Time for Communities

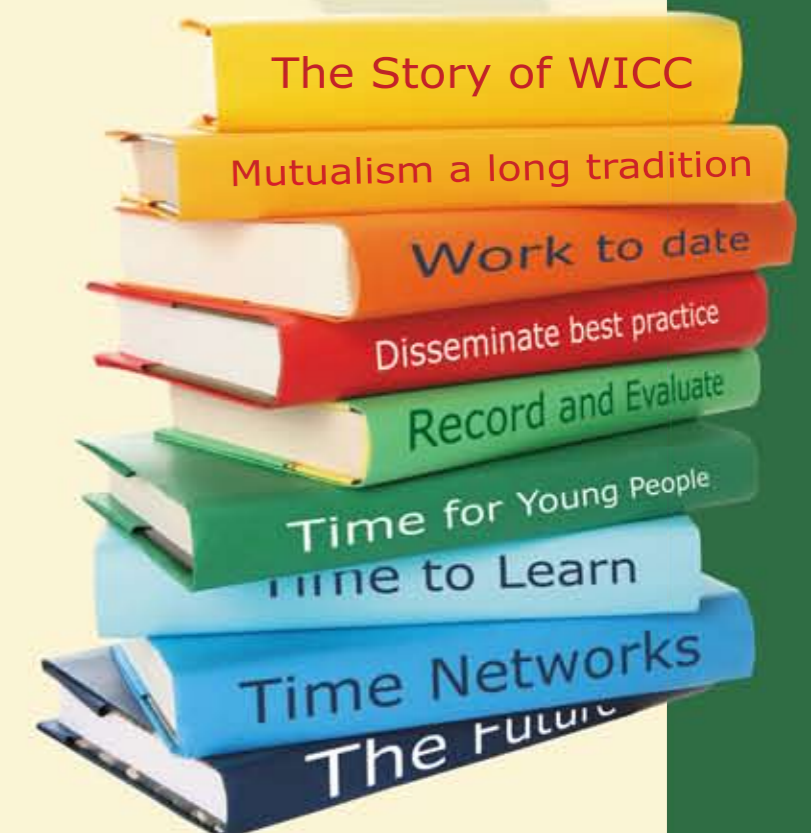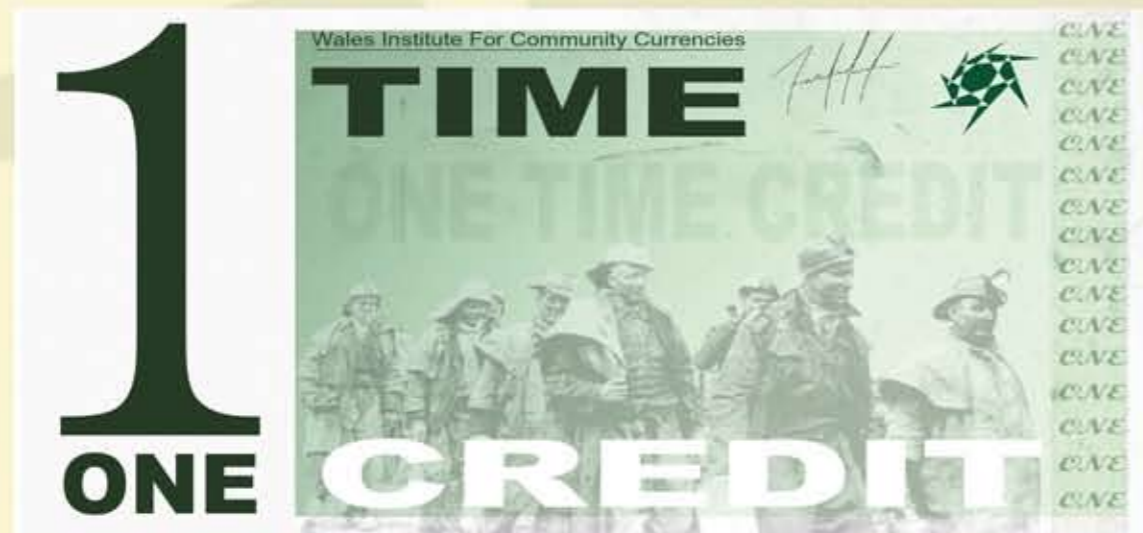**The Story of the Wales Institute for Community Currencies**

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"For us empowerment meant the use
of collective action to transform society
and so lift all of us together"

Aneurin Bevan

Wales Institute For Community Currencies

TIME
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- The Story of WICC
- Mutualism a long tradition
- Work to date
- Disseminate best practice
- Record and Evaluate
- Time for Young People
- Time to Learn
- Time Networks
- The Future

Mutualism – A long tradition

WICC pays homage to the traditions of mutualism and collective action of the South Wales Valleys that gave birth to the mutual societies, educational settlement trusts, and miner's welfare institutes during the 19th and 20th century. These community initiatives fired the collective imagination and were fuelled by the active engagement of 'people in communities'. If the old agencies had failed to enlist the support of active constituencies the institutes would not have been built. By working together the agencies and their active membership laid the foundations for radical social change. Tyrone O' Sullivan, a modern humanist, reminds us that 'the Miner's Institutes were built not solely as centres for learning and personal development but for a vision of the common good that included us all in opening new windows to discover new tomorrows'. They were powerhouses generating social energy, creating an active culture, empowering peoples' mutual capacity to work together for social purposes.

