



# Nurturing a global network

## Homeshare in action 2014 – 2019



***Homeshare International is a UK charity set up in 1999 to encourage the development of new homeshare programmes around the world and to forge links between them.***

## **Homeshare International @ 20!**

My Uncle Bert lived in his own home until shortly before his death aged 101. He was able to do so because a loving family lived with him and provided the support and companionship he needed. But what happens to people who do not have family close by? Homesharing programmes enable unrelated people to share a home and their lives for mutual benefit. The late Maggie Kuhn set up the first programmes in the USA in 1972. And the concept spread.

In 1999 Nan Maitland launched Homeshare International (HI) to foster homesharing more widely. At the time there were homeshare programmes in seven countries. Twenty years later, just look at what has been accomplished!

Homeshare International has sponsored six international Congresses, is the world leader in promoting the concept, and has been instrumental in encouraging the growth of national networks to support and create new programmes to meet local needs. Homeshare programmes are now running in at least 16 countries.

The international network provides added value as we share concerns and solutions, and learn from one another. It is a tremendous track record for an entirely volunteer organisation, and I am so proud to be a part of this amazing and growing movement.

We must acknowledge the dedicated leadership of our Honorary Director, Elizabeth Mills. Elizabeth's passion has

motivated and guided HI since 2007. She is an exceptional networker who has recruited some truly inspiring trustees and other outstanding people to donate their time, skills and energies to HI's work.

After 12 years in the post however, Elizabeth wishes to retire as our Honorary Director, while remaining a trustee. So we are delighted to announce that, later this year, Shared Lives Plus, a UK charity, will take over the reins. Shared Lives Plus already manages Homeshare UK, the national association, and is well placed to nurture HI through its next steps.

We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Rhian Bradley who relinquished the Chair in 2017 when she moved back to Australia. Rhian had been Nan's homesharer so brought personal experience as well as passion, insight and skill to her role. We miss her and wish her well.

This Review celebrates the past 20 years. Please join us as we develop Homeshare International to the next level to help more people across the globe. As a powerful network we can change the world, two people at a time.



**Cheryl Snider, Chair**

### **We aim to:**

- Develop a **network** of homeshare practitioners, enabling them to support and learn from each other
- Support and encourage **good practice**
- **Raise awareness** of homesharing and its potential among **policy makers**
- **Foster new programmes** and local networks in all parts of the globe
- **Encourage research** on the contribution that homesharing can make
- Raise awareness of the **benefits of homesharing** among potential householders and homesharers

Cover photo courtesy of Adriana Juan and Solidarios, Spain

### **About homesharing**

Homesharing enables two unrelated people to share a home and their lives for their **mutual benefit**.

Typically older householders with a room to spare are carefully matched with a younger person who provides support and companionship **in exchange** for their accommodation. The homesharer might help with daily tasks, offer some financial support or a combination of these. Homesharing recognises that both parties have needs **and** something to give.

Homeshare programmes are known to be running in at least 16 countries.

[www.homeshare.org](http://www.homeshare.org)

Homeshare International is a registered UK CIO, number 1170322

***Homesharing began in the 1970s in the USA to help older people to stay in their own homes. No one could have foreseen the global spread of the concept. Homesharing works because it is a simple solution to many of the challenges of the 21st century.***

## A simply brilliant solution

Every country that has embraced homesharing faces its own set of challenges but there are some policy issues that are common to most of them.

### An ageing world, an opportunity

Globally more than one person in ten is aged over 60 and the proportion of people in older age groups is rising fast. In Europe a quarter of the population is over 60. That so many now live into older age is cause for celebration but later life is a struggle for many people. A high proportion of older people live alone, often miles from their families. They can be isolated and vulnerable.

Homesharing provides a way for people to deal with some of the challenges they face in later life and helps them remain independently in their own homes. A well-chosen homesharer can provide some help in the home, companionship and security, especially at night.

And in return for this support, older people are **giving something back** – a secure home to a younger person. The reciprocity of homesharing chimes with the United Nations' vision of older age:

**“Older persons are increasingly seen as contributors to development, whose abilities to act for the betterment of themselves and their societies should be woven into policies and programmes at all levels.”**

**Intergenerational programmes** are being tested in many countries to break down barriers between the generations, foster mutual respect and tolerance, and build stronger communities. Homesharing could be called the ultimate intergenerational programme.

