**Time** **banking**: An economic system where time is the currency, and where all time is equal. The New Economics Foundation describes time banking as ‘a framework for people who would not normally meet, to come together and learn how to exercise both their powers and responsibilities as caring citizens’. An effective time bank has impact at 3 levels: personal development, community development, time bank development.

**5 core values**:

1. We are all assets – every human being has something to contribute;
2. Redefining work – rewarding the real work in our society by creating a currency which pays people for helping each other and creating better places to live;
3. Reciprocity – giving and receiving are basic human needs which help to build relationships and trust with others;
4. Social Networks – building people’s social capital is very important, belonging to a social network gives our lives more meaning; and
5. Respect- encouraging people to respect others in their community.

(Ozanne, 2010)

**Why Time banking?**

* Co-production: Theory built on the idea that people and society flourish when the economy is based on reciprocity and equity (Ryan-Collins et al., 2008); and, that services are most effective when the recipients of those services are involved in their creation and running (Lewisham, 2011)
  + Explicit and dynamic collaboration between the client community and helping professionals. It allows agencies and service providers to be catalysts and facilitators rather than simply providers (Lewisham, 2012)
  + Uses peer supported networks as the best way of transferring knowledge and capabilities
* Imbues giver and receiver with a sense of belonging and empowerment (Lewisham, 2012)
* Has been proven to increase the wellbeing, physical and mental health of the community (Ryan-Collins, 2008)
* Creates access to services and skills without cash (Shah & Samb, 2011)
  + Facilitates community building projects
  + Allows stakeholders/community members to take ownership of initiatives that improve their lives (Shah & Samb, 2011)
* Theexchange of Time Credits perpetuates itself, and results in a multiplier effect (Ryan-Collins et al. 2008)
* For organizations:
  + Time banks are a mechanism to keep detailed track of the amount of volunteer hours put into the organization – can show funders that for example, 1,000 volunteer hours were put into the organization. Valuing that at $20/hour, the organization received $20,000 in community labour/investment
  + Can reward volunteers for their work, and thereby establish mutually beneficial relationships with volunteers
* Increases social capital of participants (Molnar, 2011)

**Three Main Types of Time banks:**

1. **Person to Person:**  Often called the neighbour to neighbour approach, individuals exchange mutual credit on an established hub. The role of the organization is to set up the hub, and coordinate the exchange of hours. Organizations can also be members in a person to person system.
2. **Person to Agency:** People earn credits through their contribution to the aims and goals of an agency or community. The agency is the ‘bank’ giving time credits out as well as offering members opportunities to use those credits by hosting community events, trips, services, etc. This approach was pioneered by Timebanking Wales/SPICE Wales
3. **Agency to Agency:** Supports collaboration and support between different community organizations and service providers. Through a timebank, agencies can share resources such as meeting rooms, outreach efforts, etc. This benefits the organizations as well as provides better support for staff.

(Ryan-Collins et al., 2008)

**Who Benefits?**

Time banks provide social networks, intergenerational relations, psychological well-being and social inclusion for typically marginalized groups (Carnero et al., 2014)

People suffering from mental health illness:

* Timebanking can provide both new contacts and social networks for people feeling isolated and alone but also the opportunity to give something back (Ryan-Collins et al., 2008)
* For example, Clapham Park is a neighbourhood in London, UK with high levels of unemployment and mental health illness. Since the project started in 2004, 708 residents have participated in activities created by the time bank and a total of 4996 hours have been exchanged. 80% of the time bank users are ethnic minorities (ibid)
* King’s Cross Time Bank serves an inner city London neighbourhood with high rates of alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, as well as refugees and asylum seekers. The time bank works with local businesses and programs to engage over 1400 people. The time bank primarily focuses on engaging the homeless and refugee population.

At Risk Youth:

* See Case Study #2 for how time banking has been incorporated to enhance local youth courts
* Time banks are used in many communities to find positive role models for youth. At risk youth are also using time credits to pay for access to programs and services in their community (Ryan-Collins, 2008)

Women:

* The core economy (those activities that support the development of citizens) such as child care, education, cleaning and house work, elder care, etc. is valued equally to capitalist-market recognized work (Shah & Samb, 2011). This is also traditionally women’s work
  + In the market economy, scarcity is valued: the scarcer a resource, the more valuable it is. Therefore everyday activities such as child care are devalued. Time banking restores value to everyday activities by valuing the time an individual spent
* See case study #1 as a prime example

The elderly and those facing social isolation:

* In Japan, time banks, or Fureai Kippu, have been in use since the 1973. They are used to “enable people to earn credits for caring for elderly people in their community. These credits can then be used to ‘buy’ similar person to person services by their relatives in another part of the country, or even save them for their own retirement” (Hayashi, 2012)
  + Two models: Vertical where time credits are used over the course of one’s life or in emergencies, and a horizontal model where time credits are used in a short time period to take care of elderly parents in other parts of the country
  + Care-dependent persons can also earn credits by doing things such as making regular phone calls to someone who is lonely and socially isolated

Low Income People:

