



Enhancing the social inclusion
of low income single parents

105 – Peer to peer outreach strategy

Elaborated by: **PA Step by step and all
partners**



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1) Introduction

PARENTBANK – ‘Enhancing the social inclusion of low income single parents’ is an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships in Adult Education project, financed by the European Commission through A.N.P.C.D.E.F.P. It has a duration of 2 years and 3 months (2019-2022) – Project Number: 2019-1-RO01-KA204-063798.

The project aims at facilitating the labour market integration of low-income single-parents, by promoting their access to childcare and other services that they may be unable to afford.

The initiative is based on the fact that single - parents are more likely to live at risk of poverty and social exclusion, with women being the most affected, as they make up almost 85% of all single-parent families in the EU. Specifically, younger mothers and women with young children are the least-employed parent group, while the lower the mother’s level of education, the more likely to be poor. One of the activities for promoting the time-banking with this project is this Peer-to-peer outreach strategy. Use this document whenever you need to repeat or stress out the benefits of the timebanking to new or existing members. Its purpose is for management structures, member coordinators and/or member themselves to use with the reason on growing the social business and/or recruiting the new members. The document also contains the list of the organizations that serves as support system but also to cooperate together on activities or any project that can benefit all involved.

2) Benefits for (single) parents of being a member of the TimeBank

Life has changed and our friends and family do not always live nearby. It is often not easy to ask for help, especially if we feel we can never ‘pay them back’. This is where time banking comes into play – it is a simple way of exchange where time is the currency. For every hour you ‘deposit’ in a timebank by helping others, you can ‘withdraw’ an hour of support when you need it – and in any form you need it. Yes, that means you do not need to spend any money and the main idea is that all hours are worth the same – so you can get an hour of tutoring for your child, doing your taxes, or car repair if you spend an hour grabbing groceries for a neighbour when you run your errands anyway.

Apart from these obvious benefits, time banking brings more to the table –

- It creates a community and a positive way to connect with people
- It helps you to save money since no money ever changes hands
- It helps you create connections that could lead to job opportunities
- It creates opportunities to make new friends
- It helps you connect with your community faster and make an impact
- It helps you with the developing of your entrepreneurial skills
- It helps you accumulating new experiences

- It can be an exchange of experience
- It can help in tasks delivery
- It can facilitate planning
- It can support that children learn to socialize with other persons
- It can bring advice from people who are in a similar situation

Timebanking is always flexible and enables you to donate your time as you wish.

3) Transforming the timebank into a social business

Your local time bank should be a product of the community it serves, which means it should always be driven by the needs of its members – and this is the perfect basis for a business of any kind. Apart from everyone in the community getting access to the services they need, this creates an opportunity to create jobs – for someone to keep data, promote the idea and attract new members, lead by example, etc. This means that not only members of the community can save money –

For this, you should develop a plan for income generation, including donations, social enterprise and community fundraising activities, or gaining the support of a larger organization. You can always go back to Unit 4 Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship of Training program (available on training courses platform - [here](#) to repeat all aspects of creating new business ideas and initiatives so that you know how to create a business plan and other important things.

4) The community of Timebank(ers)

Most time banks are “place-based” and their goal is “neighbours helping neighbours”. One article on time banking reports that **90% of people using it said they had made new friends, and more than 40% saw those friends several times a week¹.**

Some other evidence shows that timebank members feel happier and healthier and also reported –

- meeting more people and making new friends
- feeling more part of the community
- feeling they could ask for or receive more help
- experiencing reduced loneliness

The members also said they had become more trusting of others, especially of people who were different from them because the time bank brought together people of different ages, cultures, and income level.

