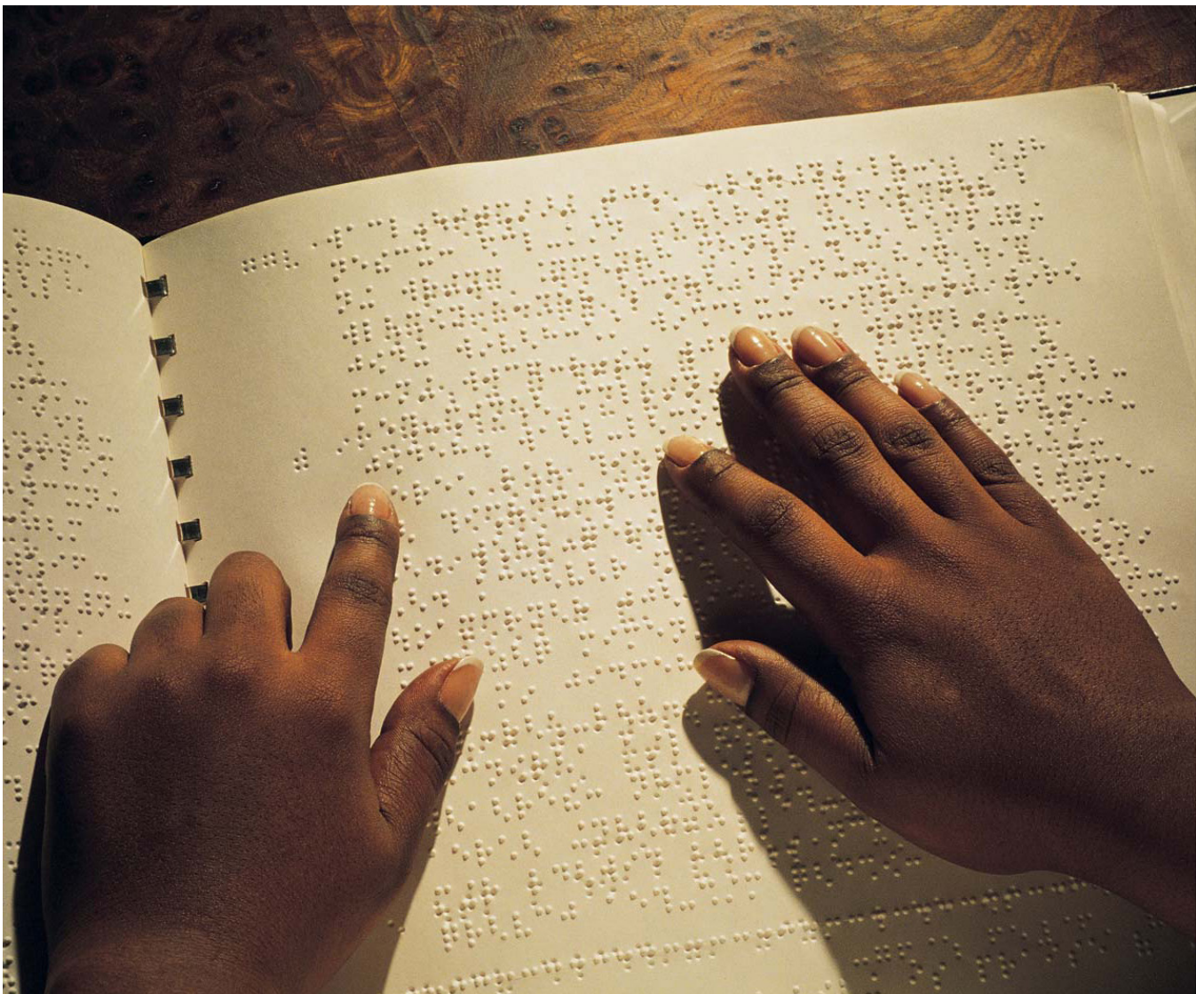




Timebanking UK

Timebanking for those with sight loss and visual impairments



January 2020



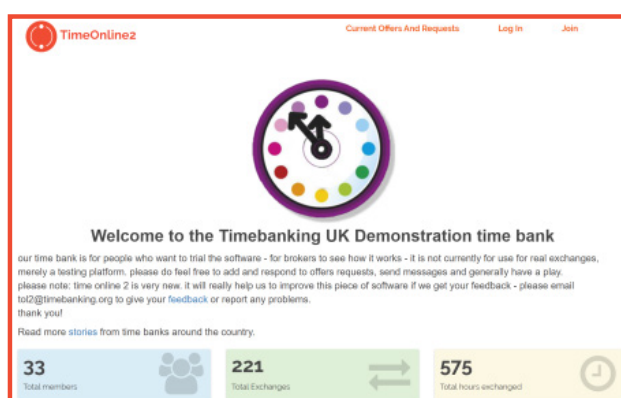
Funded by Greater London Fund for the Blind

Braille materials/software and website

As a result of generous funding from the Greater London Fund for the Blind we have been able to create resources which will enable people with sight loss to become involved in timebanking. This report explains more about the materials and our plans for the future.

We are very pleased with the development of the software platform and our new website, alongside the braille materials. Screenshots of all are shown on page 2 of this report. We tailored and developed these materials after our first six months of planning and consulting with a range of groups and people with sight loss to determine what would work best. We were pleased with the useful responses and enthusiasm to help us with the design, planning and implementation of these new timebanking resources.

Our software developers said: “The themes we’ve used utilise black text on a white background, which offers maximum contrast. We don’t use text over images (other than in the roll-overs, where contrast is maximised by using white text over a dark grey overlay). We also use high-contrast colour schemes for buttons and menus.”