* Time banks allow low income individuals to access certain services that would be unaffordable in the traditional market economy (Carnero et al., 2014)
* An example is the time bank in Alicante, Spain where the unemployment rate is above the national average, with a population of 2 million. The time bank was created in 2000, and in 2008 after the financial crash, the number of members grew in correlation with the growth in unemployment (ibid)
* As we see in the Senegal example (case study #1), time banks drastically increase economic activity, provide users with a means to subsidize their household income, and can in some cases lead to salary-based employment.
* Time banks offer a means for community self-help (Seyfang, 2004)

**Number of time banks:**  It is hard to determine the exact number of time banks in the world. In 2011, it was estimated that the UK had 116 active time banks, 87 developing, 8,549 members, 646,671 hours traded (Lewisham, 2012). In the same year in the US, the number was estimated by hOur World at 300 time banks (Hogan & Daniels). At the end of the year 2012, there were around 400 time banks in Spain (Carneo et al., 2014). Time banks are also present in Senegal, Japan, Wales, Italy, Greece, Canada, Ukraine, Tunisia, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Brazil, Panama, Uruguay, Costa Rica etc.

**Key Characteristics of a successful time bank project:**

* Retains informal approach;
* Provides opportunities for personal growth and development;
* Develops the emotional intelligence of people;
* Uses peer support networks;
* Devolves real responsibility
* Offers participants a range of incentives.
* Provides basic training to participants on the values and practicality of a time bank
* Has a paid time broker (coordinator) to facilitate trading (Ozanne, 2010)
* Running the time bank as part of an existing community organization, rather than as a standalone project, brings many benefits in terms of institutional support, synergy with other projects, community knowledge and credibility
* By engaging local organizations, the time bank can build momentum and engagement in existing projects and activities, and bring benefits to the wider community
* Intensive co-ordinator support is needed at ground level to engage the most vulnerable and excluded sections of the community, meaning frequent face-to-face contact and a neighbourhood drop-in centre (Seyfang, 2004)

**Challenges:**

1. Engaging men: The majority of participants who join time banks are women.
   * Collom (2007) surveyed participants in a US Time Bank to determine their motivations, engagement, satisfaction, and outcomes of participation. The participants who joined this Time Bank were largely female and white, highly educated (although average household incomes were low since one-quarter of members were unemployed). (Ozanne, 2010)
   * Carnero (2014) on Spain, and Shah & Samb (2010) on Senegal, noted that the majority of time bank users are women.
2. Psychological barrier to using time banks: In 2004 a study done on a time bank in Scotland found participants had a psychological barrier that makes it difficult for participants to understand the difference between Time Banking and traditional volunteering. In addition, participants in this Time Bank enjoy giving of their time, but find it difficult to ask for time in return (Ozanne, 2010).
3. Limited number of services offered on the system prevents members from spending time credits if there’s nothing they need (Seyfang, 2004)
4. Members who were not in regular contact with the time bank sometimes felt cut off and became less likely to engage with the group. Regular and good communication is needed (Seyfang, 2004)
5. Time Constraints: TNB in Sweden found that participation required a significant time commitment. Participants are already living with a shortage of time in their daily lives making active participation difficult (Molnar, 2011).
6. Segregation: Also from the TNB in Sweden, participants noted that there was a lack of social integration between people of different backgrounds. TNB is a person-to-agency model which supports the development of groups and projects and in part causes this issue. (Molnar, 2011)
7. Need for funding from a sustainable long-term source. Developing the time bank requires a full-time local presence with office space, a drop-in facility and support, and short-term, insecure funding threatens the consolidation of the time bank’s efforts (Seyfang, 2004)

**Case Studies:**

1. **GRADES, Senegal:**
   * Groupe de Réflexion et d’Action pour le Développement du Sénégal (GRADES) started in 1995 as a training center for women and children in Kaolack Senegal, a conservative and impoverished town
   * Since time banking was introduced in 2005, GRADES has grown immensely in size and scope: costs of operations were reduced, enrolled increased, and amount of services expanded
   * Time banking has allowed GRADES to become sustainable, and it has grown now to include 13 campuses, in which time banking plays a significant role
   * To start the timebank each member of the community identified needs that they could address
   * Found time credits are far less susceptible to corruption and waste within the family than money
   * Many women prefer earning time credits to money, as earning time credits ensured that the value of their labour came back to serve the family
   * They found resistance from men in the community, who were used to having women in the home to care for them
     1. To win their trust and support men were included in the planning and implementation of time banking, and were offered opportunities to earn time credits
   * The time-based currency empowered women, and everyone benefited
     1. Women helped each other with work such as child care and cleaning
     2. Women honed skills; some after graduating became teachers at GRADES for time credits. The Senegalese government began to recruit teachers from GRADES and offer them salary-based jobs
     3. Women were not as restricted in their movements in the community. Came together to discuss issues they and their community faced and solutions
     4. Free time was more often used productively to create services and resources for the family and community

(Shah & Samb, 2011)