¹ More on: <https://timebanking.org/howitworks/>
<https://www.yorks.ac.uk/socialeconomy/library-and-resources/what-is-a-timebank/impact-of-timebanking/>

Also, a lot of people reported that the best part of working for the timebank was the feeling that they're making a difference in other people's lives – and all that despite any disadvantages you might face. Even in the unusual time such as pandemic and/or more digitalized world, you can make this full online with not much digital skills. As platform is already on the internet and all the job offering/exchange is done there, you can use chat option there as well and make plans with other member. Those all can also be your future collaborates. Also, you can communicate via social media or communication applications that you already have on your phone such as WhatsApp/Viber. **All-time is valued equally.**

5) Recruiting new members

A Timebanks should always look for ways to grow a community and recruit new members. When starting a business, existing members (managers, members, ...) should make one "working meeting" where they will make an action plan to gather new members. Develop a plan of "how and who", which target group you want, who will be in charge. Before you start a recruitment drive, make sure you have a proper strategy in place.

- You have to be clear about who you want to recruit - your **target group (single-parents)**.
- Decide a goal for **how many members you want to recruit** and how much time it should take.
- Your recruiters must **understand your organization and the interests** of the target group and what they can say to persuade people to join.
- **Different areas, organizations and sectors** where you will find potential members, must be identified.
- A membership system must be in place and clear to everybody involved.
- Look at the human and material resources you have available to use for recruitment.
- Decide on the best methods and times for recruitment.
- Work out an action plan

There are many things current members can do to attract new members. Here are some of the viable approaches that one could use to recruit more members.

➤ **Host a "bring a friend" meeting**

Encourage members to bring someone. This could even be a recurring event so that new members are continually bringing new friends!

➤ **Help members develop an "elevator speech" about their membership**

Why are they members? What's the biggest benefit of membership? Can they explain the purpose of the community?

➤ **Create an online presence - social networks**

Today we can no longer do anything without having a visible and "strong" presence on social media. Think about where you want to be present. You do not have to use all the

networks at once. Start with one, create a community there, and gradually expand to others if necessary. Follow the training and seminars that exist around creating good and quality content. Designate one member who will be in charge of regularly maintaining the social networking site.

➤ **Blog posts**

Blog posts are a cost-effective way to spread the word about the time bank platform. There are many free, open platforms available such as [Medium](#), where anyone can create a profile and start writing their thoughts on the topic. “What does the time bank platform offer?”, “Why is it important to support single-parents?” are just some examples of topics that people can publish in their blog. Anyone looking for relevant issues can read them and ask for more details. Moreover, by using the appropriate key words and hashtags, such as “parents”, “single-parents”, “time bank”, community support authors can get more relevant clicks on their piece.

➤ **Thank your members regularly**

There are a few different ways you can do that. Here are just a few:

- a) **Create a video thank-you message** and publish it on your website, your social media profiles, and your email newsletter.
- b) Each year, **make a list of all the events, services, and educational opportunities** that were made possible by the Time Bank services. Publish the list on a separate page on your site/on the Time Bank website, and add a link to it regularly in your online content and email campaigns.

Host a yearly event to say “thank you” to your members. Consider a member brunch, picnic, pool party, or other fun gatherings.

➤ **Sprinkle in some fun with the facts**

Some people make decisions from a rational viewpoint, while others are more feeling-based. As you talk about the group’s benefits, do not forget to mention some of the enjoyable social and relationship-building aspects of membership along with all of the impressive facts and figures about member programs and services. Talk with enthusiasm about some of the personal benefits you have obtained from being a member.

Try one of these as well

- Have public meetings at commercial centres outdoors, etc
- Have a booth at malls, fairs, festivals, etc.
- Place pamphlets in hospitals, cafeterias, libraries, etc.
- Put together guest information packets
- Invite family members to join
- Do not take age into consideration
- Make some meetings social events
- Ask corporations or other businesses to sponsor or subsidize membership

- Have a reward program for those who bring in new members
- Use word of mouth
- Network with co-workers, friends, and family
- Lead by example—how many members have you recruited?
- Have members give talks at other organizations
- Ask your (local) government for help and support
- Hold joint meetings with other groups
- Share your club experience with others
- Participate in community events
- Conduct a Membership Satisfaction Survey
- Meet at a good and different location
- Develop a strategic plan membership as a year-round priority and which needs to be planned
- Display a thermometer showing progress towards club goal
- Feature a member’s “benefit of the month “
- Create partnerships with the Social Services from the community in order to attract new members
- Organize a system on the Time Bank platform in which members are allocated according to small communities and assign a representative for each small community