Contrast this picture with the early 21st century. Instead of active, thriving community institutions where agencies and people work together to co-produce mutual outcomes, we have a landscape influenced by a 'market driven service provider model' where agencies perceive their primary goal as delivering services to beneficiaries. This model offers limited opportunity for service users to be effectively involved in the design and delivery of services.

Over the past decade there has been a growing consensus amongst policymakers and professionals that public programmes are unlikely to succeed unless they actively involve the people they are designed to benefit, whether it is to reduce crime, improve the physical environment or enhance health and well being. Active citizenship is seen as a way of achieving a better quality of life and is dependent on people becoming engaged in their communities in a partnership with public services. The goal being not just to involve people in one vote every few years but to get as many people as possible to contribute each and every week in the life of their community; to work together with agencies to build strong and resourceful neighbourhoods. The Assembly Government views citizenship as an essential component of democracy, acknowledging that the willingness of people to act for the benefit of their community forms a major force for social good.

Recent research findings by Professor Whiteley, Programme Director of the Economic and Social Research Council reveal that: "Communities with lots of civic and community engagement are also communities that have environments that foster favourable outcomes such as better health, lower crime, improved educational performances and greater life satisfaction. A relatively poor community with lots of activity can do better in relation to health, crime and education than a relatively affluent community which lacks social activity" (ESRC, September 2004).

Aneurin Bevan warned that if the new order leaves citizens as passive creatures we will slip into a new kind of social helotry. The challenge for agencies and social activists is how to rebuild active creative communities - to revitalise the involvement of citizens in communities by addressing new ways to replenish the diminishing stock of positive social capital.
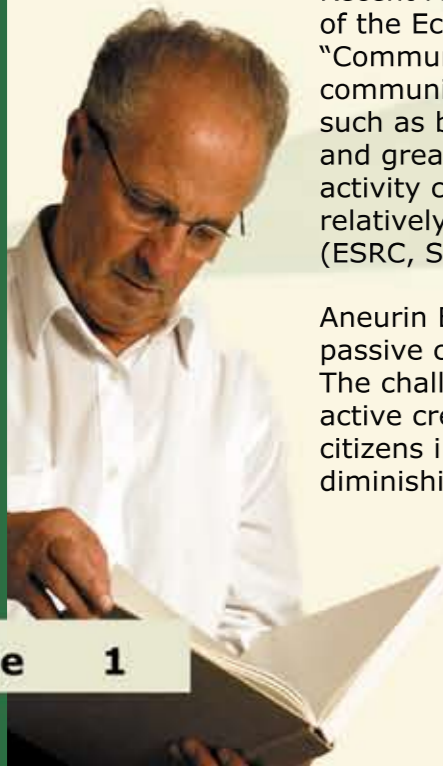
The Evolution of WICC

WICC in the form of Time Banking Wales is now ready to enter a new development phase.

This advanced phase will deliver timebanking and the creation of active communities engaged in public sector delivery across Wales, as well as continuing to research, test and develop radical tools for community development.

In the few years, since WICC was initiated in 2003, a huge amount of groundwork has been covered and WICC has achieved unrivalled success in piloting new models for active engagement between agencies and citizens. The current partnership and European funding for WICC comes to an end in June 2008. In order to take forward the work of WICC as an entity in its own right we are registering Time Banking Wales as an independent charity. This new legal vehicle will replace the current project management consortium of the University of Wales Newport, Valleys Kids and Time Banks U.K. that has nurtured the growth of WICC to the stage of stand alone governance.

The new management team to drive Time Banking Wales forward, comprises a wealth of professional talent across a broad spectrum that includes representation from third sector agencies, public service bodies and academic institutions.

WICC's Achievements

In 2006 WICC commissioned an external evaluation of its work at the request of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO). The report made this assessment of WICC's progress against its three main objectives:

"WICC has succeeded in providing effective, high quality, support to its partners. This support is on both a professional and a personal level, and is inclusive and empowering. WICC's commitment to research was demonstrated and fulfilled by its employment of a professional researcher for eighteen months. The Joseph Rowntree report produced shows the effectiveness of timebanking as a tool for community regeneration and that timebanking is an appropriate and forceful method of underwriting community development and increasing participation in community life."