### Students need homes

More young people than ever before now go to university or college and the provision of housing for them has not been able to keep pace. In many countries **homesharing is meeting the housing needs of students**. In Spain, France, Germany and Belgium, for example, hundreds of students are matched with older householders for whom they provide help and companionship. In return they get a secure home from home in which to study, at a modest cost.

### Rocketing rents

Housing costs are soaring in some countries, such as the UK. This particularly impacts on younger people at the start of their careers. Homesharing is a brilliant solution – it gives younger people an **affordable home** and makes **better use of housing stock** since older people often occupy a home that is too big for them. **Key workers**, for example nurses, teachers and other public sector workers, are among the people who can benefit from homesharing.

### Loneliness – and other health issues

Loneliness recently shot up the public agenda in countries such as the UK and Australia where research has shown that **loneliness is as bad for health** as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Various policies are likely to be rolled out in coming decades to reduce the impact of loneliness on health spending. Homesharing deserves to be one of the policies. Homesharing also supports the health service in other ways, for example by allowing **hospital discharge**. Older people with a live-in companion are less anxious and this too is a boost for health. **People with disabilities** can also benefit from homesharing.



### “We talk, we laugh, we eat together”

Now in her 70s, Philomena shares her home with Rakesh, a Malaysian student who is studying nursing at a local college. Their match was arranged by Homeshare Melbourne, Australia, to give Philomena some help in the house – Rakesh loves to cook! – and an affordable home for Rakesh. But the benefits go deeper. With their own families miles away, they love each other's company and loneliness is kept at bay. Such is the bond that Philomena calls Rakesh her adopted son. Philomena has had three homesharers at different times since her husband died.

*Photo courtesy of Michelle Grace Hunder, [www.thebigissue.org.au](http://www.thebigissue.org.au)*



**At least 16 countries across the world now have homeshare programmes and many of them are members of our Network. Here we give an overview of each country and share its success stories and its frustrations.**

## Homesharing works! A global snapshot

Since our last review (2013) homesharing has grown significantly with more countries experimenting with the idea, more programmes and more matches. It's not all rosy, sadly. It was a tragedy that the very successful **Netherlands** programme had to close in 2018, crushed by the country's inflexible social security laws.

### Australia and New Zealand – forging ahead

For nearly 20 years, homesharing has been supporting older people, reducing public costs for care services and providing affordable housing. Homeshare programmes have generated hundreds of successful matches, often lasting for many years. Sadly, some programmes have failed due to insecure funding but the Melbourne programmes have persevered and grown, with HANZA (the Homeshare Australia & New Zealand Alliance) leading the way in creating more sustainable business models.

Now there are welcome new initiatives in New South Wales and New Zealand, along with the promise of a new programme in South Australia. Homesharing may also be set to play an even bigger role in addressing the affordable housing crisis. On the whole, homesharing is continuing to gain momentum and the market for it is broadening.

In 2015 HANZA hosted the hugely successful Fourth World Homeshare Congress in Melbourne which was attended by over 100 delegates from all round the world.

### Austria

Homeshare programmes are active in three university cities – Vienna, Graz and Innsbruck – where they are helping to meet students' needs for decent housing. In Vienna the Wohnbuddy programme offers traditional matching services and also places students in retirement homes where, in exchange for their room, they provide companionship and support for the residents. This is a new form of homesharing, also tried in other countries.



*Homesharers from Spain and the UK took to the stage to tell their stories to the Madrid Congress in 2017*

*Photo courtesy of Adriana Juan and Solidarios, Spain*

### Belgium – a decade of success

In March 2019 1toit2ages ('One Roof 2 Ages') celebrates its 10th anniversary and hosts the Sixth World Homeshare Congress in Brussels. It is a testament to how the charity has thrived since it was set up in 2009 by Claire de Kerautem, with support from her husband Régis who became a trustee of Homeshare International in 2018. From their base in Brussels they have introduced homesharing to five more towns and have plans to extend it further. They have now reached their 2000<sup>th</sup> match! In 2016 they won a prestigious prize from the Housing Ministry for their work in meeting students' housing needs.

### Canada

Interest in homesharing is growing as communities develop programmes to meet their needs. While most of these focus on matches between seniors and students, some include broader populations.

