

# How to Build a TimeBank



# Welcome to the enriching experience that awaits you as you journey into the world of Timebanking.

We in the Lyttelton Harbour TimeBank are passionate about the difference that Timebanking makes in our lives and to the depth of community it creates.

Timebanking is more than a medium of exchange, a way to trade with others. Timebanks enable us to tap into our dreams of having loving, connected, healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities where people, because they are connected and supported, expand into their fullness.

We are social beings, we need each other and our collective creativity to be able to thrive. The TimeBank community is ushering in cultural change; moving us away from the much touted 'I' society to a 'we' culture where we do for one another, where we accept help from each other.

This booklet is a guide drawn together from our experience. It is not a definitive 'how-to' guide as every community is unique, but we want to share what we have gathered along the way, to hopefully make your path easier.

Keep things simple, stay attached to the spark that inspired you and drew you towards Timebanking, and don't forget to get trading!

Margaret Jefferies

*Chair, Project Lyttelton, initiator of Timebanking into New Zealand*

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# WHAT IS TIMEBANKING?

Timebanking is a way of trading skills in a community. Instead of dollars, time credits are used as payment. You earn time credits for the work you do, and then use them to 'buy' another member's time to get the services you need.

## Everyone's Time is Equal.

No matter what type of work is done, one hour always equals one time credit. 1=1. Every person is equally valued.

Timebanking originated in the USA in the 1980s from the work of Edgar S Cahn. Since then it has spread worldwide. Project Lyttelton set up New Zealand's first TimeBank in 2005. Timebanking continues to grow with TimeBanks popping up all over New Zealand.

## Timebanking is based on 5 Core Values:

- 1. We are all assets.** We all have something to give. The real wealth of a society is its people. Every human being can be a contributor, no matter who they are and what their experience in life has been.
- 2. Redefining Work: Some work is beyond price.** Work has to be redefined to value what it takes to raise healthy children, build strong families, revitalize neighbourhoods, make communities work, advance social justice, and make the planet sustainable. That kind of work needs to be honoured, recorded and rewarded.
- 3. Reciprocity: Helping works better as a two-way street.**  
The question: "How can I help you?" needs to change so we ask: "How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?"
- 4. Social Networks: We need each other.** Networks are stronger than individuals. People help each other re-weave communities of support, strength and trust. Community is built upon growing roots, building trust and creating networks.

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**5. Respect: Every human being matters.** Respect underlies everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of community. When respect is denied to anyone, we all are injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be in the future.

### **Creating Community One Trade at a Time.**

As we begin to share our skills and get to know each other, we start to develop a sense of connection and we build community. We realise that we have tremendous resources right where we are. These resources may be in the skills and knowledge that we possess, in the things we can lend to each other or in the support and help we give to one another.

Timebanking differs from the financial world. Trading within a community keeps the wealth where it is, amongst us. Local trading (without relying on the national monetary system) can also help build community resilience. Because every trade is valued at the same rate of one time credit per hour, everyone can afford everything equally.

# HOW TO SET UP A TIMEBANK

## Get people involved and excited about Timebanking.

You can't do this alone! You need a group of passionate people to make this happen. Here are some ideas to get the word out:

**Present at a community meeting** or residents' association

**Get information in the media:** your local paper, radio, community boards, email, social networking, flyers, etc.

**Talk to your friends,** colleagues and groups you belong to

## Keep it simple. Some suggestions of what to say:

**Give an outline** of what Timebanking is and why you are motivated to do this.

**Show an inspiring video** about Timebanking (see Resources)

**Invite everyone to introduce themselves,** find out what they know about Timebanking, and discuss why they are inspired to be part of starting a TimeBank

**Invite another TimeBank to speak**

**Get everyone to discuss their skills,** what they might offer on the TimeBank, and also what they would like to receive

**Share food.** Have a potluck meal and talk about your ideas

## Set up a Core Group

Gather a Core Group of committed individuals who are willing to set up a TimeBank and drive the idea forward. Those excited by your initial meetings may make themselves known.

