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# KEY INDICATORS OF TIMEBANK PARTICIPATION

Ed Collom and Michael Marks

## Introduction

At the “Key Indicators of Time Bank Participation” workshop, doctors Ed Collom and Michael Marks presented a variety of ways of analyzing the activity of Time Bank members. Their analyses, they said, can be used to see how Time Bank participation is working, to identify areas of improvement, and to provide proof of its successes. In the first part of the workshop, Dr. Collom presented his analyses from transaction data spanning 13 years in two Time Bank communities: Hour Exchange Portland, in Maine, and Community Exchange, part of the Lehigh Valley Health Network in Allentown, Pennsylvania. From this data he was able to identify the following 11 **key indicators of TimeBank**

### Participation:

1. Number of active members per quarter
2. Quarter of first transaction
3. Total number of hours (Time Dollars earned) per quarter
4. 13 service categories
5. Total hours of member participation
6. Average hours per quarter
7. Account balance
8. Number of contacts (member size)
9. Number of reciprocated contacts
10. Ego-network density (measures how many transactions are taking place between the members with whom one trades)
11. Diversity of services exchanged

Dr. Collom provided graphs and statistics from these categories which he said would require further discussions as to their meaning, but which could lead to effective “interventions.” All of this data, Dr. Collom said, should be available in the back-end of the various time tracking systems that are being used. Therefore, other Time Banks should be able to conduct the same kinds of analyses. He did note, however, that there were some limitations to his research. This included the fact that some members reciprocate informally, or they become friends and see the transactions as favors, or they forget to record their time, or they do not care about Time Dollars—all of which lead to unreported exchanges. He also noted that if other information was collected, like income level, sex, race, and level of education, then more powerful and detailed analyses could be created. A member in the audience from the U.K. indicated that in some of the U.K. Time Banks the total number of hours is so large, that it may be more beneficial for them to look at total number of transactions; Dr. Collom agreed. Many members in the audience were interested in learning more about the **13 service categories**. Dr. Collom said he went through thousands of transaction records one-by-one to come up with the following categories:

1. Sales and rentals of items
2. Events and program support
3. Health and Wellness

## Participants

Leander Bindewald  
John E. Farley  
Sarah McGowan  
Emilie Dubois  
John Schaeffer  
Gavin Atkins  
Brenda Serrano  
Devorah Davis  
Kathy Perlow  
Marc Brakken  
Marie Goodwin  
Nelson Carrasco  
Kim Hodge



4. Office and administrative support
5. Tutoring, consultation, and personal services
6. Construction, installation, maintenance, and yard
7. Cleaning, light tasks, and errands
8. Food preparation and service
9. Transportation and moving
10. Beauty and spa
11. Computers and technology
12. Arts and crafts production
13. Entertainment and social contact

### **Co-Production in Real Life**

In the second part of the workshop, Dr. Marks presented a case study he had done called “An Empirical Investigation of Co-Production Interventions for Involuntary Youth in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems.” In this study, he was looking to see what happens when co-production is not engaged out of one’s own desire, but rather imposed upon someone else, such as in the cases of judges mandating participation in a co-production program as part of the sentencing for a criminal offense. He looked at high risk children in these settings using a case study/action science approach—where the researcher is allowed to work as an internal consultant for the project. These children were placed in two co-production settings where autonomy building intervention practices were in place, such as trying to foster youth voice, choice, and opportunities for leadership. Dr. Marks found that while there was a high dropout rate—even though the program was mandated—there was some movement from involuntary to semi-voluntary engagement. Some of the children were able to find value in the programs, he said, and there were some indicators that behavior was enhanced, even if overall youth engagement was not consistent.

Staff members working with these programs were transformed as well. While some staff did not like co-production, overall staff efficiency and sense of empowerment increased. This was important, Dr. Marks indicated, because there tends to be a high burn-out rate for staff working with high-risk youth.

To summarize, Dr. Marks said that funding authorities would want to see Dr. Collom’s work, but that there was also benefit to his type of work—even for funding—because it shows with real life examples how co-production is working.