6) Life-long learning competencies in a TimeBank

Based on education on lifelong learning competencies and project-based learning methods from the beginning of creating your community, managing, maintaining and recruiting new members, are linked to these key-competences. Disadvantaged single parents who join the TimeBank community can benefit from these courses, which can be also attended virtually. Every single parent can build up their skills for personal development or support on the labor market. Also, every education lesson/unit you attend is an important part of the success of your TimeBank, as single parents become more skilled in developing the TimeBank and in running it.

Unit 1	Communication competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - key competence throughout the process - communication with other members - communication with management - arranging and offering jobs on the platform
Unit 2	Mathematical science and technology competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - counting of hours worked - reconciliation of hours worked - monitoring of financing - financial aspects of projects (budgets)
Unit 3	Digital competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use of the platform itself - social media management - communication with other members - creating new content

Unit 4	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishing a social business - community management - sustainability of "TimeBank" - job creation
Unit 5	Learning to Learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making a job description that you offer - creating CVs and job applications that you want and can do - highlighting the skills and competencies that you can offer - setting your own goals and community goals
Unit 6	Social and civic competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mapping resources that already exist in the community - Self-identity □ discover individual characteristics and how to describe yourself and how to build the characters and "faces" of your community - what are your values and principles

7) Timebank platform

As part of the Parentbank project, according to the TimeBank model, the Parentbank digital platform was created. See more on this [LINK](#). The approach on which this model is based is: increasing the availability of childcare to single parents, encouraging and providing them with space to become aware of, and developing and using the various skills they possess. It also provides more time and personal resources that parents can use to meet other needs and provides them with support in entering the labor market and further training.

The timebank is, therefore, a system of operation that functions based on reciprocity, in which hours serve as currency. It is a kind of social currency that allows people with a certain skill group to exchange their working hours with someone who has another skill group, without exchanging money.

After a simple process of applying for membership in the Parentbank community (platform), members have the opportunity to introduce themselves to all community members, list their talents, interests and skills, location, announce what services they offer to other members, announce their requirements or needs for certain services, and connect and communicate with other parents about common topics. Services can be advertised and claimed according to different categories, from art (e.g., instrument instruction or making an object), business services (finance, marketing, IT, etc.), housework, plumbing services, painting, electrical work, etc.), home help (e.g., babysitting, cooking, pet care, hair care and beauty services) to transport,

recreation or health care services. The platform can record the number of hours exchanged, so members can follow their work, but also see the experiences of other members, which can help them decide whom to contact directly for the work they need or want to offer. The platform offers various other possibilities, and each member can ask for the help of a coordinator or customer support for any questions or difficulties in the functioning of the platform.

8) The support system in your surrounding

There are several institutions and/or associations that work on activities for parents. Ask them for support, help or advice:

ROMANIA

- **The General Directions of Social Assistance and Child Protection** from different sectors of Bucharest (such as DGASPC sector 1, DGASPC sector 2, DGASPC sector 4, etc.) and from different counties of Romania (e.g. DGASPC Cluj, DGASPC Arges, DGASPC Olt, etc.) who work with and support single parents who are in disadvantaged situations
- NGOs in the social field who work with and support single parents who are in disadvantaged situations (e.g. Fundatia Sf. Dimitrie, Fundatia FARA, Salvati Copiii, Fundatia Copii in Dificultate, Fundatia Inima pentru Inima, the Romanian Red Cross, Asociatia 'Copii fara copilarie din judetul Valcea', etc.)

LITHUANIA

- Kaunas city, Kaunas region, Jonava, Prienai, Kaisiadorys Social services centers, which work with families and people receiving social benefits.
- Women NGOs in the social field from the SIF network working with disadvantaged learners including single parents.
- Lithuanian Labour Exchange Office Kaunas department works with all unemployed people of the Kaunas region including single parents.