You may have already talked about the skills, interests and experience that you each want to contribute to your TimeBank. Now is the time to get clear about what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.

**Host a brainstorming session** to discover the next steps to get your TimeBank up and running. You may be a large group of new members and all start together. Or you may be a small group and nurture it gradually. Consider the pros and cons of how to move forward and find agreement in the vision you are creating together. Be honest with yourselves and each other about how much time you are able to commit.

**Make a list of everyone known** by the Core Group and contact them to explain Timebanking.

**Start trading** so that people actually see the action rather than just listen to others talk about it.

**Mind-maps are a great tool** to gather lots of ideas and create a path that you can refer to as you go along. Have a look at [http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS\\_01.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm)

**Read “No More Throw Away People’** by Edgar S Cahn, or the summary notes from Lyttelton’s LIFT Library.

## Roles of the Core Group

The Core Group are the people who will run the TimeBank and may at some point include paid Coordinators. Identify key roles within your Core Group. The following are some of the roles that you may need to fill. When you are starting out, one person can take on several roles.

**People’s Person:** gather membership information, orient new members to Timebanking, coach people through their first trades and continue encouraging existing members; send out regular newsletters/broadcasts, keep records of members, and all trades

**Events Coordinator/Marketing Guru:** host events to get people interested, to sign up new members, and to keep existing members interested and valued

**Finance/Funding Guru:** investigate possible funding sources and draw up a draft budget (see Funding)

**Computer/Technical Guru:** investigate possible software and give technical support to Core Group and TimeBank members

**Other roles:** Always keep your eye open for TimeBank members who can help! Lyttelton TimeBank has a member who puts all our offers and requests on Facebook.

## Create an Advisory Group

Timebanking is not about doing it on your own, so it is important to have supporters! Gather people in the community that are strong supporters of Timebanking to meet with the Core Group/Coordinator(s). Meeting periodically or in an emergency situation, the Advisory Group should support the Core Group by giving feedback or advice in making big decisions and by upholding the vision of your TimeBank.

## Models of Working Together

There are several models of working together in the core group and advisory group that you may find helpful.

**Appreciative Inquiry** “deliberately seeks to discover people’s exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialities – their essential contributions and achievements,” says David Cooperrider. To read more about this approach, go to <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/whatisai.cfm>

**Sociocracy** is a system of governance, using consent-based decision making among equivalent individuals, more here at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociocracy>

**The five core aspects to Timebanking** are as relevant amongst the people creating your TimeBank as with its members.

Establish a sense of togetherness and a belief that you will build a successful TimeBank. Valuing the role of each person who contributes, and being honest about the time you are willing to give will help create a sustainable foundation for your TimeBank.



# HOW TO BUILD A TIMEBANK

## Communication

Communication is key to Timebanking, from communicating within your Core Group, informing and helping your current TimeBank members and promoting the TimeBank to potential members. Fortunately, there are systems and software available to make it easy! Here are some of the different types and methods of communication to think about:

### **Within the Core Group and Advisory Group:**

- In person, phone, email
- Doodle ([www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)): helps schedule meetings and other appointments. It is simple, quick, and free.
- File sharing: Google Drive/Docs (within Gmail) is a place to store and collaborate on documents; Dropbox ([www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com)) is a free service where you can share your photos, documents, and videos; and Picasa ([picasaweb.google.com](http://picasaweb.google.com)) and Flickr are great for photo sharing

### **With TimeBank members:**

- In person: where possible, it is great to have an office in an accessible spot where people can walk in, have a chat and ask questions. Orientations and events, such as a stall at an event, are also good places.
- Broadcasts/Newsletters: sent through a trading database, such as Community Weaver (available through [timebanks.org](http://timebanks.org)) or via MailChimp or email
- Social Media: Using Facebook to announce events, or link to recent trades
- For offline members: print out broadcasts and trades and post them on a bulletin board

## Promotion/Networking

**Form links within the community.** Think of the different community groups that exist in your area. They can all become part of the

TimeBank: Police, the local branch of St John, Civil Defence, Fire Brigade, kindergartens, schools, Plunket, etc.

