improved relations between the community initiatives and the municipal government, shifting from a litigious approach to productive dialogue and meaningful engagement. Synergos uses transformational dialogue processes to build trust among diverse stakeholders and to co-create initiatives that impact communities positively.

Learn more at: https://www.synergos.org/south-africa

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location of the Project: Synergos, South Africa Team

This project will be conducted remotely via a work-from home model. Preference will be given to candidates located in South Africa.

Section 1: Description of the Project

The fellow will conduct research and generate knowledge on Synergos' "Bridging Leadership and Social Connectedness within Communities" work, assessing and informing how communities and municipalities connect and build a sense of belonging. At Synergos, we want to understand how our efforts to strengthen social connectedness, through bridging leadership, have led to changes for the communities we operate in. The Fellow will be tasked with highlighting the program's strengths, impacts, and areas for improvement, with attention paid to both individuals and the broader community. Building on SCSC's and Synergos' Social Connectedness work, the Fellow will use a framing that focuses on three of the four dimensions of SCSC's framework of belonging: place, people and (em)power(ment).

The research will involve mapping the various partners and their role in the Social Connectedness Program, and how this aligns with the Bridging Leadership Program's resilience building, internal development and belonging work. An emphasis will also be placed on how systems of belonging can be created through social connectedness work and community engagement and participation.

The Fellow will also work to understand best practices for building-collective values, and approaches to working with diverse partners. Synergos is interested in approaches that center:

- **Systems Thinking:** Identifying root causes and emphasizing long-term solutions over short-term fixes and highlighting our interconnected futures to build independent solutions.

- **Collaboration:** Synergos serving as a neutral space for conversations and collaboration; Supporting collaboration between diverse stakeholders, leveraging diverse resources and facilitating workshops and meetings for productive collaboration between the Community Teams, Municipal Officials and leaders.

Section 2: Goals of the Project

This research will help inform Synergos programming, advocacy and future practices. The goals of the project broadly are to:

- Build lessons from the "Bridging Leadership", and the "Community Connectedness and Engagement" programmes, to create best practices for   enhancing community voice and participation

- Advocate for community voice and active citizenry; recognizing that participating in community can build a sense of belonging, purpose, care, protection and agency for self and others.

- Inform how community leadership can enhance and guide active participation of the community towards collective purposes, cultivate a sense of place, and encourage ownership of community challenges and co-created solutions.

Section 3: Guiding Questions

1. What are the best ways to, and how can we build community leadership networks that are strong, resilient and focused on enhancing communities?

2. How do community leadership networks contribute to systems of belonging that build community participation and active citizenry?

3. What opportunities do community leadership networks create towards systemic principles of belonging that enhance collaboration and collective action, in communities?

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
- Final Outputs
    - A 25 – 35-page research report supported by primary and/or secondary source data.
    - Mapping the Social Connectedness Network in South Africa & it's impact on community leadership, and resilience
- A Final Presentation with the Cohort

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Key Attributes and Skills in the Applicant

This application is prioritzing applicants in South Africa, and/or those who are familiar with the development context.

The preferred applicant will have the following qualities:

- Good analytical skills
- Good writing skills
- Research skills
    - Participatory and reflective research methodologies are preferred
- Group facilitation skills
- Diverse African languages
- Understanding and experience in community work
- Understanding of local government community engagement processes
- A self-starter who can take initiative and lead with the Social Connectedness partners
- An understanding of holistic development of people linked to the relevance and importance of social connectedness.

Additional Assets:
- Any of the fields linked to leadership development
    - Leadership Development Studies
    - Transformational and Conscious Leadership
    - Leadership in the Southern African context
    - Layers of leadership – all being leaders and the psychology of leadership
    - Interest and understanding of leadership development and community agency

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 21st 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, $15-24 CAD per hour, adjusted according to each Fellow's geographic location and experience.
    - o 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