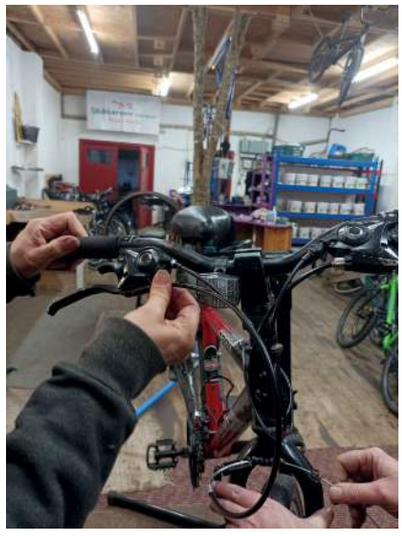






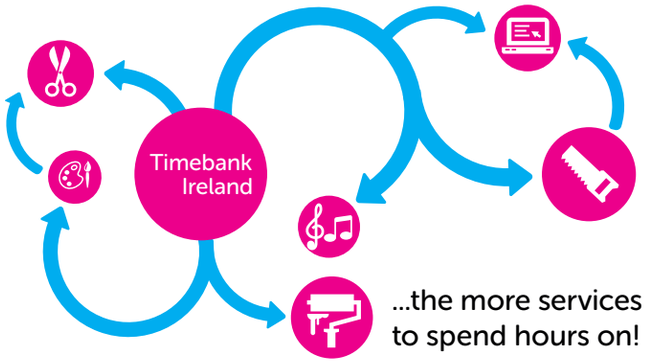
Social Impact Study 2023





Executive Summary

The bigger the community network...



...the more services to spend hours on!



Modern society has resulted in people living in local communities with less social connection and neighbourly support. Differences in income, education and opportunities lead to greater social inequality, often in the same localities. This type of inequality persists among the groups that have the highest rates of poverty and unemployment. While many have both skills and time to offer, they are not in a position to engage with the traditional money economy. Likewise, many individuals reliant on narrow career paths for income, have other diverse skills and talents they might offer the community in informal ways but do not have avenues for sharing.

For every €1 invested in Timebank Ireland, €16 is generated in Social Value

Timebank Ireland (TBI)

TBI is a group of people who help and support each other by sharing services, skills, talents, and knowledge. With a vision of an interconnected community where meaningful relationships strengthen resilience, solidarity, and prosperity. Members provide services voluntarily enabling them to give and receive "time" and no money is exchanged. Through this exchange, TBI appreciates the value of every member and recognises all have needs as well as gifts to share. It supports basic needs to be met that mitigates deprivation and stress resulting in a better quality of life and stronger connections among citizens.

All services are recognised and respected, and every person's time is equally valued. Exchanges between TBI members are different from a service purchased or bought from a professional service provider. Participants in Timebanking are made aware that the nature of the interactions are voluntary assistance and neighbourliness and NOT a professional service being exchanged.

Potential Exchanges			
Shopping	Fence Post Digging	Fermenting	Woodwork
Lifts	Knitting/Sewing	Foraging	Astrology
Zoom	Website Assistance	Dousing	Homeopathy
LinkedIn	Online Marketing	Alternative Healing	Fixing Jewellery
Tennis Lessons	Help with Social Media	Pen Pals	Photo Restoration
Art Tips	Compost Advice	C.V.	Seed Germination
Cookery	Music	Flatpack Assembly	Handmade Cards
Tiling	Building Small Pond	Moving House	House Sitting
Minding Animals	Backgammon	Career Coaching	Travel Tips
Languages	Decluttering	Family Ancestry	Marketing Tips
DIY	Window Cleaning	Personal Training	Dancing Lessons
Painting	Coding	Massage	Graphic Design
Gardening/Weeding	Maths	Prayer Ministry	Photography
Walks	Dog Training	Letter Writing	Swimming Lessons
Chats	Child Minding	Nature Walks	Plant Care
Mediation	Science	Textile Art	Proof Reading
Yoga	Mosaic	Interior Design	Meitheal