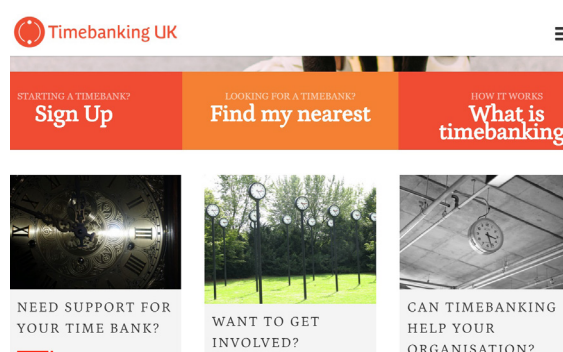
Some of the focus groups were held using social media (Facebook) and generally across our national membership of time banks using our newsletter and email.

Feedback on our beta website, current website and software included comments such as:

- *You need to be considerate of the hyperlinks behind the images and the amount of HTML links as that’s what throws things out...your previous website used a lot of red which is a very difficult colour to get along with!*
- *The vast majority of us use speech software and what tends to throw the software out is high graphics and rolling banners. When using software to access websites it’s easiest with simple text and you will find that accessible websites have an accessibility tab to put the website into an accessible format.*
- *Drop down tabs are hard to navigate visually if you don’t use software but reply upon magnification*

Our software developers said:

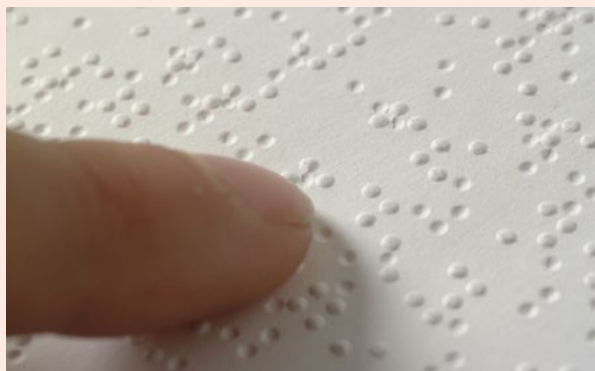
“ We will look into how these can be made as accessible as possible while following the WCAG 2.0 guidelines, which are the current web standard for accessibility for people who are blind or partially sighted. ”



There has been regular communication with a company specialising in transcribing texts to braille, who have provided invaluable advice and direction.

