

Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme

Addressing the challenges faced by 'front line' practitioners

Evaluating the Public Health Outcomes of the Cambridgeshire Time Credits Project

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Background & Rationale

- Spice is a social enterprise that developed the Time Credits model. It runs programmes across the UK with local councils, community development organisations, housing associations, care providers and schools.
- Established in 2014, Cambridgeshire Time Credits is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge Housing Society.
- Spice Time Credit systems support people in giving their time to strengthen communities and to design and deliver better services.
- Time Credits recognise that everybody has something to give that can make a difference in the place they live and are an effective tool for encouraging people who may be new to volunteering.
- In exchange for their contribution, they 'earn' printed Time Credit notes, one for every hour they give, which they can then 'spend' on a range of leisure and other opportunities in a network of Spice partners across the UK.

Aims & Objectives

- To address the knowledge gap by rigorous, independent evaluation to enable more accurate estimates of the extent of benefits arising from time-based currencies.
- To analyse the potential of Time Credits to address public health issues by:
 - Reducing loneliness and social exclusion
 - Improving wellbeing for participants
 - Increasing community cohesion and social capital

Conceptual Underpinning

- Health benefits accrue in various ways through several different pathways, largely through opportunities to engage in meaningful activities¹. Typically cited positive outcomes in time-based currencies include:
 - Enhanced self-esteem, confidence and skills
 - Expansion of social networks and increased community involvement
 - Social integration and community self-efficacy; social inclusion
 - Improved health, wellbeing and quality of life²⁻⁷.
- Many of the benefits are believed to arise from the reciprocal nature of time-based currencies and its guiding principle of co-production.
- Time Credits provide everybody the opportunity to be active citizens and share their experience and skills to make positive contributions that foster a sense of inclusiveness and help shape their own community

References

- ¹ Burgess, G. (2015) *Evaluating the Public Health Outcomes of the Cambridgeshire Time Credits Project: Interim Report*. Cambridge: Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research. ² Boyle, D. (2014) *The Potential of Time Banks to Support Social Inclusion and Employability: An investigation into the use of reciprocal volunteering and complementary currencies for social impact*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014. ³ Boyle, D. & Bird, S. (2014) *Give and Take: How timebanking is transforming healthcare*. Gloucester: Timebanking UK. ⁴ Bretherton, J. & Pleace, N. (2014) *An Evaluation of the Broadway Skills Exchange Time Bank*. York: Centre for Housing Policy, University of York. ⁵ Lasker, J. et al. (2011) Time Banking and Health: The Role of a Community Currency Organization in Enhancing Well-Being. *Health Promotion Practice*, 12(1), 102-115. ⁶ Ozanne, L. (2010) Learning to Exchange Time: Benefits and Obstacles to Time Banking'. *International Journal of Community Currency Research*, 14, A1-16. ⁷ Seyfang, G. (2003) 'With little help from my friends.' Evaluating time banks as a tool for community self-help. *Local Economy*, 18(3), 257-264.

HOW EARNING AND SPENDING TIME CREDITS CAN LEAD TO POSITIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES



Methodology Underpinning

- Mixed methods research design using both quantitative and qualitative tools
- Incorporating co-production in the evaluation methodology
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Literature review, including scoping review and health outcomes
- Secondary data analysis
- Developing a programme theory of change
- Longitudinal survey with individual new Time Credit members using EQ-5D
- Face-to-face interviews with individual Time Credit members (20-25)
- Survey and face-to-face interviews with partner organisations (15-20)
- Visual ethnographies and participant observation

Public Involvement

- Collaboration with the Cambridgeshire County Council Community Engagement Team, Spice, and Cambridge Institute of Public Health (CIPH).
- Steering group with Time Credits partner organisations and members who volunteer and earn Time Credits.

Outputs / Dissemination & Knowledge Transfer

- Six Working Papers on separate aspect of the research
- Interim and final report detailing project outcomes for individuals, organisations and the wider community
- Findings disseminated in a range of accessible formats, e.g. five short films
- Two conference posters and two conference presentations
- Event at the Cambridge Festival of Ideas
- Peer reviewed journal articles