"WICC has made great efforts to disseminate information about timebanking and the results of their research and experience. These have been highly successful and have led to a heightened profile for timebanking. A greater appreciation, knowledge and understanding of their effectiveness as a tool for community engagement has been made available to policy makers, practitioners, and representatives of the statutory and voluntary sectors."

Executive Summary to 'An Evaluation of the Wales Institute for Community Currencies' by Michael Warden, June 2006.

From a standing start in 2003 WICC has firmly put timebanking on the map of community development in Wales by advocating timebanking as a mutual mechanism to advance citizen engagement. WICC has developed the capability to design and test new co-productive practices in the relationships between agencies and citizens. The challenge for WICC is to permanently embed these methods into public and third sector agencies.

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4 Core Values of timebanking Leading to Active Communities

People Are Assets

The most valuable assets in a community are its people - all people can positively contribute to their community

Redefine Work

The time that people give to build and strengthen their communities is valuable and should be recognised as work

Give and Take

Having a two-way relationship. Agencies and professionals to give people the opportunity to contribute as well as to receive; not just to be passive recipients of services but to co-produce them

Social Networks

Healthy, communities have strong social networks. These networks are a crucial part of the community infrastructure and function as a mutual support mechanism

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Reinventing Mutualism in the 21st century

Traditional currency is simply a human artefact, a medium of commercial exchange reflecting the values of competition and differential. The DNA of time currency is designed to embody the non-commercial core values of co-operation and mutuality that foster and encourage civil interactions between people. It is a humanitarian currency that can only be acquired by civilly interacting with others regardless of age, disability, gender, language, race, religion or sexual orientation'. It operates on the simple principle that for one hour that people give to their community they receive one time credit in return. They can use their time credits to access social events and activities on an hour to hour exchange basis, thereby celebrating their work in the context of their community.

Over the past decade timebanking has been developed as an instrument for building positive social capital by accrediting the work of people in communities. The system can be applied in numerous settings ranging from single issue agencies to large scale partnerships. Time currency gives communities and agencies a language to say 'thank you' to active citizens.

Timebanking embodies the values of mutualism in currency form. The constant value of the currency embeds egalitarianism, civility, fairness and common humanity into collective affairs. Every time a transaction occurs these values are exchanged. By using timebanking people subscribe to a core set of values that make mutuality visible in the 21st century.

Work to Date -
Creating a Modern Version of Mutualism

In 2003 the University of Newport came together with Time Banks UK and Valleys Kids in a partnership to set up the Wales Institute for Community Currencies (WICC). This partnership has attracted European Regional Development Funds from 2003 to 2008, employing a team of five people in the South Wales Valleys.

The Institute is the first organisation of its kind in the world dedicated exclusively to both practising and researching community currencies . It aims to learn from empirical applications of time currencies and to develop a working methodology that improves practice and makes the benefits available to a wider range of people. It aims to act as a 'think and do' tank in the community sector to:

A **Design, test and support public and third sector organisations to develop timebanking as a tool for active community engagement.**

B **Research their effectiveness. Incorporate lessons learnt into modified design to ensure improved practice and achievement of outcomes.**

C **Disseminate best practice to practitioners, funders and policy makers.**

WICC aims to balance theory and practice by reflecting critically on testing the effectiveness of timebanking to increase active citizenship.

WICC's Achievements

Since 2003 WICC has put timebanking on the map of community development in Wales. Prior to that date, there was no activity around timebanking in Wales and WICC has become the sole development and research agency for this approach. WICC has achieved an international reputation as a centre of excellence for the application of timebanking as a social innovation within the field of community regeneration. WICC celebrates our past communitarian values by advocating timebanking as mutual mechanism to advance collective engagement in the 21st century

The importance of this work has been recognised by Professor Edgar Cahn, originator of timebanking in the 1980's, who spoke at WICC's launch in 2003 and has been a regular visitor since. Professor Cahn was a keynote speaker at the Wales Council for Voluntary Action annual conference in 2005, the Public Service Management Wales Summer School in 2007, and has met with senior policy makers at the Wales Assembly Government. He acknowledged our work stating:

"The Wales Institute for Community Currencies has earned international status and respect as a contributor to our collective effort to redefine the possibilities of timebanking. It has had enormous impact through its outstanding contributions to the theory and implementation of timebanking. The work of its small but gifted and dedicated team is notable for its breadth, creativity and innovativeness."

Professor Edgar Cahn 2007

WICC's work has highlighted the following

• Timebanking is a social instrument that can be applied in a multitude of context ranging from single issue agencies to large scale public programmes

• Timebanking restructures the relationship between professionals and clients, agencies and service users, public programmes and beneficiaries by enabling people to become active
citizens. Reform of public services requires the implementation of new co-productive relationships.