Table 1: Potential TBI Exchanges

Anyone is eligible to join TBI to meet every day social and household care needs through the mutual exchange of time, skills, and opportunities. An online portal displays each member's array of skills as a list of 'offers' and 'requests'. These are displayed on the online bulletin board and shared periodically by email and social media. Members 'deposit' time in the Timebank by spending a few hours delivering a requested service or doing other useful activities in their community. They are then able to withdraw these 'time credits' from the Timebank when they need help themselves.

Members can be service users (beneficiaries) and service volunteers simultaneously, and there is no embarrassment in asking for help. This mechanism is empowering, especially to traditionally marginalised groups. Everyone gains and the community becomes increasingly robust and resilient. Anyone in a time of need, can ask for assistance even if they have not yet earned enough time credits. As a community TBI will always try to help members in need at any time. There is no pressure to repay the Timebank for services received until any member is well enough or in a position to offer services.







Case Study 1 – Monica[1]

Monica found out about TBI through attendance at the outreach mental health team where the consultant recommended it. Monica lives alone with her dogs for company in a rural area and has no family connections or support and initially found it difficult to settle in and integrate in West Cork. Monica has been affected with post-traumatic stress disorder since 2002 and has an auto immune condition which was particularly problematic during Covid. Since getting involved in TBI, Monica feels much more connected to the community which has had a positive mental health impact. She highlighted that TBI offers people who think they have nothing to give the opportunity to offer something that is of equal value to other members' time.

Monica has been a member for 3 years and feels comfortable requesting help and describes the timebank as a safety net and loves that members contribute on the basis of how they can help rather than what will they get. She likes that money is not involved and marvels at the generosity of others and describes TBI as a great community. Monica has availed of help at home, in the garden and getting lifts to appointments. She has participated in sewing workshops which is a very transferable skill for members. Monica did an Art degree and has a qualification in adult teaching and hopes to be able to use this in some form in the future and is currently doing conversational English with Ukrainians.

1 In all case studies, names have been changed to protect anonymity.

User Group Information

Table 2 presents the data on the user group with a significant increase in the number of enabled users in 2022 (219 to 391). 95% (n=374) of enabled users are resident in County Cork with the remainder in Counties Kerry, Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Clare, and Sligo.

User Group	01-11-2021	28-10-2022
Enabled Users	219	391
Removed Users	103	183
Users in Dublin	5	6
Users in Kerry	1	1
Users in Cork	204	374
Users in Waterford	1	1
Users in Limerick	0	1
Users in Clare	1	1
Users in Sligo	2	2
Users in Brokers	5	5

Table 2: User Group



Activity

The currency used for TBI activity is time credits in units of one hour. Table 3 presents the results on the units exchanged for 2022.

Activity	Time Credits
Gross Expenditure	928
Number of Outgoing Transfers	238
Gross Income	1,941
Number of Incoming Transfers	559
Number of Logins	1,560
Percentage Not Trading	-37.50
Average Amount of Users in Period	270.85
Balance of Community Account (At end of October 2022)	1,007,748

Table 3: TBI Activity

2,868 hours were exchanged via 797 transactions with over twice as many incoming than outgoing credits with the average number of users in the period sitting at 270. The Community Chest (CC) enables members to donate as many or as few TB credits as they like. The broker can give these credits to any member(s) or community group that may need them, for whatever reason.

While many transactions are 1-1, members also use credits to participate in groups. Table 4 illustrates the extent and reach of such activity. Workshops tend to be educational while Meitheals are a coming together to help another member with a labour intensive task requiring many hands based on an old Irish custom of good neighbourliness. Members also meet up socially to chat, listen to music or engage in crafts and hobbies. A total of 125 members attended groups during the one-year period.

