

A Youth Time Bank in Wales

The Glyn Coch Estate is located on the outskirts of Pontypridd. With a population of nearly 3000 it faces a number of challenging socio-economic problems including high levels of child poverty, high unemployment and low levels of education. In September 2005, the Wales Institute for Community Currencies (WICC) was asked to assist Communities First in developing a youth time bank in Glyn Coch from the existing youth group.

There was very little opportunity for young people to choose to be involved in active projects and little opportunity for them to take responsibility to run their own youth group. So the time bank idea was introduced to the young people and they were asked if they would like to become members. A four week planning process began to decide on the name and logo for the time bank, the initial projects and what trips the young people would like in return for their time given to the youth group and the community.

As the young people began to be involved in new projects for the community and were therefore able to go on trips there was a change in atmosphere and culture of the youth group. Recently young people have increasingly taken responsibility in running the youth club and have their own constituted organisation making their decisions on activities, trips, budgets, behaviour issues and members. They are developing more innovative projects in the community such as tree planting, putting on concerts, or producing a mural for the local primary school.

With their time credits the young people have enjoyed a three day outdoor pursuits weekend, quad-biking, ice-skating, a survival skills and gorge walking course, My Fair Lady at the Millennium Centre and a karate competition in London.

Continued on page 2



Young people of Glyn Coch involved in planning their time bank and putting on a concert for the community.

From page 1

Over 12 months the Glyn Coch Time Bank has increased the number of active citizenship hours from 210 to 1200 hours a year. The number of young people actively involved in their community has increased to 35. All the young people that attend the youth group are now actively involved in the time bank.

Becky Booth
Wales Institute for Community Currencies

Now we are Twelve

It's been six months since last summer's notice in the newsletter asking for nominations to the Board. For the five new trustees who kindly put themselves forward and who were interviewed in November, the January 2007 Board meeting was their first.

So now we are 12, which is a good number and is also the number which last year's AGM agreed was the best size for the Time Banks UK Board. There are now six men and six women and the expanded Board has good representation from around the UK (other than, as yet, N. Ireland).

It's brilliant that we have a strong and balanced Board made up of people with years of experience of time banking, as well as knowledge of policy and potential partner organisations.

The job of the Board is primarily to provide strategic direction and financial oversight so that Time Banks UK is effective in creating an environment in which time banking can flourish throughout the UK. So, as well as being passionate about time banking and knowing how it really works, we need to have an eye to the 'policy environment' and be creative about linking with other organisations which could use time banking as a tool.

The names of Board members are on the website in New to Time Banking/How we are Managed. A warm welcome goes to our new Board members who are Becky Booth (WICC), Dan Grainger (Time 2 Trade, Sandwell), Lisa Haywood (mental health service user/organisational consultant), Martin Brennan (Time Exchange, Newcastle), Sian Lockwood (National Association of Adult Placement Services).

Martin Farrell
Chair, Time Banks UK

Focus on Time Banking

TBUK ran a series of focus groups in Newcastle to understand how best to communicate to the general public about time banking. There were three groups each of different ages that had not heard about time banking and one mixed group of time banking participants. Representatives from ethnic, disabled and low education backgrounds were also included. In true Geordie style, discussions were open and humorous. Many people already do favours for friends, families and neighbours and like the idea of exchanging time within a system that overcomes their concerns of trusting strangers.

We learnt that the main media they used to find out about local community activities were free papers, posters and leaflets in public places like libraries, surgeries, post offices etc. and newsletters. They would respond to relevant and eye-catching advertisements to get more information using the cheapest method – generally website but also freepost coupons.

The groups made many suggestions to improve our designs for folders, posters, leaflets and especially the new time banking logo. They liked the use of illustrations but wanted them to be 'lively' showing people together rather than individuals. They also made many comments on the Key Messages (mentioned in the last newsletter) which were frequently different to those from the group of time banking participants! For the general public groups, the important aspects of time banking were its flexibility, exchanging time, everyone being equal and a trusting environment. However, the time banking participants felt the social aspects of the time bank were key features.

Yvonne Lambert
TBUK



Time Exchange participants at the Focus Group.

Read all about it

Stories about time banking are starting to appear regularly in the news. Since the beginning of 2007 a short piece called "Give, receive and swap stuff here" appeared in The Guardian (6 January), we have found a long article on the Benetton website (www.bennettontalk.com) and a short piece appeared in the February edition of Zest magazine (www.zest.co.uk). There is also a feature on time banking in the March edition of Organic Life magazine.