In addition to requesting input via email and social media, we met with two blind people who read the braille proofs, giving us good feedback and areas for development:

“ I have read the document and, generally speaking, everything is OK although it rather depends how professional you want the document to appear to a blind person. Basically, there is no reason why a braille reader would not be able to understand the document. ”



Once the braille documents were printed and bound, we distributed them to member time banks across London. Time bank brokers told us they feel these improved resources will significantly open up timebanking to blind and partially-sighted people. We will publicise and promote these across our London and regional UK networks.

Lord Low of Dalston

Lord Low of Dalston is our Patron. He is blind and readily accepted our invitation to proofread the braille transcripts as he has been keen that our organisation reach out to more people with sight loss. A passionate supporter of Timebanking UK, Lord Low read through the documents at the House of Lords. Lord Low was very appreciative of the move to transcribe the handbook and the easy-read leaflet to braille, making positive comments and giving constructive feedback.

In his maiden speech to the House of Lords, he said: 'The blind do have some important interests in common with other disabled people--to be included in society, not to be discriminated against, and to be involved in shaping their own destiny--but they also have important needs which are peculiar to the condition of blindness--notably the need for information in a non-visual form and for an environment largely designed for those who can see to be mediated for those who cannot. This is no small requirement considering how critical the sense of sight is to man's interaction with the natural world and the world he has constructed.'

In our aim to promote timebanking and improve access for those who are blind or partially-sighted, Timebanking UK seek to address those needs and enable people to realise their own value and self worth in communities.



Distribution and training across London

Whilst the changes to our software and the creation of the new website took longer than anticipated, we intend to unveil both in our national conference in 2020, and to apply for funds to help us diarise workshops, taster sessions and information events across London over 2020 and 2021. We realised that the materials need some personal interaction and 'story telling' from those who currently have sight issues and who have benefitted first-hand from the timebanking mechanism.

In order to obtain this meaningful feedback, we held interviews across our UK time bank membership to hear how individuals with sight impairments got involved in timebanking, what kinds of things they give and receive, and the impact on their lives.

If our pending application for funds is successful, we will be inviting a selection of the people who shared their stories to travel to London to meet other time banks and communities.

We continue to have the support of our patron Lord Low who has agreed to produce a short film and appear at some of the London-based events to share his experiences and meet time bank members and co-ordinators.

Time banks exist in a range of London boroughs, which are listed below, and we intend to host events or workshops in each of these, to disseminate the work we do with GP's, councils and support groups, and to increase the benefits of timebanking.

	Total population	From ethnic minorities	People living with sight loss	Registered blind
Barnet	387,803	36%	10,700	2,105
Brent	329,102	64%	7,540	1,815
Enfield	332,705	39%	8,320	1,305
Harrow	248,880	58%	7,090	1,270
Lambeth	324,048	43%	5,480	1,180
Lewisham	301,307	47%	5,750	1,270
Southwark	314,232	47%	5,430	1,370
Tower Hamlets	307,964	55%	4,260	845
Westminster	244,796	38%	5,680	1,155

Stats from RNIB Sight Loss Data Tool

Case studies

Derbyshire Time Swap

Mahes is a full-time carer for her husband Graham who is completely blind and they find the help from Time Swap so valuable. Mahes told us:

“What TimeSwap help Graham gets relies on my hours, although Derbyshire Time Swap do not expect any contributions from him at the moment. The main thing he has appreciated is the kindness of Time Swap members who have given freely of their time to help him and me and with whom we have developed friendly relationships. When he was not so crippled as he is now, members took him for short walks, talked to him, read to him and did some chair based exercises with him. One member offered a reclining chair and we are hoping that others may offer complementary therapies. It is also reassuring to know that a member might step in if I am ill to ensure that he makes his medical appointments”



Mahes is actively involved in helping Derbyshire County Council shape their commissioning and policies to support people who are carers in the community. She earns time for this work. Mahes then uses the time to get support for herself and her husband at home. So far, she has received help from Time Swap with gardening, DIY and cleaning around the house. Members also take Graham on short walks when he is well enough and will chat and read to him, which allows Mahes to get things done or have a little break.