Workshop	No's	Meitheal	No's	Meeting	No's
Composting	10	Putting up fences, planting potatoes, clearing space etc	6	Social	7
Plants	5	Moving wood	5	Social	6
Natural Beekeeping	6	Removing grass from base of saplings	7	Members meet up Skibbereen	6
Nature Walk	4	Clearing sheds, planting, level gravel and overgrowth	8	Music meet up Drimoleague	8
Emotion Code Talk	4	Clearing, pruning, and turning compost	5	Craft and Hobby Group	4
Weaving and Spinning	5	Clearing overgrowth, weeding beds, and planting vegetables	7		
Crystals	6				
Interior Design	3				
Crystals	4				
Mushroom Foraging	9				
Total:	**56**	**Total:**	**38**	**Total:**	**31**
Overall Total					**125**

Table 4: TBI Groups

Case Study 2 - John

John got involved through a friend about 3 years ago and has significant health issues. John has been living in a rural and remote area in West Cork for many years after moving from Wexford in 2008. John receives support with transport through TBI, getting lifts to hospital and GP appointments but also help in the garden and planting potatoes. Through a Meitheal, John's cottage was painted, and some handyman jobs were completed. John has dogs and goats and receives TBI support tending to them. He describes the TBI experience as amazing and a great relief to know that there are people out there to help if needed.

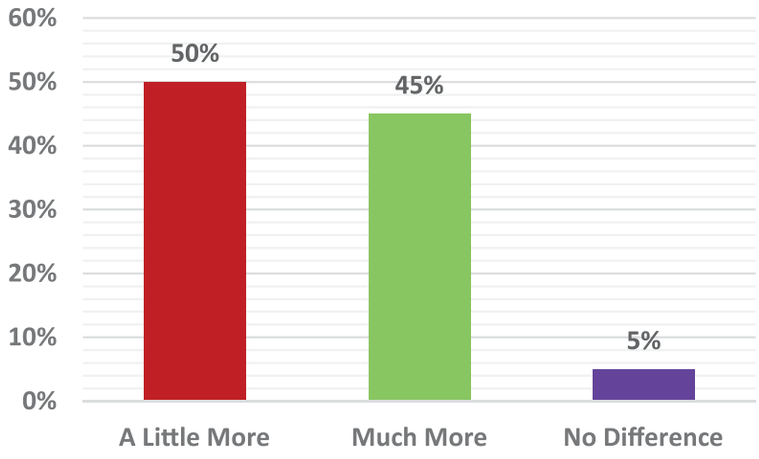
John loves the new friendships made and has invited new friends for dinner and has delivered a small workshop on propagating plants and making soups. John wants to continue with Timebank as feeling supported is important. John doesn't use the website but messages Angela who records the hours. Before this John would not have asked anyone for help but has been overwhelmed by people's kindness and willingness to help and now doesn't mind asking for help and support. John loves the great sense of community and describes the Meitheal as powerful way of getting people together to achieve a common goal. John's health issues include emotional health and describes the support from Timebank as being transformational and lifesaving as there have been times before TBI when life was a massive struggle for him.

Member Impact

When asked about the extent to which involvement with TBI has impacted on their feelings of social connectedness, 95% (n=38) indicated that felt more socially connected due to TBI.

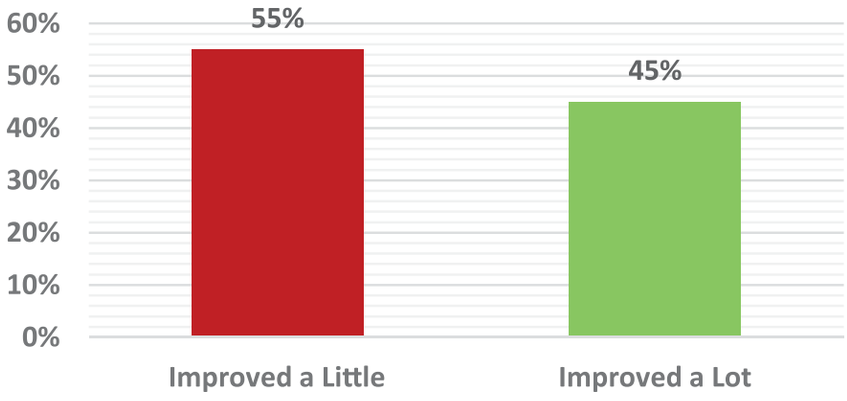
"Connection and community is vital, now more than ever. It means a lot to be able to reach out to TB members when I need their support. It also gives me a stronger sense of purpose, to know that I have something of value to give, whether it be organising events or offering interior design advice. I truly believe that TBs are the way of the future".