Part of the Time Banks UK remit is to raise the profile of time banking to a bigger audience to encourage more participants to join and for new time banks to start up. (See Focus on Time Banking.) We are now involved in the government funded Volunteering for All campaign which means we will be running a marketing and publicity drive later on this year as well as teaming up with the Media Trust on their Give More, Get More promotion aimed at raising the profile of volunteering in general.

But to step up the level of public relations work means providing the media with the kind of stories they want and that is where the time banks come in. Take the example of the Organic Life feature, the journalist called TBUK asking for case studies (examples of real life time banking stories), we called our time banks' contacts, explained what was needed and then the journalist called the time banks we had recommended and briefed.

Information needed

At a very minimum the media want to know the answers to when, where, why, who, what and how. So we need to build up a picture of each person, what their personal circumstances are and how they have benefited from joining a time bank. The more variety of backgrounds and ages, the better it demonstrates how time banking works in a range of situations.

Briefing the person

Finding the case study is only the start of the process. We have to make sure that the person is agreeable to being used as a case study for the media. This means explaining to them exactly what they are letting themselves in for and how the media behave. It can seem exciting to some people to appear in the media but there are always knock on effects which people need to be aware



Time bankers talk to the top man - photographed at a special reception for volunteers at No. 10 Downing Street from left to right: Tina Spiers of Gloucester Time Bank, Reyaz Limalia Gloucester Time Broker, Alec Rosam of Gloucester Time Bank, the Prime Minister Tony Blair and Erica Tate from Clapham Park Time Bank, London.

of – sometimes the story takes hold and everyone wants a piece of the action. There are always risks of the story running away or other facts appearing and changing the story completely.

We have to safeguard our sources especially as many of them are vulnerable in one way or another. This means that we will always be the intermediary between them and the media so will not give their contact details. Instead we will be the first point of contact. (Useful websites www.mediatrust.org and www.presswise.org.uk)

Ambassadors

So the search is on for Time Banks UK to collect a library of case studies to use as promotional material for TBUK and with the media. This is important as it makes time banking 'real' and the media thrives on the human interest angle. It is crucial to have to hand a selection of case studies to be able to respond to any media request as quickly as possible and to reinforce our key messages about time banking.

We are now on the look out for people willing to share their time banking stories with a wider public through featuring in the media and become time banking ambassadors. Anyone interested in doing this should contact me.

*Stella Parkes
TBUK
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‘Clock-Cakes, Committees & Credits’

The Story of an AGM

It’s often said that if you’ve got a good recipe the right ingredients and a great cook, you can make just about anything! As time broker for the Rhondda Housing Association Time Exchange project (RHATE), that’s how I see ‘Co-Production’, Edgar Cahn’s fundamental principle of working-together. So what have ‘clock-cakes, committees and credits’ got to do with time banking? Simple – ‘People Powered Possibility’ or ‘Self-Governance’.

When RHATE needed to put their AGM together, I figured we’d need a recipe for success. The recipe I chose to use was, ‘Inter-Dependence’

or independence with mentoring. I asked my management committee if they would be happy to take on their 2nd AGM as a time exchange. Everyone loved the idea and so was born the concept of ‘A Slice of Time’ or ‘Piece-by-Piece’ or time banking!

The principles of the concept work like this. Ask your members to divide the components or ‘slices’ of a project, concept or in our case, an AGM into ‘bite-size’ chunks so that no one person chokes on the total responsibility. Then, treat each piece of the larger whole as individual time exchange possibilities. Your basic premise is always a ‘win-win-win’ scenario. I started with the core components of our desired AGM, for example, promotional materials, phone calls, transport and entertainment.

I asked the members, who can put together AGM packs, invites and flyers and how long will it take? Once people had been asked to volunteer their time, the rest was easy. I simply divided up the remaining areas into ‘wants and needs’ or, ‘give and take’ and away we went — an AGM in the making. Members earned time credits, the committee embraced self-governance and as time broker I took several steps backwards towards a future move forward of self-sustainability for the time bank. All in all, a great ‘piece’ of work which made the whole experience of producing an AGM fun!



‘Uncle Albert’, John Rogers (WICC) and Terry Mace about to cut the clock-cake at the AGM.

*Terry Mace
 RHATE*