• Attention to design and a precise developmental methodology for new
applications of timebanking is essential to release the potential of these
systems.

• Time Networks have a crucial role to play in building social capital by providing frameworks for socially inclusive humanitarian exchange. These new frameworks are essential for community cohesion, the message being that everyone, irrespective of race, gender, religion is able to participate.

• Wales is at the forefront of social innovation that will advance the boundaries and value of active citizenship in the 21st century

Disseminate Best Practice

This intellectual capital is shared with practitioners and policy makers through:

➤ *Regular network days for Time Bank practitioners to learn from each other.*

➤ *A comprehensive website providing an educational and information resource.*

➤ *Hosting visits from Universities*

➤ *Internships*

➤ *Presentations and workshops at conferences throughout Wales.*

➤ *National and international presentations include London School of Economics, New Economics Foundation Birkbeck College, Harvard University, Social Currency Movement in Austria, Germany and Ireland.*

➤ *Educational manuals and newsletters*

➤ *Developing partnerships to co-produce the dissemination of timebanking.*

➤ *Co-ordinating a national working group consisting of New Economic Foundation and Time Banks U.K on sustainability in timebanking.*

➤ *Sharing specific expertise in timebanking with colleagues in the wider time currency movement.*

The ripples of these activities have already spread so that community organisations are now setting up new systems as a result of contact with WICC.

Design, Test and Support

Between 2003 and 2008 WICC has supported organisations to incorporate timebanking into their everyday working practices. These range from Communities First Partnerships, Housing Associations, Development Trusts, Tenants and Residents Groups, to Youth Clubs and Neighbourhood Learning Centres. These organisations have been willing to experiment with models of timebanking and have learned many valuable lessons in practical organising and integration of timebanking into their existing community development processes.

The starting point of our work is a system of 'active citizenship proofing', namely time auditing the number of active citizenship hours generated by service providers. This is in line with recent Welsh Assembly proposals that a new system of active citizenship proofing should cover all new policy initiatives and existing spending decisions. This means each and every Assembly Division checking, assessing and modifying its work by asking the question 'What does this do to increase active citizenship?'

WICC has applied this test to several youth agencies by asking the question 'how many hours of active young citizenship does your service generate?' In many instances the answer is very few. For all the investment that goes into youth services there is little evidence to suggest that high levels of active young citizenship are being achieved. One reason being that the emphasis of the service provider is customer focused, the modus operandi being to tell us what you want and we will try to deliver (similar to Tesco asking how can we improve our customer service), rather than community focussed – involving young people as citizens in the life of their community. This baseline study allows us to quantify the number of citizenship hours that are generated by investment in public and third sector services.

We also conduct time audits on a large scale basis by measuring the 'stock take of active citizenship' within communities. These methods build an extra dimension into the social mapping process by adding a time audit of 'active citizenship proofing' to measure the hours that citizens actively contribute to the life of their community thus providing a quantitative baseline audit of existing community capacity. If investment in communities is intended to increase levels of community capacity, one can measure these outcomes in an agreed manner between funders and community practitioners. For example, if a time audit in a Communities First area revealed existing capacity totalling 30,000 active citizenship hours per annum, it would not be unreasonable of a funder/investor to expect that figure to grow to 40,000 active citizenship hours by Year 2, and up to 65,000 active citizenship hours by Year 4. Community practitioners should be quite capable of achieving these targets that are easily measured quantifiable outputs.

Each timebank has the common aim of fostering active citizenship but takes a different form in each situation because it sets out with different goals: to increase the participation of young people, to motivate adult learners, to grow healthy living networks or to increase the social energy of a community centre. A common theme is that people who are generally regarded as passive beneficiaries of services become co-producers of social wealth.

