

TIME BANKS UK

TIME TO GIVE AND TAKE

www.timebanks.co.uk

Edition 16

June 2004

International Time Banking

Florence Conference

April 2004

I was impressed by the fact that nearly all of the conference attendees (about 80) from around the country were doing this in their own time. People believed in the movement so strongly that they took time off work to attend. They did not want to call themselves "volunteers", as the reciprocal element made a big difference.



Presenting the plaque - Margaret Cecchelli our contact is on the far right and Lucy's holding the plaque

Most "Comune" - our equivalent to Parish Councils, provide support to time banks in Italy, similar to that on offer to our hosts who were one of five time banks in Florence. They have use of an office and telephone in the Town Hall and had evolved into a group of about twenty friends who made exchanges directly with each other and met up regularly for a shared supper. Most time banks in Italy have to survive on the goodwill of volunteers as there are few paid workers.

Time Banks in Rome each have a different cultural theme and vast resources in comparison. One time bank was sponsored by the Co-op, who paid for the workers and for promotional events. A huge stumbling block for community development as a whole in Italy is that all "associations", from scout groups to school clubs or time banks, have to pay tax to the government as soon as they become official, which deters many from taking that step.

When I took the stand I talked about time banks in the UK and Chesterfield Time Bank. Mostly I concentrated on administration and funding, as this seemed to be the most frustrating aspect for our Italian counterparts. Then came the best bit, when they gave me presents - books in English about the restoration of parts of Florence, a CD of Florence music and a plaque to commemorate the day.

Lucy Curtis
Chesterfield Time Bank
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Japan

In April this year I went to visit my daughter Sian in Japan and I could not resist the opportunity to go to Matsuyama where there are ten time banks. We met their management group and they were really keen to learn about what is happening in Great Britain.

In return, they told us all about the 200 or so “community currency” schemes in Japan. Some are straight time banks and some are more like LETS.

There are also village based projects where people are given 20 special stones and when they receive an hour of help they give a stone to the person who provides the service. At the end of the year they have a ceremony and see who has what number of stones and celebrate all the giving and receiving that has transpired. Then they are each given another twenty stones for the next year.



Martin with Japanese timebrokers

After the meeting we all had a meal together and we spent the following day with Masako, the Director, who I now feel privileged to call a friend.

Time Banks USA

The Time Dollar Institute has been working with several leaders from some of the most successful time dollar projects in the USA to develop a strategy for high growth and sustainability. They have now decided to formalise their network and to link together under one organisational framework – Time Banks USA.

They will still call their currency time dollars and their vision remains of a world where any person who is willing to give of their time and skills to help others, to restore the environment or redress injustice will receive in exchange all he or she needs to live and to keep well.

Edgar Cahn will be the President of the new organisation and Mark McDonough and Andrew Wolk will share the role of CEO. Christine Grey will be responsible for training and Auta Main for the development of the network.

They can be contacted through the Time Dollar Institute or Maine Time Dollar Network.

TBUSA is also building a web-based new version of ‘Timekeeper’ which will be launched at the Toronto conference. See the Personal Home and Member Services sections of www.timebanks.org for a glimpse at the first stages of work in progress. It should then be available, under licence, to time banks in the UK.

“There are thousands of agencies working with billions of dollars attempting to build healthier lives, communities and society. Yet, through it all there is a constant cry for more funding. The Time Bank model provides a simple solution with ground breaking results. We are on a journey to find how individuals can create a better world that relies not just on financial support, but also on each other.

It is time to Unite”.

Time Banks USA

We are all now part of an international movement. Time Banks are springing up in Japan, USA, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Israel, Poland, Brazil, China, Slovakia, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. Every month we hear about a new startup.

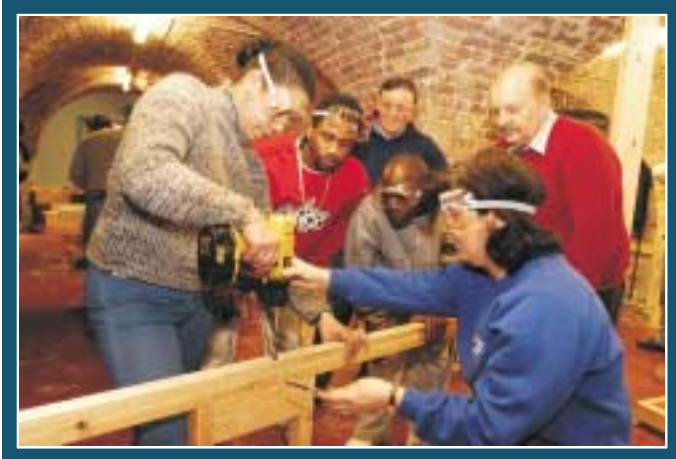
Martin Simon
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*Don't ask yourself what the world needs
Ask yourself what makes you come alive
And then go do that
Because what the world needs
Is people who have come alive.*