Ontario has seen the biggest growth but programmes also exist or are starting in Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia.

### Czech Republic – a new start-up

We are delighted to welcome this newcomer. Based in Charles University in Prague, the Program sdíleného bydlení (Shared Housing Programme) was set up in 2018 to provide student accommodation. Its founder, Vera Hoffmannová, has been mentored by Beris Campbell from Australia – the Network in action.

### France – scoring a legal victory

Homesharing is thriving in France where it is helping to meet the housing needs of students in most of the major towns and cities. Three networks are active throughout France, between them running over 40 programmes. The first to be set up was Le Pari Solidaire (réseau COSI) in 2004, followed by ensemble2générations in 2006. The third one is réseau LIS.

In 2018, following a very effective joint campaign, the French government was persuaded to change the legal status of homesharing. Part of the problem was that only students could legally be homesharers; now anyone under the age of 30 can apply to be a homesharer. Homeshare programmes are now recognised as service providers; formerly they were classified as 'lettings agents'. These changes in the law will make it much easier for

programmes to operate and allow more people to benefit from homesharing.

## Germany – meeting students' needs

Homesharing is known here as Wohnen für Hilfe ('Housing for Help') and was set up in 1992 in Darmstadt by our Vice President, Anne-Lotte Kreickemeier, to meet the need for student accommodation. There are now 35 programmes in university towns and cities across the country. There is also an active national network, [Wohnen für Hilfe in Deutschland](#), which brings practitioners together annually to share their learning. Homesharing is thriving in part because of the high cost of housing.

## Ireland – a run-away success story

Lucie Cunningham had worked in the home care sector for many years when she decided to try running a homeshare programme instead – THE HomeShare. Starting in Dublin in 2017, the programme aimed primarily to support older people in their own homes. It was an immediate success with several matches and plans to spread beyond Dublin.

## Italy

As with many European countries, Italian programmes aim to solve the student housing crisis in university cities such as Milan, Rome, Bologna and Turin.

## Japan – overcoming the hurdles?

With the highest proportion of older people in the world, Japan has much to gain from homesharing. However, much of the country's housing stock is unsuitable for sharing and cultural factors also limit the take up. Even so homeshare is being trialled in four places. The organisers are now working to establish a national network to share their experiences and support each other.

## Korea – new and growing

A homeshare project began in Seoul City in 2012 to meet the needs of older householders and students coming to the city from rural areas. Since then the programme has made hundreds of successful matches and the idea is being taken up in other cities with large student populations.

## Portugal – on the starting blocks

We believe there are two programmes, in Oporto and Coimbra, both meeting the needs of students but in different ways. The Coimbra programme, whose motto is 'Two generations together for a good cause' is placing students in care homes where they offer companionship and some support in exchange for their room.

## Spain – a remarkable recovery

Homesharing started here in 1991 in university cities in response to an urgent need for student housing. For a time Spain had more programmes than anywhere else in Europe until the economic downturn in 2008 deprived

## "Homesharing has become a lifestyle choice"

Celine was 45 when she came to HomeShare Vermont, USA, looking for a home after her divorce.

She was matched with Joyce and was fortunate to have no-cost housing while she searched for work.



Little did she know she would find a new career, a great friend and mentor and live there for eight years until Joyce's death at the age of 100. And Joyce achieved her aim of living independently in her own home.

Celine discovered such a love of working with elders from her special friendship with Joyce, that she started homesharing with another senior after Joyce died.

For Celine, homesharing started as a necessity and became a lifestyle choice.

*Photo courtesy of HomeShare Vermont*

many of them of their funding. Happily homesharing is growing again, partly as a result of funding from local councils. The Madrid programme Convive, run by Solidarios, has recently had its funding doubled. Programmes are also running in other cities such as Seville. A network, Red de Programas de Convivencia Intergeneracional, was set up recently to link all the known programmes.

In May 2017 the Fifth World Homeshare Congress was organised in Madrid by Solidarios. An immensely successful occasion, it attracted 140 delegates from 11 countries. The photo on our front cover shows what a well-supported and happy event it was.

## Switzerland – re-inventing the idea

We are aware of programmes in seven cities, including Zurich, Geneva, Bern and Basel, some of them invented quite independently (this is not the first time that homesharing has been re-invented!). The programmes have been driven by the need to provide good accommodation for students. Some of the programmes are known as Wohnen für Hilfe ('Housing for Help') as in Germany.