Socially Connected



"I have met so many amazing people through Timebanking. The feeling of connection and the knowledge that there are people in our communities that actually do care about others. I feel I have somewhere to go to for help but also to find fun things to do and participate in".

Well-Being



In relation to improvements in emotional, physical, and mental well-being attributable to TBI, 100% of respondents (n=40) felt that their well-being had improved. The assortment of comments below provide further insights into how improved well-being has manifested through TBI membership.

"The musical events have made a huge difference to my sense of wellbeing and paved the way for new friendships".

"Feels good to be part of something bigger which is real and meaningful, it has improved my mental health and I feel included and have become more social with people I would not otherwise meet in my everyday life".

"It's great to know that there is another way of getting help when you need it especially on the doorstep. Also, that people value the camaraderie of supporting one another".

"I was anxious moving to a new area, but I need not have been as the TB has helped me to make new friends and connections".

"Less stressed as I'd been meaning to get the job done for a long time and we have made new friends from the people who came to help" .

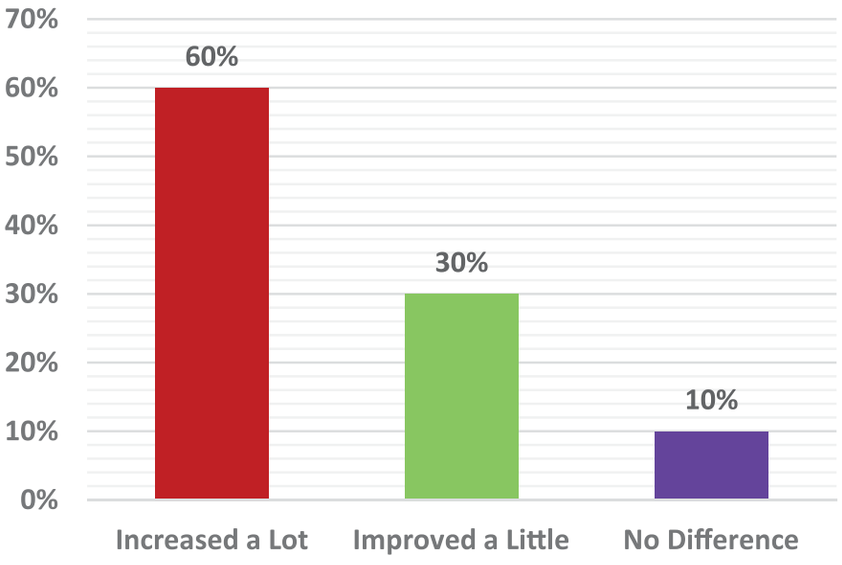
"When I joined TBI I had left a voluntary position which I had found challenging, I suffered from anxiety and isolation. Being abĺe to help other people helped me to find a source of happiness and self-worth, and developed my confidence".

"I work in the shop. The crystals give the place a wonderful energy and it's nice helping and chatting to the customers".



An aspired outcome of TBI is to make members more independent through the supports available. 90% of respondents (n=36) felt that TBI had increased their sense of independence. There was a definite sense from the semi-structured interviews and comments that members felt more in control of their lives and that accepting support and help enhances independence rather than increase reliance.