Harold Thurman Whitman

Back in the UK

Making DIY Work



Hexagon Housing Association was keen to empower their residents and equip them with the basic skills to enable them to undertake low level maintenance in the home. To that end Hexagon applied for the Housing Corporation's "Community, Training and Enabling Grant" to fund a DIY Skills training project. The Housing Corporation funded 4 courses of DIY training - 2 in April and 2 in May. In addition the Housing Corporation funded the setting up of a time bank, which they also saw as a good mechanism to encourage skills sharing.

The Project is currently targeting Southwark and Lewisham Boroughs. The course covers basic practical training and provides 10 places per course. The training is delivered on behalf of Hexagon by Lewisham Community Refurbishment Scheme (CRS) at both the CRS training centre in Deptford and in an empty Hexagon property.

The course is delivered over 10 weeks one day a week and covers the basics of plumbing, carpentry, electrical installation, painting and decorating and tiling. This includes repairing taps, fixing leaks, fitting locks and latches, wiring plugs, health and safety and first aid. As each module is completed participants will receive the appropriate tools to form a tool kit enabling them to provide basic ongoing repairs. Those who successfully complete the course also receive a grant towards improving a room in their own house.

Jayne Williams, the part-time timebroker, gives a presentation on timebanking at the end of each DIY course to encourage membership so that attendees can then share their skills further and earn time credits into the bargain. The time bank is of course not only open to participants

on the DIY skills training, but to all Lewisham and Southwark residents. In addition the time bank will be on offer to the housing associations that were invited to join the DIY skills training. As the pilot DIY scheme progresses, it is hoped the skills base and the geographical area will widen.

Hexagon has now opened up the training to tenants of other housing associations and is considering the development of accredited courses to allow residents to gain qualifications.

Jayne Williams
Hexagon Housing Time Bank
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Top Timebanker Competition

The winner of the family ticket for the Eden Project in St. Austell is June Bradbury of the HOurBank in Peckham, London. Sarah Burns of London Time Bank nominated June because 'She is totally innovative and inspiring and has brought a sense of real creativity as well as new possibilities to time banks.'

Body Shop at Home Prize

Thanks goes to The Body Shop at Home for providing this fabulous range of body care products worth over £50 for the next Top Timekeeper competition! Nominations to TBUK by 31st July 04.



Don't forget your time bank can request a Body Shop At Home consultant to run a 'try and buy' pamper party at your time bank. With raffles on the night, demonstrations of the latest goodies and a chance to benefit from special offers, this is a chance for some serious pampering! Call the party line on 08459 050607 and quote 'Time Banks UK' or contact kika@timebanks.co.uk for more information.

Rules available on request.

TIME BANKS UK

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Avalon Fair Shares

Over 130 people attended the launch of Somerset's first Time Bank scheme - Avalon Fair Shares - in Glastonbury. The event was the culmination of 12 months hard work by a dedicated team from the Glastonbury community, looking for ways to revitalise the town's LETS scheme. It celebrated a number of firsts, as described by 'chair' Michael Penn:

"Not only are we Somerset County's first Time Bank but also the first community project in Britain to become a TimePartner of the BBC TimeBank; and the first project to co-ordinate a LETS scheme side by side with a Time Bank."

With guest speakers including both Mary Fee - Secretary of LETSlink UK and Martin Simon - Executive Director of Time Banks UK, the day was certainly going to feel a bit like an Alternative Currency Conference. With the addition of keynote speaker Richard Rockefeller - Founder and

President of Maine Time Dollar Network USA, the launch became *"something of an international happening,"* attracting media attention from local and national press and BBC and ITV news. Richard talked of his involvement in the international and local exchange of time and gave the example of this African lady who proudly wore the wealth of her village, each bead representing a good deed done for a neighbouring tribe which could be 'cashed in' later.



To symbolise the launch the speakers planted six rare native Black Poplar tree cuttings donated by the Glastonbury Conservation Trust. Richard Rockefeller then cut a ribbon to officially open the project, of which he said *"just like we are planting cuttings to grow trees, so I am making a cutting of LETS and Time Banks to grow into Avalon Fair Shares!"*

Following the speeches, guests were treated to a taste of Glastonbury with a gorgeous buffet provided by organisational participant The Café Galatea and danced the night away to Glastonbury's Green Angels ceilidh band. Entertainment also included poetry reading and music from the harp, Celtic style fiddle, Native American flute and didgeridoo.

Jon Cousins
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