**Events:** Create children’s activities or stalls on the street to swap veggies, books, DVDs, or toys. Celebrate an occasion – your TimeBank’s birthday and have a big swapping fair once a year. Have a skill-sharing party, e.g. fix bikes, sew patches on clothes, and give “taster” sessions. It is important to make all events open to everyone in the community even if they aren’t members. Run a garage sale to raise special funds.

**Education classes:** Run by members, one-off classes could teach cheese making, or could extend over many weeks, teaching a language, story-telling, etc. Also open to the whole community, but for non-TimeBank members Lyttelton TimeBank charged \$15 per hour. Then the money was used as a fund-raiser for TimeBank.

### **In the media**

- Press releases for newspaper, radio
- Community newspapers/newsletters: build up a relationship with the local paper. A regular slot every month or fortnight is ideal. You can talk about upcoming events, or have members tell stories about a specific trade they enjoyed.
- Social media: announce events on your own page, and connect with other Facebook pages in the community
- Design a small brochure with stories and examples of trades. Make available in local places, such as health centre, library, info centre, and grocery store.

## **TIMEBANK MEMBERS**

### **New members**

Now that you have communicated and promoted your TimeBank, how do you sign-up your first members? Some TimeBanks just start trading and keep track of trades with pen and paper. As you grow you might find that you prefer using a trading database.

## Who can join?

**Individuals, couples and households** can join. Children can have their own accounts with parental supervision. A TimeBank member says “Timebanking is wonderful for children who are home-schooled as they are able to reach and engage with a wider part of the community for their learning. In Lyttelton the children have had German, piano lessons, wool craft, gone boating, stacked wood, harvested nuts and more.”

**Community groups can join.** Building healthy connected communities is one of the tenets of Timebanking. So, the more community groups that join the TimeBank, the better.

**Experiment with other possibilities.** In Lyttelton, the Harbour Co-Op, a community-owned food shop is a member. Maybe there are businesses in your area that could join. Certainly encourage schools, health centres, e.g. individuals can gain credit by helping children learn to read, the school can reciprocate by loaning out their school hall, or having the children deliver the community newspaper.

## Becoming a member

**To join, fill in a paper registration form** with contact details

**OR Start using a trading database.** Currently, many TimeBanks around New Zealand use Community Weaver (CW), a software developed by TimeBanks USA, which offers an easy way to manage trading, post offers and requests, log hours, and communicate with members. While there is a small fee per person, usually about \$1/member/year (e.g. 2013 TBUSA membership fees: \$25/year for 1-25 members, \$120/year for 26-100, etc.), it has currently proved to provide the best service. You can join at <http://timebanks.org/membership>

Discussion around TimeBanks in New Zealand using other trading databases that are free, such as Time Exchange, and discussions about hosting servers in New Zealand for databases, are on-going.

**Send a welcome letter** and invite the new member to a orientation by using the contact details from your registration form, or via the email that is automatically generated from CW when a new member joins.

## Orientation

**When and where?** Depending on the number of people joining, and your own schedule, decide how often to have orientation sessions. Lyttelton TimeBank has a one-hour orientation, in the evening on a weekday roughly every fortnight. A meeting place where you can talk undisturbed and have computer access is great. You might find that sending out a Doodle (meeting planner) to new members will result in a time that suits the most people.

**Share your passion** about Timebanking with your new members. Everyone has skills to offer, things that they are good at, things they enjoy. Sometimes people feel they have no spare time. But if we do things we like, and get another member to do the things we don't enjoy much, everyone benefits! Share your own experiences. Some offers and requests on the TimeBank are: cooking, sewing, gardening, child minding, transport, wood stacking, computer help, music lessons, storytelling, and companionship, to name but a few. Get creative!

**Get character referees.** Ask each new member for email addresses of two character referees, as it seems more efficient than reaching people by phone. You may wish to do police checks. This is something you should discuss with your Core Group before orientation.