BULGARIA

- **RUNI Centre** works in non-formal education, early language learning and national and international projects in the sphere of VET education. The main goals of its activities are gaining knowledge, soft skills and qualifications which help people adapt to the dynamics of social changes and requirements of the labor market and mainly works with adults from disadvantaged backgrounds like single parents.
- **Sdrudzenie "Kapka pokapka"** an NGO that works on national and European projects in VET education for the well-being of children, young people and the elderly. The organizations contribute with the dissemination of project outputs and support the selection of beneficiaries and the piloting of the online timebank.

- **Children's Complex in Chepelare** supports single parents coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and offer different arts and crafts and sport activities for their children.

SPAIN

- **SAE local points** (Servicio Andaluz de Empleo) in the regions of Malaga and Granada
They are working with single parents in regards to their employment
- **Municipalities** in the regions of **Malaga** and **Granada** - Their social workers are working with single parents to improve their social inclusion
- **Primary and Secondary Schools** in the regions of Malaga and Granada
Teachers may promote the project to single parents to support them
- **Malaga and Granada Acoge** - Association supporting disadvantaged people here in the region
- **Red Cross** - Supporting disadvantaged people

GREECE

- **Syllogos Monogoneiikis Oikogeneias & Gynaikas** - is an organization that works directly with single parents from vulnerable groups.
- **Solidarity Now** is a non-governmental organization, committed to improving vulnerable people's lives to pursue a better future, with dignity and perspectives.
- **Pigi Agapis**, an organization that supports single-parent families.
- **Hellenic Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs.**
- **Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE)** - The Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE) is a legal entity acting as a body governed by public law, representing the first level of local authorities in Greece (municipalities).
- **Kivotos tou Kosmou** - Non-profit organization supporting children and mothers.
- **Médecins du Monde – Greece (MdM-Greece)** - The first and foremost mission of Doctors of the World is to provide medical care. Actions though are not limited to medical treatment: Always based on the medical experience, the organization is vocal against the obstruction of access to healthcare, against to violation of human right and dignity.

CROATIA

Parent's Association "Step by Step" implements a program called MOM IS MOM for providing help and support to underage pregnant women and parents with the aim of preventing risky behaviours of young people and providing psychosocial help and support to underage pregnant women, parents and their families. As part of that project, a partnership was concluded with Children's Home Zagreb - The Mother's Home, The Social Welfare Centre Zagreb and Public Open University Zagreb.

- **Children's Home Zagreb - The Mother's Home** provides accommodation for mothers without adequate housing conditions, including underage pregnant women and mothers with children. Through the activities within the MOM IS MOM project, this institution strives to provide intensive psychosocial support to mothers whose right to accommodation in the home is expiring, and who need intensive support, counselling services and support in coping with new circumstances.
- **The Social Welfare Centre Zagreb** is a public institution that decides on social welfare rights and provides social services to particularly vulnerable groups of citizens. Within the project MOM IS MOM, Social Welfare Centre Zagreb participates in the identification of beneficiaries and refers underage and young pregnant women and parents to counselling. Other social services include all activities, measures and programs designed to prevent, identify and address the problems and difficulties of individuals, families, groups and communities, and to improve their quality of life in the community (e.g. First Social Service (Information, Identification And Initial Needs Assessment), Counselling And Assistance, Psychosocial Support, Early Intervention, Assistance In Inclusion In Educational And Regular Education Programs (Integration) And Family Mediation)
- **Parents in Action - RODA** is a group of interested citizens who are committed to a dignified pregnancy, parenthood and childhood in Croatia.
- **The FLIGHT** is a non-profit organization that is continuously working to improve the quality of life of single parents, keeping in mind the needs of parents and their children.
- **Club of pregnant women and parents Split** aims to humanize childbirth, promote and support breastfeeding, exercise the right to informed choice and create a social environment in which all children and parents will have equal rights to protection, support and education to realize their maximum potential.
- **Growing Up Together Centre for Parenting Support** is a programme which strives to provide parents with the exchange of information, knowledge, skills and support, enabling them to fulfill their parental responsibilities and promote the personal growth and development of competences of both the parent and the child.
- **Klubko – Parents Hub** seeks to respond to the needs of parents, provide support in the community, provide a safe place for parents to socialize and meet with professionals.
- **"Hour after hour" Pula-** the first organized time bank in Croatia