## Supporting our health services

The first UK homeshare match enabled Josie, in her 70s, to be discharged from hospital after a stroke. Over the next three years her homesharer, Trevor, provided companionship, help and security until she was well enough to live on her own again. Josie felt she'd gained a grandson – and the health service gained a hospital bed. Homesharing is a win-win solution for everybody.

## UK – of funding and friends

In the UK, homesharing has developed as a means of supporting older people in their own homes. The UK has been extremely fortunate in having a successful charity, Shared Lives Plus, run the national network, Homeshare UK. This has not only brought practitioners together, it has also provided the resource to monitor the UK's progress (the sector reports are on their website).

Another huge boost came in 2015 when the Lloyds Bank Foundation and the Big Lottery Fund invested £2 million in homesharing. This enabled new programmes to get off the ground; there are now 19 of them. Homeshare matches and their duration have gone up and, to everyone's surprise, homesharing is successfully supporting people with early-stage dementia. The challenges are clear however – and public awareness is a key one.

Homeshare UK recently scored a legal triumph when it lobbied for a change in the Tenant Fees Act, which would have made it illegal for programmes to charge a fee to homesharers. Non-profit making programmes are now exempt from the new law.

### How does homesharing work?

Practitioners have developed different models of homesharing to meet local circumstances but the three common ones are:

**The counselling model** – programme coordinators screen all applicants, suggest matches and support people to make a suitable match. A contract is drawn up and the programme offers continuing support to both parties.

**The referral model** – programme coordinators interview applicants and suggest matches. It is then up to the applicants to take things forward.

**The do-it-yourself model** – some providers have issued guidelines for people to arrange and manage their own matches. This recognises that homesharing cannot be offered in every community where there is a need for it.

**Something new** ... since our last review some programmes have successfully introduced homesharing into care homes for older people. Students or other young people

are offered a free room in the care home and in return they socialise with and support the residents, for example teaching them how to use new technology. Early indications are that this works very successfully.



*Ezra and Alan were matched by the Homeshare Oxford programme, run by Age UK Oxfordshire*

*Photo courtesy of Marian Pocock, Age UK Oxfordshire*

## USA – still in the forefront

Homesharing began in the USA in the 1970s and is still thriving despite some setbacks. Homesharing is increasingly seen by policy makers as an important affordable housing option as well as an in-home alternative for a dramatically ageing population.

In 2016 the national association, the National Shared Housing Resource Center (NSHRC), reorganised and decided to focus solely on non-profit homesharing organisations. In 2017 they developed a *Resource Guide for Establishing a New Homesharing Program*, the proceeds of which go to support this national association.

In 2018 the NSHRC held the first national conference in 15 years thanks to help from HIP Housing in California. In 2019 the NSHRC will be offering a two-day training course for new homesharing programmes in Vermont.

### “Homesharing transforms lives”

“I feel an immense gratitude to Wendy, my home provider, for inviting me into her home, welcoming me into her family, and trusting me in her space.

In return I hope that I am helpful and compassionate – and enhance her life and home as she and her home have enhanced mine.

I would recommend everyone to consider homeshare as an alternative way of living.”

*Eleanor, a 25-year-old homesharer, matched through the Homeshare Oxford programme, UK*





***Homeshare International has had many successes in building a vibrant network of practitioners and spreading the concept of homesharing.***

## Homeshare International at work

When Homeshare International began in 1999 there were programmes in seven countries: now we know of 16 and there may well be others. In some cases homesharing has been independently re-invented but in others we have had a direct or indirect influence on the spread of the idea.

This is why our **website** is critical – it's an open resource for anyone wanting to get involved at any level, or to start a new programme. In 2018, with marvellous support from our design partners, Archetype, we completely redesigned the website with a fresh new look and extra content. Thanks to Google Translate it's possible to read the content in any language, a huge plus point for us.

We recently launched **Homeshare Shout**, a social media campaign for programmes to use to raise the public profile of homesharing and what it has to offer.



### A learning Network

The **Homeshare International Network** is a resource and inspiration for practitioners, helping people to learn from and about each other. We now have Network members in 11 countries, representing many different programmes. People joining the Network sign our **Charter**, which commits them to supporting other practitioners as members of a learning community. They also commit to work towards good practice.