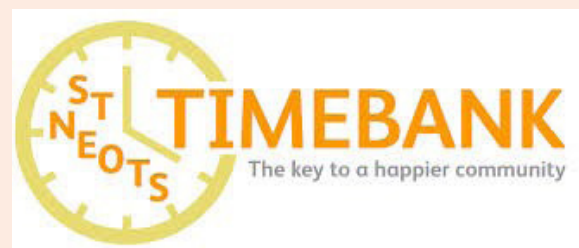
She adds:

“It is a good way of building communities and fostering friendships which can benefit isolated vulnerable members”

St Neots, Cambridgeshire

This group includes a gentleman, Greg, who is blind, while his wife can only see letters in a large font. The time bank sends them a bespoke version of their newsletter in 24 font. The couple come to the coffee mornings, as they say it's their monthly treat and they really look forward to it.

They often make a small donation, as they say they cannot do very much otherwise, although Greg has been able to contribute by giving advice to members with poor eyesight about visual aids and such programs as screen readers. As the time bank has many elderly people, this input has been of great value.



Time Swap Derbyshire Case Study

Sharon Fye joined Time Swap back in March 2017. She had just left work after being diagnosed with Glaucoma and was told that her sight would deteriorate over the next few years. It was a chance meeting at The Cantelupe Centre in Ilkeston at a Time Swap monthly drop in where Sharon came to meet Jo, the Erewash Time Swap Officer. Sharon loved the idea of swapping time so joined Time Swap immediately. Since starting, Sharon has participated in 914 hours of time given, and received 183 hours back from other members.

Although partially sighted, Sharon has given hundreds of hours in the form of knitting. She has knitted dozens of twiddle muffs, which go to two different hospitals in the East Midlands for people living with dementia. She has also made a mountain of baby blankets that also go to both hospitals. She has created toys, tea cosies and been involved in organising various stalls, with others who make up the Time Swap Knit & Natter group, to sell their wares, raising, to date, £970.00 in total, for Guide Dogs. Sharon also participates in lots of group socialising, providing friendship and support to other members, all met through Time Swap.



Sharon says:

“ Time Swap has provided me with emotional support and friendship. If I want a coffee, I have several people I can call on. It’s like having sisters!! We share ideas, stories, and great company and have a lot of laughs. ”

Sharon has received help through Time Swap by receiving lifts to appointments and shopping, help increasing the text size on her mobile phone, moving house, involved in lots of social get-togethers including being an integral part of the Ilkeston Knit & Natter group, which is attended by a dozen local people all joining in to socialise, whilst creating knitted and crocheted items to sell to raise money for charity. As well as supporting other charities and causes, the group turned their attentions to support Guide Dogs as their chosen charity back in January 2018. This was in support of Sharon and her journey. At that time, Sharon was assigned a “My Guide”, a local volunteer who can escort you shopping and doing everyday tasks, provided by Guide Dogs.

As time went on it was suggested that Sharon work towards getting a guide dog of her own, which finally happened in November 2019. Pippa, a Golden Labrador is now settling in very nicely. Sharon is keen to involve Pippa in more Time Swap activities, and looking forward to getting out more often with her new found freedom.



Sharon says:

“ Getting Pippa has given me my life back, I feel empowered as I no longer have to rely solely on others to go out ”

Sharon commented that:

“Time Swap has helped me with practical support and friendship, during a time of change and a fair bit of worry. It has given me a sense of reassurance by just knowing people are there if I need them. There are people who might be able to help but also who might just be able to suggest ideas or explain how things can be solved. I have made some amazing connections.”

Time Swap is a Derbyshire County Council run project covering most of Derbyshire County. Members share their time, skills and talents for time. Whatever the activity, one hour = one hour. For every hour you earn by helping someone in the community you have an hour to spend on something you would like help with or just simply something you like doing. The activity can be anything from gardening, crafts, dog walking, music lessons, computer support etc.