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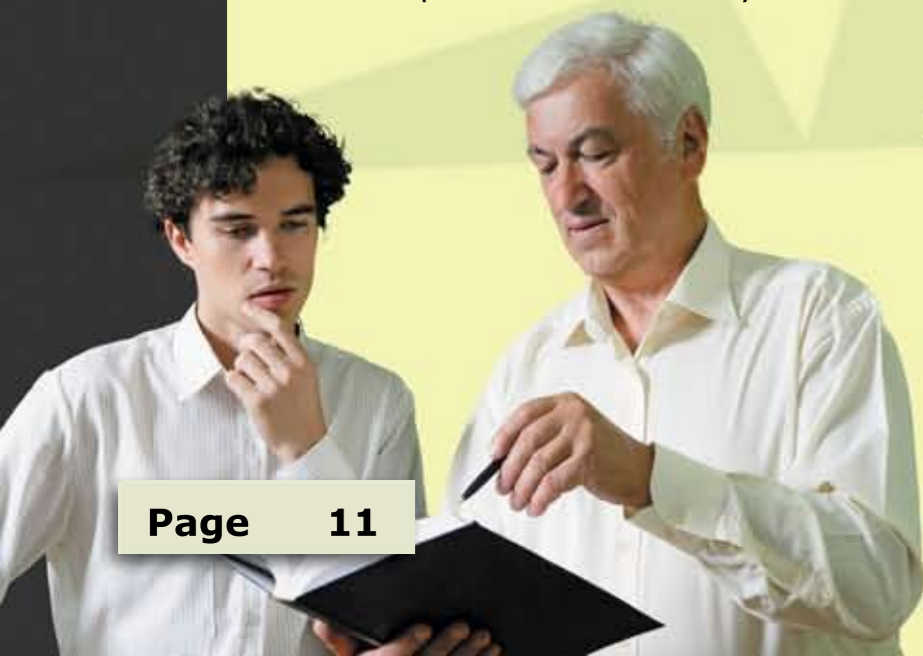
Time For Young People

Government policies state that young people should be able to take part in positive experiences and be more actively involved in the design and delivery of the services they receive. These policies also acknowledge that young people are assets to their communities, with voices and talents that can be used to improve community life. Time For Young People (TFYP) builds on this by valuing the work that young people are willing to do for their community and provides them with opportunities to both to give and to receive. The result of this is healthier communities with active social networks, improved understanding and respect between generations.

Youth services that simply provide high quality diversionary activities do not provide a sense of purpose for young people, having a lasting impact on their lives and their communities. T4YP creates opportunities for young people to become active young citizens, contributing to the life of their community. TFYP offers youth workers a new way of working. It encourages them to explore with young people how they can play a part in the life of their community. TFYP is one of the simplest and effective models of timebanking to emerge from WICC's work.

Case Study: Glyn Coch's Youth Timebank

The Glyncoch Youth Time Bank (aka BOB - 'Building Our Bridges') has been running at the Glyncoch Community Centre for 12 months.

BOB has 35 members and has increased the number of active citizenship hours from 210 to 1020 hours over the last year; a near 400% increase from baseline audit.

The young people have acquired time credits by:

• Producing a mural for the local primary school
• Helping to run the summer festival
• Getting involved in environmental projects
• Running the youth club,
• Putting on concerts for the community
• Assisting the community centre committee.

With their time credits the young people have enjoyed a 3 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.

Through the timebank the young people have begun to take more responsibility in the youth club. They have formed their own constituted organisation GYAT (Glyncoch Youth Action Team) and are taking over the decision-making processes of the youth club.

Future developments:

We will continue to work with the Active Communities Department of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action to progress a Wales wide dissemination programme for T4YP. At present we are undertaking a feasibility study to develop the project to an all Wales dissemination phase. This evidence based study will be used to apply for an initial 3 year project investment, employing a small team of workers (One North and Mid-Wales T4YP Worker, one South Wales T4YP Worker plus one part time Administration Support Worker) to co-produce with Youth Agencies the dissemination of T4YP.

"Timebanking has meant we have done loads of stuff for the community and because of our efforts we have been on trips to loads of places"

Youth Participant

Disseminate Best Practice

WICC aims to share best practice of timebanking with practitioners, funders and policy makers at local, regional, national and international levels. Agencies that wish to use timebanking and co-production as instruments for system change and sustainable community development are offered the following

Introduction to Timebanking

A brief introduction to the theory, practices and values of timebanking and WICC's various applications of timebanking across different themes: Time For Young People; Time to Learn; Time for Health; Time Centre; Time Network.

Measuring Active Citizenship

Introducing tools for measuring community capacity through local time audits and how to build 'active citizenship proofing' into planning for community development. This is a starting point for all timebank projects involving active citizenship proofing of agencies in communities – quantifying existing levels of engagement

Co-Production

Theory and practice of how service providers and service users can work together to achieve mutual outcomes with critical appraisal of current practice.

Bringing Mutual Culture Back Home

A more in depth look at the roots of mutualism and the collective traditions of the South Wales Valleys exploring the question "How do we build creative active communities?"

Time For Young People (T4YP)

This application of timebanking encourages active young citizenship . This leads participants through the key planning, action and evaluation stages]of a successful T4YP project, including the theory, practice and values of timebanking.

Time to Learn

This work includes sharing the findings of two documents: One summarising the results of a 12 month pilot project with the Workers Educational Association at Cwm. The other a feasibility study to progress an active learning network.