And it works! For example, we were thrilled to hear that ensemble2générations from France was supporting programmes in Martinique and French-speaking Canada. Beris Campbell from Australia has been mentoring programmes in South Korea and the Czech Republic. Within countries there is also contact between members, especially where there is no national association.

Membership also confers another advantage – the kudos of being part of an international movement. This matters most to more isolated programmes or those that struggle to get funding. They can demonstrate that homesharing has a proven track record and is here for the long term.

### Face to face at our congresses

In 2009 we held a modest gathering in Paris to bring homeshare practitioners together. Such was its success that we have held a congress every two years since, in different parts of the world: Cologne in 2011, Oxford, UK in 2013, Melbourne, Australia in 2015, Madrid, Spain in 2017 and this year, 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. Recent congresses have attracted delegates from almost every country where homesharing exists, with well over 100 delegates at each. The feedback tells us that the participants feel stimulated, informed, re-energised and connected to a vibrant global movement.

### A study of homeshare models

With support from a group of researchers we undertook our first **survey** of homesharing in 2015, to establish what kinds of business models are in use. The survey showed that over two-thirds of programmes are run by charities or non-profit organisations. The survey is posted online.

### Where next?

We are delighted to announce a **partnership with Shared Lives Plus**, a UK charity, that will secure our future. Shared Lives Plus is consulting our stakeholders and “actively seeking funding to expand and develop Homeshare International’s support for homesharing around the globe”. The charity is well placed to take on this role as it already runs Homeshare UK, the national association. We look forward to working with them towards the next 20 years.

## **“I didn’t like being on my own. Andy has been a great support”**

Rosemary was struggling to care for her seriously ill husband when her daughter suggested the Homeshare Oxford programme, run by Age UK Oxfordshire. The couple were matched with Andy who works close by as an NHS occupational therapist. Andy needed somewhere affordable to live in one of the UK’s most expensive cities.

When Rosemary’s husband sadly died, Andy stayed on. “We’ve become good friends,” says Rosemary. “Andy has been a great support to me, so kind and helpful.”

*Photo courtesy of Marian Pocock, Age UK Oxfordshire*



## Management ...

**Homeshare International is a UK charity run by an international Board of Trustees with support from a group of National Advisors.**

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USA: Kirby Dunn, HomeShare Vermont

### Ambassadors

Rhian Bradley, Australia

Carmel Hurst, OAM, Australia

Professor Mariano Sanchez, Spain

Hilary Todd, UK

### Volunteers

We are most grateful to the volunteers who have supported us in this period: Enea Casari, Hilary Todd and Judy Winchester.

## ... and money

In the period 2014-2018 our **income** included: grants and sponsorship for our two congresses; subscriptions from members of the Homeshare International Network; and donations. These included a donation from The Funding Network and two ShareGift donations – see [www.sharegift.org](http://www.sharegift.org)

Our **expenditure** included running our website, supporting two congresses and administrative expenses. We had no paid staff in this period.

**Our warmest thanks** go to those organisations and individuals who have supported our work. We would particularly like to thank Shared Lives Plus and AGE Platform Europe for their encouragement and support.

Please contact us if you would like further details of our finances.

Homeshare International is entirely dependent on voluntary **donations** for its continued existence. Donations may be made by PayPal in any currency – see our website.

**Homeshare International**  
11 Divinity Road  
Oxford OX4 1LH, UK

[HI@homeshare.org](mailto:HI@homeshare.org)  
[www.homeshare.org](http://www.homeshare.org)

Follow us on 

## Contact us! Join us!

**We'd love to hear from you** if you have information to share, need to know how to start a programme or evaluate one, or if you'd like to join the Network.

Please note: we do not arrange matches between house-holders and homesharers. If you are interested in this, please refer to our website for local contacts.

You can contact us at [HI@homeshare.org](mailto:HI@homeshare.org) – other details are given above.

### "It gives me complete peace of mind"

"The difference having a sharer live with me is that, when we say goodbye in the morning, I know I will have company in the evening.

Even when he's not in the sitting room with me, I know he's pottering around in the kitchen. It gives me complete peace of mind."

*Tommy, who was matched by THE Homeshare in Ireland*