

The political potential of time banking

Dr Gradon Diprose
Open Polytechnic, Aotearoa New Zealand

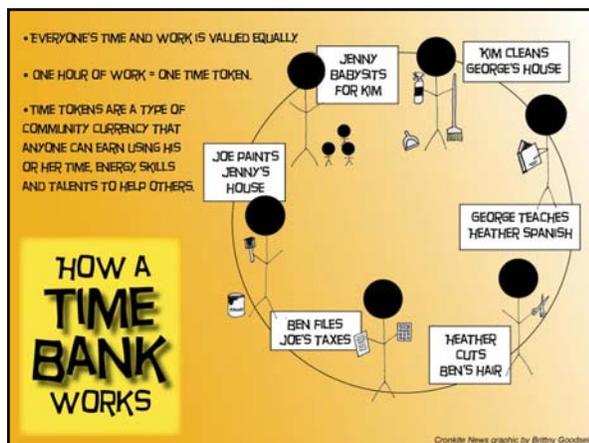
The work society

Since the GFC the contradictions surrounding waged work have increased

However waged work is more important than ever. Weeks (2011) describes this as the 'Work Society', characterised by:

- Waged work framed as morally necessary
- Waged work as the right to/of citizenship
- Waged work as the primary way to participate in a capitalist system

Vrasti (2013a, para 2) suggests there is 'a crisis of a society built around work as the only legitimate point of access for income, status and citizenship rights'



Membership processes

Wellington Timebank membership processes consist of the following:

- \$5-10 initial fee
- Two referee checks
- Police check
- Interview with the Timebank Coordinator
- Provision of membership pack (includes instructions on how to use online 'banking' software and a code of conduct for trading)

Code of conduct

As a member of Wellington Timebank I agree to:

- Understand that trades where goods or money such as petrol, materials, ingredients or the like need to be paid for by the person receiving and should be agreed to before the trade
- Members should not put their safety or the safety of others at risk by their actions during trading
- Respect all other members' privacy and/or confidentiality
- Respect other members' viewpoints and not pressure another participant to accept my religious beliefs or political views
- Not involve my friends or relatives in timebanking by bringing them to a member's home or venue of exchange
- Not solicit or accept money, gifts or gratuities from other participants
- Refrain from consuming a member's food or drink unless invited to do so
- A no smoking policy when trading in members homes or at the venue of time exchange
- Traders should not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs during a trade
- Not use any possessions of the member trader, including the telephone, unless given clear permission to do so
- Always treat fellow participants with compassion and respect

Framing Timebanking

- ⊗ Hannah Mackintosh: "are you guys anarchists?" and I was sort of like, 'well no. I can see why you'd think that but no'. And I find that it speaks to a lot of different groups. It speaks to people in different ways' (Pers Comm).
- ⊗ Member: '[Hannah Mackintosh] wanted some interview questions to ask a Timebank member for an article and I said something like "oh what about a question like "do you think this just a crazy hippie thing or not"'. And she was like "oh really?". And I was like "well I think so", I think that maybe not the younger generation, but I think my parents would be like that, maybe the older generation. Or just, and maybe like a lot of my friends who aren't or don't do community stuff...
- ⊗ Gradon: Would they be uncomfortable with the Timebank somehow or just don't need it in their lives?
- ⊗ Member: I think um, don't need it, don't have time, what kind of people are in it, who am I going to have in my house, could be anybody? I have one or two friends I could imagine would be a little suspect of people (Pers Comm).



Conclusion

- ⊗ Wellington Timebank membership initiation processes encourage people to re-think how they value labour
- ⊗ The refusal to categorise the practice through existing political terms maintains a certain openness in the collective
- ⊗ The Wellington Timebank enables members to partially move beyond the shaming and disciplining narratives of the work society

References

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