

Homeshare international

promoting housing for help worldwide



BUSINESS MODELS FOR HOMESHARE PROGRAMMES

In 2015, Homeshare International surveyed 48 homeshare programmes in 11 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States of America) on the business models that are used to provide intergenerational living match-up services. This fact sheet presents main data from the survey and some further reflections. We intend to keep this survey on-going. Consequently, updated versions of this fact sheet may follow.

Not-for-profit models prevail (Figure 1)

71% of surveyed programmes¹ are run as either charitable (33%) or part of a larger charity (38%). 6% are a Local Authority initiative. Only 2 of the 48 programmes operate as a for-profit model. 15% are university or educational establishment initiatives. In Spain, all programmes are under the responsibility of a university.

Geographical scope (Figure 2)

Geographically speaking, 61% of homeshare programmes in the survey serve a city/town and nearby communities; 23% are county wide, 6% are state wide, and 8% are country wide.

Figure 1. Programme is run as...

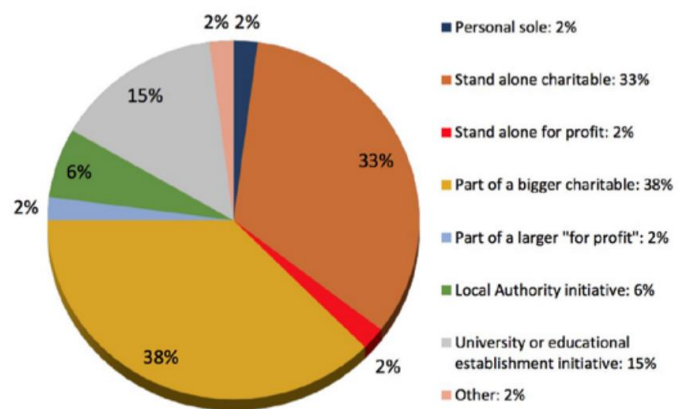
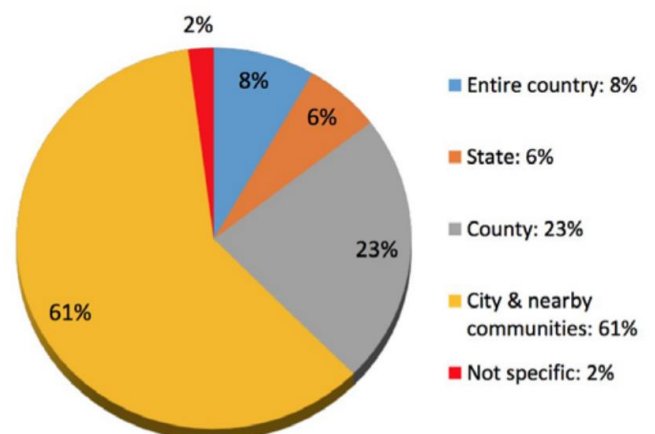


Figure 2. Geographical scope...



¹ All percentages indicate proportions over number of received replies

Staffing (Figure 3)

Half of programmes rely completely on paid staff, whereas 42.5% combine paid staff and volunteers. Only one programme functions just with volunteers.

Figure 3. Human resources



Age profile of participants

- ❖ 55% (11 programmes) ask householders to be over 65. Age range in other programmes goes from “no restrictions” to “typically over 75 but flexible”. Living alone or owning a house is a requirement in 10 and 6 programmes respectively.
- ❖ Overwhelmingly (75% of programmes responding), homesharers must be over 18. Being a full-time student (37.5%), sleeping in the house most nights (56.2%), and staying for a minimum period (45.8%) are different expectations for homesharers.

To fee or not to fee

- ❖ More than half (57.8%) of programmes surveyed offer the service for free (no fees to be paid). Monthly fees by householders (26.7%) and or homesharers (20%) as well as introduction fees are infrequent.
- ❖ Only 4 responding programmes indicated that they were fiscally self-sufficient.

Further reflections

- Homeshare programmes adopt business models that aren't financially focused. It would be worth discussing to what extent the charitable nature of the majority of these programmes might be either a catalyst or an inhibitor for their expansion and development.
- Why are so few programmes run at a state or country level? Has it to do either with organizational complexity of bigger scales or with the fact that match-up services require proximity to homesharers and householders? Whatever the case, relation between programme size and geographical scope deserves further research.
- Homeshare programmes need support from dedicated staff. Hence a clear pressure to raise funds to pay personnel. Looking into how programmes' charitable nature, the need for paid staff, and strategies for fundraising may combine is another issue deserving more detailed research. Likewise, identifying key competencies among both paid and unpaid staff involved in running successful programmes would be very useful for programme managers.
- Chronological age does not seem to be a clear-cut or distinct criteria to describe householders or homesharers. A broad age diversity exists. What other characteristics identify potential participants?
- Data points to a struggle between an altruistic approach to homeshare and the need to make programmes financially sustainable. Studying how similar sectors (eg: social housing, services for the elderly) are confronting such a struggle may be a source of inspiration to find our own pathways to make programmes viable.