1. **Dane County Timebank, USA**
   * Established in 2005, it is one of the largest and most diverse time banks in the world with over 2500 individual and organizational members
   * Dane County is the second most populated in Wisconsin, with a population of approximately 509,000 people. The racial makeup is 86% white. Median household income is $61,000 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55/55025.html>)
   * A wide variety of projects have been created
   * **Maxine’s Time Bank Store**: where new and gently used clothing, toys, books, equipment, home décor, etc. can be bought in time credits
   * **The Allied Community Coop** is a project of Allied Wellness Center, Madison Apprenticeship Program, Allied-Dunns Marsh Neighbourhood Association, Dunns Marsh Neighbourhood Association, the Dane County Time Bank, Nehemiah Corporation, and residents of Madison's Allied Drive neighbourhood. The co-op works with partners to identify needs in the community and create programs and activities that need those needs
     1. Co-op projects include container gardening, a neighbourhood theatre club, and green carts selling fresh produce in this neighbourhood without a grocery store. The co-op is now looking into an energy project to help community members with free and low-cost energy conservation improvements
   * **The Time Bank's Youth Court Program** works with high school aged youth who have made a mistake, and could potentially receive a ticket for the incident. Instead of ticketing, the police officer can refer the youth to our youth court where they are judged by a jury of other students and given a sentence that is restorative and strength based and increases the youth's skills and support system. When they complete their sentence successfully they avoid receiving their ticket and having something appear on their juvenile record
     1. Jurors can earn time credits either for themselves or for their school. Schools have used credits for anger management courses for the school, or specific trainings for teachers.
     2. Jurors can devise sentences that are creative and unique to the defendants interests and skills using the time bank
   * **The Front Yard Gardens Program** brings together neighbours to help each other build raised garden beds in their front yards, and organizing potlucks to enjoy the fruits of their labour
   * **Healthy Community Economy**: an evaluation and research project in collaboration with Madison Hours (until they disbanded in 2011) to evaluate how they can better apply cooperative economic tools. They are currently designing a cooperative super-structure designed to steward time banking, other forms of sharing and mutual credit, and cooperative saving/community investment pools in the service of supporting good work. This framework is called Mutual Aid Networks.
   * **Inclusive Community project** is focused on getting all members of the community contributing and benefiting from the timebank in collaboration with Dane County Department of Human Services Developmental Disabilities
   * **Medical Transportation Project:** In collaboration with Dane County Transportation Services and local health providers, drivers receive credits and a modest gas stipend for drivers those in need to their medical appointments. The bulk of services are provided to two dialysis centers
   * **Neighbourhood Care Teams:** Gather the available resources in an area to help people meet their basic needs - such as assistance around the house, access to healthy food, help with transportation, companionship, and other basic services.
   * **The Wellness Project:** A collaborative effort of the Dane County TimeBank and community partners dedicated to providing opportunities to improve the health of our community through quality meals, companionship, information to enable healthy living, and access to essential services. It includes wellness workshops with healthy meals provided, fairs and clinics. It seeks to increase access to services such as dentistry, midwifery, yoga, reiki, and more.

(Dane County Time Bank)

**Community Co-ops:** One definition of a community co-op, developed by Linda Hogan and Terry Daniels, is “a business, club, program or project where the product or service is created using Time Credits”. Some examples of community co-ops:

1. **Hour Weatherization Cooperative:**
   * Started in 2009 out of the Hour Exchange Portland (HEP), an already well established time bank
   * Concerned with rising oil prices and the financial and physical effects of this, a HEP member offered a cash donation of $10,000 to start weatherizing homes of HEP members
   * The co-op focuses on basic step-one weatherization
   * It invites HEP members to participate in “green teams” that, under the supervision of a certified Co-op Energy Technician, do step one weatherizations
   * HEP members also contribute by offering transportation, lunches, etc. to the green teams. One member even sold a van to the co-op in time credits.
   * In the first year, 36 houses were weatherized, the second year 54 houses, and the 3rd, 101 houses. Further, 3 members received state certification as energy technicians and now do step 2 weatherization for a living, as well as supervise green teams in the co-op
   * Multiple grants support the work of this co-op
   * *(Hogan & Daniels, 2014)*
2. **The Cooperative Farming Network:**
   * Started in 2013 in Lake County, CA. The timebank THRIVE already had a strong relationship with the community action group North Coast Opportunity (NCO) which focuses on food security
   * NCO which operates food pantries and nutrition programs, supported the birth of the timebank and a food co-op
   * Individual interviews were conducted with farmers to determine how they could be best supported. Farmers needed help planting, weeding, and harvesting; community members needed access to healthy affordable food, and the co-op farming network was born
   * Members of the THRIVE co-op give their time/labour to the farms, and in turn are given fresh produce
   * In the last year ten farms have been supported by 38 time bankers who worked 800 hours assisting with the production of 30 different products.
   * Farm fresh food is now also canned and sold for time during the fall and winter months
   * *(Hogan & Daniels, 2014)*

**Key Remaining Questions:**

1. How can we run a timebank in a neighbourhood as diverse as St. James Town? How do you ensure social inclusion crosses racial, religious, and national lines?
   1. How can we engage men in the time bank?
2. How can we value goods with time credits? In preliminary research, only Dane County Time Bank through Maxine’s store offers goods for time credits.
3. How can we successful run a timebank with no center/office of our own?

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