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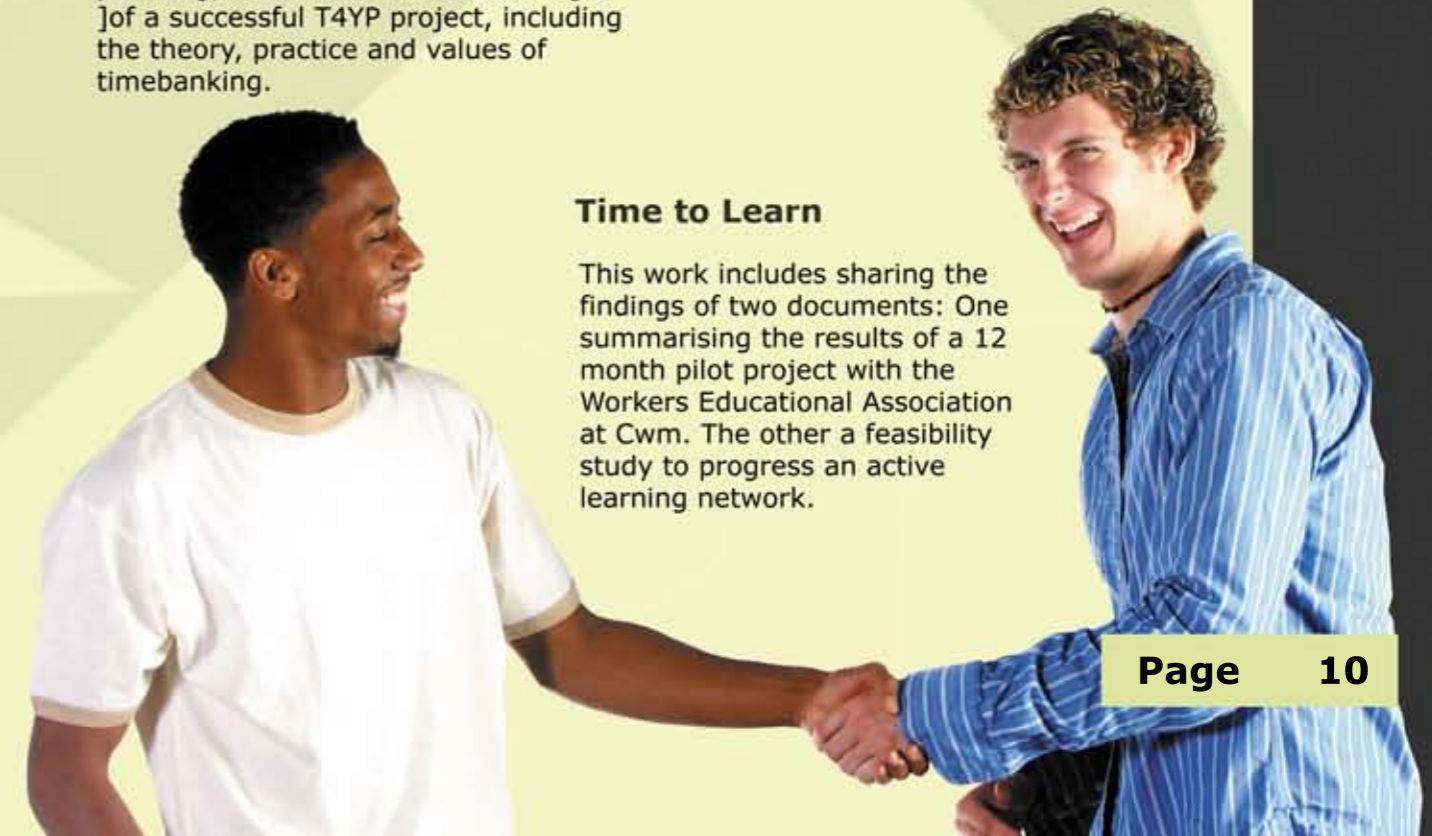
Research and Evaluate

Research and evaluation concerning the development and testing of innovative applications of timebanking involves permanent feedback from pilot projects. These, in turn, lead to lessons learned and further improvements; WICC incorporates this feedback into best practice. By evaluating the effects of timebanking this enables WICC to achieve an immense learning curve gaining experience in relation to project design and methodological construction.

Creating a learning environment in our own organisation is essential in order to encourage and facilitate the same process in partner organisations. WICC partakes in dialogues and discussions with pilot projects regarding the effectiveness or otherwise of timebanking. Research and evaluation is thus important to learn from success and failure and, as a result of this to grow stronger as and organisation.

WICC participated in the national action research project into 'The Impact of Co-production on People Outside Paid Work', funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, published in June 2006. WICC employed a researcher for 18 months who trained local timebank participants to run focus groups and to interview participants and paid workers. People talked about positive self-esteem, reactivation of skill sets, new learning experiences, increased social interaction, health benefits and community building.

Comments taken from Research

"The Impact of Co-production on People Outside Paid Work." David Boyle, Sherry Clark and Sarah Burns

"Seeing people as assets rather than liabilities is what I like about time banks. When people are looking for change, they are always seeing these communities as liabilities."
Head, Voluntary Agency

"Now I'm prepared to get up and have a go myself and I feel a lot better for it."
Participant in Wales

"A huge amount of work is needed in terms of changing mindsets – instead of being the people who deliver, agencies should be those that enable communities to get on their feet. While people say that it is the capacity of the community that needs to be built, it is also the capacity of the Partners in the process that needs to be built."
**Service Provider – Statutory Sector**

"Crucially for me, timebanking provides a mechanism to thank people for the work they do."
Valleys Kids Staff Member

"For me I can see that the timebank is bringing great benefits. Its good for older volunteers, those that are long serving. But it's also encouraging new young ones to come in. They can fill a chair that you might vacate."
Adult Female Volunteer
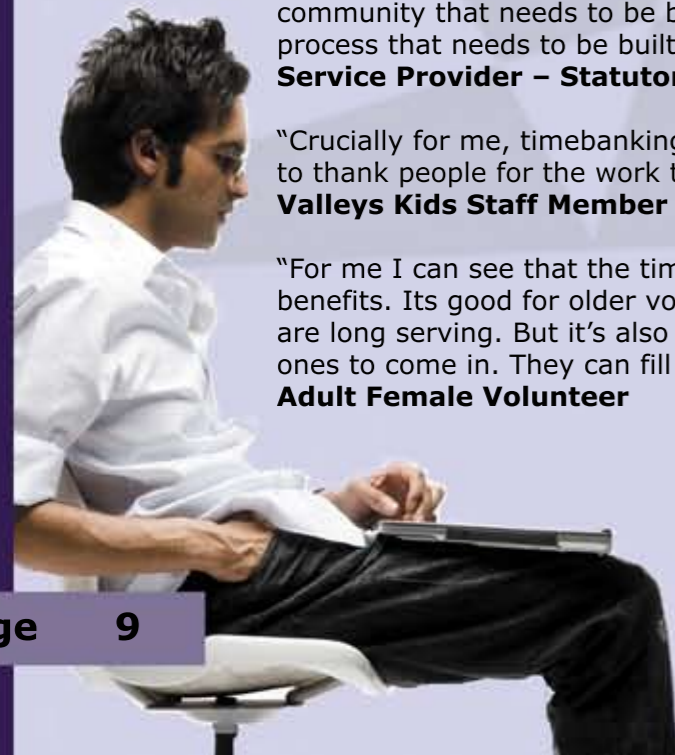
Time to Learn

'Knowledge is power' is an old motto that used to adorn Institutes in the South Wales Valleys. The Assembly Government promotes the importance of life-long learning to create a society where learning is pursued, valued and used effectively for the good of the individual, the community and the economy. Research by Stephen Gorard of Cardiff University states that, despite calls for lifelong learning, adults are less likely to take part on learning than they were 20 or even 50 years ago: "There is as great a need today to support the development of a culture of lifelong learning that increases and widens participation as there was in former times. The challenge is how to re-engage people into a learning culture that is relevant to their lives, supports their aspirations and recognises their own inherent talents."

Time to Learn pays tribute to the old teachers and artists who worked with the Institutes, modeling its design in part on the old Educational Settlement Trusts that encouraged active learning in the South Wales communities. Time to Learn values the participation of adults in active community learning networks and groups. The agenda is to move away from a passive learning culture to the creation of an active learning culture where people use their learning in the collective context of their own community.

Case Study - Cwm Community Cafe

This project was undertaken from January 2005 to June 2006. Eighty adult learners at the Cwm Community Café in Blaenau Gwent were given time credits for active learning - attending planning meetings of the Workers Educational Association, teaching, mentoring and recruiting other learners. Members were also encouraged to continue their learning experience outside the classroom, and to share their learning with the community. Time credits were used to access educational and social events including trips to the Museum of Welsh Life, the National Portrait Gallery, a pampering evening for the 'Feeling Good, Looking Good' class.

In previous years learning classes had a high drop out rate resulting in some classes being withdrawn. The Learning Timebank helped turn this culture around enabling learners to make a commitment to their classes by placing an emphasis on active learning thereby encouraging retention.

The project demonstrated that there was a high level of student interest in developing an active learning culture. Over 75% of students stated that if opportunities were provided to use their learning actively within their community they would be willing to do so. When learning providers and professional tutors were asked whether they wished to facilitate an active learning culture, they were similarly enthusiastic and regarded timebanking as an effective tool in helping them to achieve this. The main barrier to community participation was lack of pathway progression provided by professional learning tutors.

Future developments:

Testing the application of Time to Learn with a large scale learning service provider. Publication of work to date and dissemination of work to date to policy makers and community educational practitioners

"The guitar class was brilliant, we learnt so much together"

Time Networks

Time Networks are designed to include everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, ability or gender, to play an active part in the life of their community. The mutual ethos on which they are built states that sharing our humanity by giving time to our local community should be as much a part of modern day life as watching TV or accessing the internet. The model works on the principle that for every hour of time that a citizen gives to the Network they can take an hour back from the Network by attending social, cultural and educational events. One time credit = One hour of active citizenship. Participants redeem their time credits by attending events. So, if an event is 2 hours longer the admission fee is 2 time credits.The model recognises that well constructed social infrastructures are as essential to everyday living as roads, bridges, and utillity services.

Case Study - Blaengarw Time Centre

The Creation Development Trust has been running the Time Network project at the Blaengarw Workingmen's Hall for the past year. The aim of the project is to build the existing capacity of active citizenship (the time that people give to their community) from 32,000 hours per annum to 65,000 hours per annum over a three year period. This model uses popular culture as a currency to build new membership led social networks by underwriting active citizenship with social, educational and cultural activitiesBy increasing citizen engagement and building new social networks the project contributes to the growth of social capital, increasing trust, strengthening the fabric of community.

The construction of an over arching Time Network builds a community that:
• is inclusive, participative and empowering
• raises the status and enhances the image of citizenship
• values and celebrates citizenship
• makes it easier by improving access for people to participate
• encourages more effective involvement of citizens
• increases the number of citizens in all age groups
• improves the organization and infrastructure for community cohesion.
• offers equality of opportunity
• is committed to sustainable community development

Future developments

Testing Time Network as a model to rebuild active creative communities in several settings. This will involve working with three new host organisations namely Glyn Coch Communities First Project Arts Factory Development Trust and Llanhilleth Miners Institute. All are keen to work with us to test this new method of working in communities. In order to research and support these projects we intend to put in place a small team of specialist workers. We have discussed the concept with the Communities First Implementation Team of the Wales Assembly Government The outcome has been positive, resulting in considerable financial support to test a flagship Time Network project in Glyncoch (a post-war public sector housing estate) for the period 2007-2010. The model recognises that communities are full of unused skills, talents, knowledge, experience and abilities, and has the potential to

"Creation Development Trust Ltd's Time Network initiative indeed sounds like a classic example of the kind of innovative approach to volunteering that the voluntary sector is famous for. It would be difficult for a local authority, or for our departments of Government, to come up with such a scheme. However, that is exactly what voluntary sector bodies can do and what we cannot do. They can come up with bright ideas and be flexible, and we want to see the richness that we have in Wales across the board in the voluntary sector maintained in order to encourage more such creative ideas"

Time Banking with Single Issue Agencies

At a time when almost every public sector organisation is talking about greater citizen involvement timebanking brings about a more deliberative relationship between citizens and service providers. WICC works with agencies to maximise their potential to engage, involve and empower the public as active citizens. Long term work in progress includes 'Time for Young People' and 'Time for Learning'. Work in development includes a pilot scheme with Taff Housing Association, and discussions with mental health agencies, doctor surgeries, and community safety initiatives.

The empirical findings of the work described in this section reveals that when social programmes encourage people to become active citizens contributing to the common good they are digging the graves of passive beneficiaries, burying the past, preparing for the future. WICC shares the lessons form these 'works in progress' with practitioners and policy makers.

Case Study - Taff Housing Association

Taff Housing Association is a well established community base Housing Association with over 1000 homes in the Canton, Fairwather, Grangetown, Riverside and Butetown areas of Cardiff. They also provide supported housing for young woman in Roath and Canton.
They have a strong commitment to tenants participation in the design and delivery of all their services. Taff has used timebanking to strengthen this agenda by valuing and celebrating the time that tenants give to the Association.

Taff uses timebanking in a number of different ways:

A) To encourage a wide range of tenants to participate:

(i) To thank tenants for the time that they give to helping Taff design and deliver services by attending Tenant board meetings, sitting on interview panels and helping to run activities.

(ii) To develop and run tenant led projects

B) To address specific issues:

(i) In their supported housing projects Taff is using time banking to encourage residents to take a more active role in management and running of the hostels.

(ii) In areas with challenging social issues Taff is developing a new family time bank to improve social cohesion. The Association is working in partnership with Cardiff City Council and local art centres to offer a broad range of social activities for tenants to access with their time credits.

Future Developments

Develop and pilot time currencies with single issue public and third-sector agencies to include:
Housing Associations,
School and the Police.

WICC will support the dissemination of these programmes across Wales.