To start developing your community, use the resources that currently exist, establish a smaller community, and build on it. Parent Bank project organizations that have worked on developing and educating other documents will be happy to help you start a business or your Timebank and share your first successes. Below is information from their pages that can be used to promote the first activities, but also as examples from the practice of how to create your own social networks and posts on them. By clicking on the logo, you will access the web page of the organization, and by clicking on the Facebook icon, their official Facebook page.

BULGARIA	LITHUANIA	ROMANIA
 	 	 ASOCIATIA HABILITAS Centru de resurse și formare profesională 
SPAIN	GREECE	CROATIA
 	 	 

Regarding the sustainability of your community, consult the Guide (IO3) on project web site - [here](#) we have developed, but also contact those people who have been with you at training and workshops to help you with this. Be independent, say your ideas, but also point out ambiguities and ask for help.

9) Conclusion

Timebanking is a mean of exchange used to organize people and organizations around a purpose, where time is the principal currency. For every hour participants 'deposit' in a timebank, perhaps by giving practical help and support to others, they can 'withdraw' equivalent support in a time when they are in need. In each case, the participant decides what they can offer. Everyone's time is equal, so one hour of my time is equal to one hour of your time, irrespective of whatever we choose to exchange. Because timebanks are just systems of exchange, they can be used in an almost endless variety of settings.

Your time bank is a product of the community it serves, which means it should always be driven by the needs of its members – and this is the perfect basis for a business of any kind. Apart from everyone in the community getting access to the services they need; this creates an opportunity to create jobs. According to Slay and Robinson (2011), **economic benefit** of timebanking is that all hours of work are equal: 1 hour = 1-time credit Powell and Dalton (2003) argue that the system, therefore, favors those with more time and it creates non-market wealth. **Community building and increases in social capital** - Time credits 'link people in a social network; each act of caring triggers a reciprocal act so that every transaction has social capital built in' (Cahn, 2004). It recognizes that everyone, even those defined as disadvantaged or vulnerable, has something worthwhile to contribute. All time is valued equally in timebanking. Even in traditional volunteering, there is a one-way transaction taking place, which can reinforce social hierarchies (Letcher and Perlow, 2009, p.2). Timebanking, on the other hand, is a 'two-way street', a reciprocal arrangement: power differentials between people are minimized (Powell and Dalton, 2003). It is based on the premise that giving and receiving are simple and fundamental ways of generating trust between people and views people as assets rather than defining them by deficits. 'This is especially important for individuals and communities that have been marginalized and, in the process, their capacities have been overshadowed by their problems and needs' (Powell and Dalton, 2003, p.93). The socially excluded become providers of useful services.

Timebanks should always look for ways to grow a community and recruit new members. When starting a business, existing members (managers, members, ...) should make one "working meeting" where they will make an action plan to gather new members. Develop a plan of how and who, which target group you want, who will be in charge.

All are providers and consumers of services, building mutual trust within communities. Seyfang (2003, p.699) points to the urgent policy interest in 'nurturing community self-help and active citizenship to overcome social exclusion'.

Based on education on lifelong learning competencies and project-based learning methods from the beginning of creating your community, managing, maintaining and recruiting new members, are linked to these key-competences. Disadvantaged single parents who join the TimeBank community can benefit from these courses, which can be also attended virtually. Every single parent can build up their skills for personal development or support on the labor market. Also, every education lesson/unit you attend is an important part of the success of your TimeBank, as single parents become more skilled in developing the TimeBank and in running it. Consult the table on page seven.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND INQUIRIES you can visit:

Project web site – <https://www.parentbank.eu/>

Project social media - <https://www.facebook.com/ParentBank-110765153856614>

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