Independence



"I am an old community spirit and love exchanging goods and time on daily basis with other people, it makes me feel alive and on top of things".

"I am very independent by nature and have surprisingly found it relatively easy to exchange and accept assistance. Asking for help is a sign of strength not weakness".

"Through new connections made, I've found out about and joined other groups such as the Lighthouse group".

Case Study 3 – Brenda

Brenda found out about TBI from a friend and joined in early 2022 and has participated in a Meitheal group to observe and learn about the planting of trees. Brenda has a great interest in nature and growing vegetables and plants and loves the values and concept of Timebanking and joined to give back to the community. Brenda worked for many years in a social care environment moving back to West Cork after living elsewhere for some years. TBI has helped Brenda to find a new community who are self-sufficient and growing their own food which is a big saver and aligns with her values. Brenda attended a composting workshop some months ago and has received some assistance with house cleaning through TBI.

Brenda would like to host a Meitheal on food growing and is looking forward to doing more with TBI in the future. She likes exploring alternative therapies and calls into the shop in Skibbereen regularly and recently attended a crystal workshop to help with healing which was very useful. Brenda summed up the impact of TBI as crucial for settling back into life in West Cork after being away for 25 years.



Social Return on Investment

The total amount invested by the funders (West Cork Development Partnership, Rethink Ireland and the general public through the charity shop sales) and volunteers with their time monetised in the one-year period of scope was €50,000 which was agreed as the final input figure. For each stakeholder outcome, the cost of an alternative activity that would have led to the same outcome (a proxy cost), was selected through discussion between the evaluation teams and stakeholders and with reference to research evidence. The objective in proxy selection was to identify the best available alternative approach to achieving a similar outcome.

A robust proxy requires evidence of effectiveness and of cost and must be recognised as a realistic activity for stakeholders to undertake. We used a combination of data sources for the proxy estimation including primary research, the Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) Social Value Bank and the costs associated with services and interventions to achieve similar outcomes sourced from desk review and experiential learning.

Stakeholder	Outcome	Qty	Proxy	Value €	Proxy Source
TBI members	Increased socialisation	95	Member of a social group	326,040	HACT Social Value Bank
TBI members	Improved health and well-being	95	Community counselling	57,000[2]	https://www.insightmatters.ie/mind-matters/appointments-pricing/
TBI members	Greater independence	90	Equivalent value of the hours received through TBI.	57,600	TBI data
TBI members	More included	95	Value of feeling part of a community	413,535	HACT Social Value Bank

Table 5: Application of Financial Proxies



[2] Based on 12 sessions @ €50 per session

We multiplied the cost of the financial proxy by the number of stakeholders experiencing the outcome and subtracted where deemed necessary a percentage of deadweight, attribution, and displacement. We repeated this for each stakeholder group and added up all the impacts to derive the total impact of the outcomes.

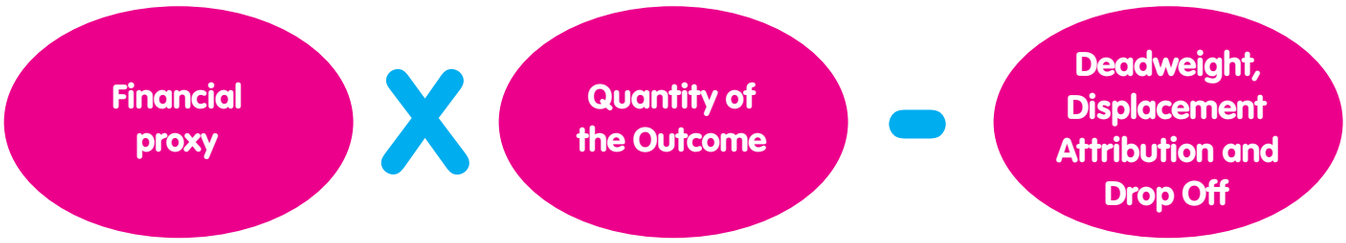


Figure 1: Calculating the SROI

TBI over the one-year period November 1st, 2021, to October 31st, 2022, generated a social value of 1:16. This is based on a Total Present Value of €803,184 created against the input of €50,000. The calculations applied financial proxies to four outcomes for TBI members.