Tendring Time Bank, Essex

A time bank member was an uncannily accurate Tarot reader and also wrote a book about creating a personal set of Tarot cards, which the time bank reviewed for her. Her eyesight has deteriorated so much she has now created a set of electronic Tarot cards, which are totally blank visually, but which use a pen sensor to relay a pre-recorded electronic message from each of the chosen cards. Another member was completely blind and wanted help to do a D.J. gig, by ensuring his pile of CDs were in order so he didn't play the same one twice. He managed to dress in his Elvis outfit, and the time bank helped him with ticket sales and refreshments. When he was given a lift home, he was greeted by partygoers in the flat downstairs who asked him to greet their 80-year-old grandmother, who was thrilled to have Elvis attend her party.



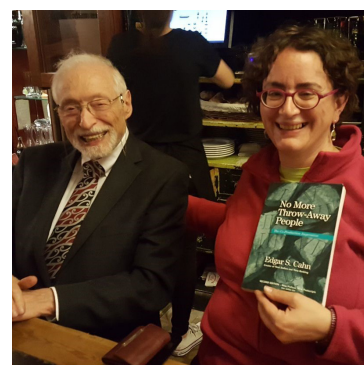
International case studies – Spain

“As a blind person, I need help with everyday tasks like going to the doctors. The time bank has made things easier for me and I've got to know a group of people in the neighbourhood that I didn't know before. It's empowering; you realise that not only can you receive help, but that you are able to help others. I offer alternative therapies like reiki and feel useful to people. I like that there is a way to interact that has nothing to do with money. Sharing time makes people equal because you give an hour and you get an hour. As a blind person, I find it empowering.”



Our collaborator Edgar Cahn, CEO of Time Banks USA, shared this photo (right) and story with us to celebrate 20 years of timebanking in Spain in April 2019. Born almost blind, Belen is a time bank coordinator who loves how timebanking has opened opportunities for her and many others by valuing all that people have to give.

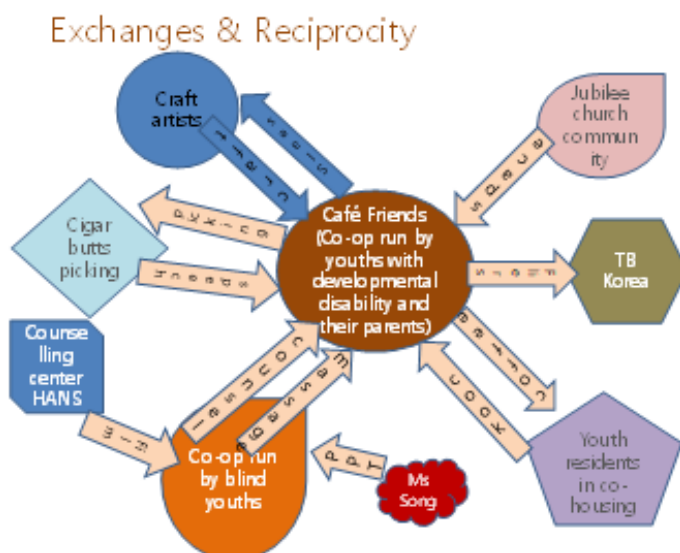
In Spain, two women who have sight impairments are in the steering committees of their time banks. One is from the Timebank in Barcelona and the other is from the Timebank of Pont del Dimoni. They are also active members.



Korea case study – Jubilee Time Bank, Seoul (Timebanking UK international partners)

When Time Bank Korea met TBUK CEO Sarah Bird and learned of the desire to reach out to more people with sight loss, they shared some examples of how young people were helping one another.

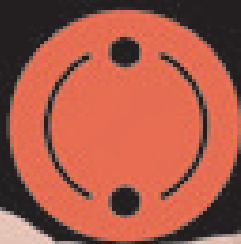
They explained how a youth with autism offered scriptwriting for the visually impaired youths of Chungmyung to watch the film The Lion King and how an adult group offered film reading to the youths of Chungmyung.



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