

# Homeshare international

promoting housing for help worldwide



## BUSINESS MODELS FOR HOMESHARE PROGRAMMES (I)

In 2015, Homeshare International surveyed 48 homeshare programmes in 11 countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, and 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 ongoing. Consequently, updated versions of this fact sheet may follow.

### Non-for-profit schemes prevail (Figure 1)

71% of surveyed programmes<sup>1</sup> are run as either charitable or part of a bigger charity. In Spain, all programmes are under the full/shared responsibility of a university. Only 2 out of 48 programmes are framed under a for-profit business model.

### Geographical scope (Figure 2)

Geographically speaking, 61% of homeshare programmes in the sample serve a city/town and nearby communities, and 23% are county wide.

Figure 1. Programme is run as...

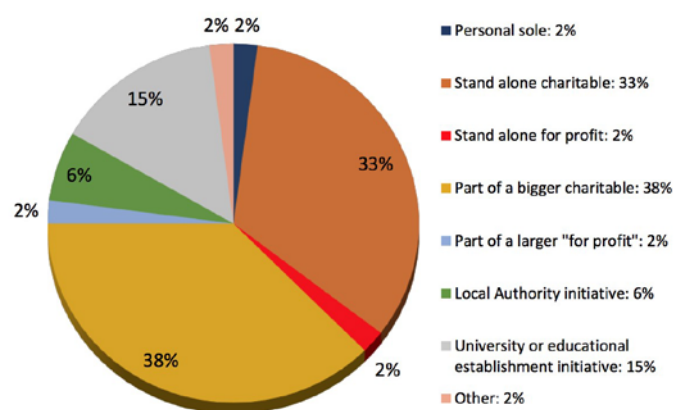
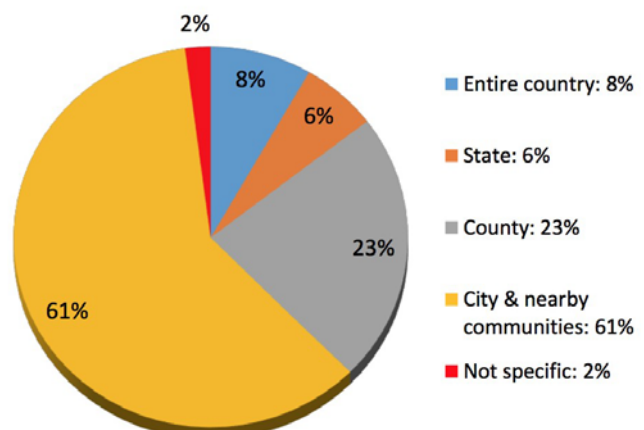


Figure 2. Geographical scope...



1. All percentages indicate proportions over

number of received replies.



## Staffing (Figure 3)

Half of programmes count only 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 householders and homesharers

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

## To fee or not to fee

- More than half (57.8%) of those 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.
- Twenty-three of the programmes reached recognize not being financially self-sufficient. Only 4 of all the responding programmes indicated that they were self-sufficient.

## Further reflections

- Homeshare programmes adopt business models that aren't business focused. It would be worthy 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 so few homeshare programmes are run at state/country level? Has it to do either with organizational complexity of bigger scales or with the fact that matching-up services require proximity to homesharers and householders? Whatever the case, relation between programme size and geographical scope must be researched further.
- Homeshare programmes need support from dedicated staff. Hence, a clear pressure to raise funds for hiring personnel. Looking into how programmes' charitable nature, the need for paid staff, and strategies for fundraising may combine is as well an issue deserving more detailed research. Likewise, finding out key competences among both paid and volunteer staff involved in running successful homeshare programmes would be very useful for managers of these programmes.
- Is chronological age a clear-cut and distinct criteria to characterize the profile of householders and homesharers in homeshare programmes? No, it does not seem so. A broad age diversity exists. Hence a need to consider criteria other than chronological age to identify potential participants in these programmes (e.g., a steep but unmet housing demand). Whether young or old, a wide range of qualitative characteristics of householders and homesharers abound.
- Should the charitable nature which predominates among programmes be strengthened? If so, how? Overall, datapoint out a potential struggle between an altruistic approach to these programmes and the need to make them financially sustainable. Finding out how similar sectors (e.g., social housing, non-for-profit services for the elderly) are confronting such a struggle might become a source of inspiration for the homeshare movement to find own pathways to make programmes viable.