Testimonial 1

"Contact is really important for both giver and receiver. We're too isolated from community now and contact is brilliant for people. Giving is good for the soul and being in contact with new people is lovely. It gives people without animals a chance to be in contact with the animals of the people they're assisting. Helping someone out has given me a new purpose in life. Normally a busy person and finding myself unable to do the things I did previously left me feeling down. Being in the Timebank means I can still help people – we mutually assist each other. It also gives me a sense of security – like having money in the bank – because I know if I'm helping people, I will also be able to get help whenever I need it. I can call on others."

Testimonial 2

"I've been a member of Timebank for a while and it is a fantastic organisation. I've got a lot of help from it like meeting new people and help with my gardening as I'm a disabled man who lives alone. I also have an adaptive car with hand controls so I can drive and am available to give anyone a lift local or long distance as I love driving. I think belonging to Timebank has helped change my life and I now meet up for coffee and a chat with one of the members who is good company and I look forward to seeing her again soon. I recommend anyone should join Timebank and offer a service".

Timebank Ireland

Logic Frame

Our ultimate impact

To enhance people's lives by nonmonetary sharing of time and talents to address individual needs, improve life standards, and in partnership address joint community issues throughout regional localities. with a long-term aim to scale initiatives throughout Ireland.

Core Strategy	SUSTAINABLE FUNDING		COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT			COMMUNICATION & NETWORKING		
	Ensuring A Resilient Operation		**Strengthening Member & Partner Interactions**			**Building National Image and Support**		
ACTIVITIES	Proposals for Awards of Grants and Donations	Managing Charity Shop Sales	Brokering Exchanges	Sponsoring Education & Training	Promoting Community Chest	Social Media Posts and Videos	hOur Timebank Website moderation	Government & News Media Relations
OUTPUTS	Funds for Initiatives to Develop and Expand Programme	Funds to Cover Expenses of Community Hub ****** Recycling of Used Household Goods	Practical and Social Interactions to Strengthen Community Relationships	Hub & Online Meetings Workshops Presentation	Community Volunteers Rewarded ****** Expanding Partnerships	Increased Individual awareness and participation in timebanking actions	Ongoing Listing of Offers / Requests ****** Transparent Indivicual Accounts	TD & Councillor Support ****** Press Mentions & Interviews
OUTCOMES	Ongoing Revenues to Pay Overhead Costs, Expand Outreach Efforts and Maintain Operating Surplus		Growing and Active Timebank Engagement by Individuals and Community Groups			Greater Public Understanding and Involvement in Timebanking Improved National Image and Reputation of hOur Timebank		

Case Study 4 – Delores

Delores had an accident during Covid and felt very isolated. She makes jewellery and sells it at the market and was a member of another Community Currency scheme in Bantry. Delores got involved with Timebank through a friend 2 years ago. She saw on Facebook that a lady needed help with her goats, so she contacted Timebank and was connected with the lady. Delores has received support through TBI with a clean up and has had plans drawn for her home, she found it all extremely helpful. Delores likes the fact that no money is involved, enjoys the social interaction, and does most TBI stuff through Angela who has been "brilliant". Delores doesn't record everything as she sees herself as a friend to most. The home clean enabled her to get a council grant for home improvements and the whole experience has helped improve her mental well-being and recovery process from her accident. As a result, Delores describes TBI as life changing.



SICAP

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme

Providing the building blocks for local and community development in Ireland

Timebank Ireland

Comhphàirtocht Forbatha Tàrthar Chorcaí
West Cork Development Partnership

Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
Cork County Council

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Cómhaoinithe ag an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the European Union

pobal
government supporting communities

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