**Take a photo of the new member** to put on their on-line profile, or to attach to their registration. Photos personalise the TimeBank and help with community building making it possible for TimeBank members to recognise each other on the street!

**New member after-care:** Send members home with the task to give themselves an hour for attending orientation. This will show you that they are able to work the software, and give them the thrill of their first hour earned. For recording an hour for orientation, the new member is the "Provider of Service", and will earn an hour and the TimeBank who is the "Recipient of Service, will give an hour. It is good practice to follow up with new members after 4 to 6 weeks, checking in with them, making sure they are happy and have traded, or have at least put up an offer or request.

# TRADING

## One-to-One

Most trades are between individuals. Within the CW database, the person providing the trade (e.g. teacher, gardener) is the “Provider of Service” and the person receiving the trade (e.g.. student, garden owner) is the “Recipient of Service”.

## One-to-Many, or Many-to-One

Sometimes trades can involve a group doing a service for an individual, as in a garden working bee. Every person who does the work is a “Provider of Service”, who logs their time that is then debited from the garden owner who is the “Recipient of Service”. If an individual member teaches a group of people a skill, then every student (Recipient) pays 1 hour, but the teacher (Provider) will only earn one hour. The rest will go into the Community Treasure Chest. In these situations it may be helpful for the Coordinator to put through the hours.

## The Community Treasure Chest (CTC)

The Community Treasure Chest is a community TimeBank account, set up as a member. Members can donate as many or as few TimeBank credits as they like to the CTC. The TimeBank member Coordinator can give these credits to any member(s) or community group that may be in need of them, for whatever reason.

## Goods or Tools

For any trades associated with lending/borrowing goods and tools you can claim one hour, regardless of the time the tool is lent out for. The duration and any expenses involved in the lending of goods/tools should be agreed between the members before the trade takes place.

## Travel Expenses/Purchased Materials

Providing transport to the airport, a medical appointment or shopping, will incur a fuel expense. Baking or cooking for a member will incur

expenses for ingredients. For trades where there are expenses involved we encourage you to discuss and agree these with the member you are trading with PRIOR to the trade happening.

## Negative Time Credits

Timebanking is not about balancing the books, but about trading skills in the community and reciprocity. You can still trade if you have not yet earned time credits. In fact, for the system to work properly, most traders will move in and out of debit and credit at some point.

## FUNDING

### What do you use funding for?

**Coordinators:** It is possible to run a TimeBank without paid Coordinators, but experience has shown that TimeBanks work far more efficiently with a paid Coordinator.

**Office supplies:** phone, computers/IT, photocopies, etc.

**Events:** food, prizes, music, craft-materials, etc.

**Marketing:** signage, flyers, and brochures

**Trading Database:** purchasing a trading database, hiring someone for maintenance and support

### Sources and Models of Funding

There are a number of different ways to fund a TimeBank. Some examples that exist around the world include:

#### Grants, charitable donations and Council funding

There are many charitable organisations and bodies throughout New Zealand that provide grants. Most of these operate in specific geographical areas. Many councils also have several different funding streams that you may be able to tap into. Your local library should have a database (Fundview) of funders operating in your local area.

## **Raising your own funds**

Your members are a powerful resource! From hosting traditional fund-raisers like bake sales and sponsored walks/runs to more off-the-wall ideas like sponsored Guinness world record-breaking attempts or auctions. The possibilities are endless!

Things to consider when asking members to participate in fund-raising initiatives include:

- How much/how often are you asking them to contribute? Asks need to balance the benefits they are receiving. Asking members every week to bake cakes or sponsor events may be off-putting after a while! At the same time it can be great to involve members in the fund-raising so that they appreciate what needs to go on behind the scenes to make Timebanking happen.
- Fund-raisers can also double up as recruitment drives and members are your best recruitment consultants!
- Think about how much effort has to be put in for the return. Asking members to put a box of chocolates in their place of work doesn't raise a fortune but takes virtually no effort either, whereas a huge gala or winter ball might bring in a few thousand but might burn all the volunteers/helpers out in the process! It's all about balance!
- Get children involved in activities so they learn the principles of Timebanking and become contributors, sharers in activities and trades.

## **Running a Social Enterprise/Business**

The notion of not-for-profit organisations running social enterprises or social businesses to support their work is on the rise across the world, from something as big as a social housing project to as small as making and selling a simple product like stickers or jams. Whatever your idea, it is best to produce a business plan - as most ideas need seed funding to get off the ground. Courses and resources available through the Social Enterprise Institute, [www.csbec.org.nz](http://www.csbec.org.nz), ph. +64 3 366 9978.

### **Charging a membership fee**

Whilst many TimeBanks make a specific point to not charge a membership fee, others ask for a small annual sum to cover basic costs like software licences, etc. Whatever you choose for your TimeBank it's worth careful consideration.

### **A combination of the above**

The reality for most TimeBanks is a combination of some of these funding streams. The Lyttelton Harbour TimeBank has its own social enterprise "The Garage Sale" which has begun to provide a sizable contribution to TimeBank costs; however it still relies on grant funding, and other fund-raising efforts to support the TimeBank.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

### **What financial structure? Charity? Umbrella group?**

There are many ways to set up a TimeBank. One example is that Lyttelton Harbour TimeBank is a project under the umbrella group of Project Lyttelton. Project Lyttelton is a non-profit grassroots organisation committed to building sustainable, connected community.

### **Working with Government Organisations**

**IRD:** Currently members of TimeBanks within New Zealand do not exchange for time credits the skills that provide their main form of taxable income (\$NZ). This is in response to advice received from the Inland Revenue Department (IRD); it is not the result of a ruling. We are interested in exploring this issue, to discover whether we might be able to move towards the tax-exempt status that Timebanking/Time Credits have in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

**WINZ:** There are possible consequences of beneficiaries building up a work record, but this needs to be investigated further.



## Safety

Some TimeBanks prefer that all new members go through a police check. Lyttelton Harbour TimeBank asks that all new members attend a face-to-face orientation and give 2 character references, but currently does not do a police check. If there is concern for a particular member, they can be put on “Guardian Angel Mode” through the CW software. If a situation arises between members and it is beyond the Coordinator to sort, a Mediator may be brought in to resolve the issue.

All members must take responsibility for their own trades – e.g. if doing a trade with a stranger, just as with a paid worker, do not assume they can be trusted in challenging situations. This is a self-regulating system.

## RESOURCES/SUPPORT

### Your Advisory Group

Meeting periodically or in an emergency situation, the Advisory Group should support the Core Group by giving feedback or advice in making big decisions and by upholding the vision of your TimeBank.

### TimeBank members

Don't forget your members are your greatest resource! Members can earn credits by helping the TimeBank, for example: by helping with events, updating trades on Facebook, help with administrative tasks, designing leaflets etc. You never know what skills are out there ... until you ask!

TimeBank members can also support other members. Experienced members can be buddies to new members or be “champions” or trading buddies for vulnerable or ‘offline’ members. ‘Offline’ members are those that do not have regular access to the Internet and can therefore find it challenging to stay up to date with offers and requests.

## **TimeBank Aotearoa New Zealand (TBANZ)**

- <http://www.coactivate.org/projects/tbanz/project-home>
- Website/forum: [www.timebank.org.nz](http://www.timebank.org.nz)
- Skype Coordinator calls/chat

## **Lyttelton Harbour TimeBank**

- Information and TimeBank videos at:  
<http://www.lyttelton.net.nz/timebank>

## **TBUSA**

- Website/forum: [www.timebanks.org](http://www.timebanks.org)
- Skype Coordinator calls/chat
- Trading software: <http://timebanks.org/membership>

## **FEEDBACK**

Anything you want to add? Find fault with?  
Contact [timebankaotearoa@gmail.com](mailto:timebankaotearoa@gmail.com) and let us know.

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## NOTES:

