UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
at Cheltenham and Gloucester

Evaluating the Impact of a New Model of Time Banking

Final report

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Contents

Executive Summary i
Acknowledgements iii
1.0 Introduction and background 1
1.1 Evaluation aims and objectives 1
1.2 Structure and purpose of this report 2
2.0 Methodology 3
2.1 Process evaluation – participants experience 3
2.2 Social Return Assessment 4
2.3 Evaluation Ethics 7
3.0 Evaluation Findings 9
3.1 Participants experience 9
3.1.1 Focus groups 9
3.1.2 Case studies 12
3.2 Social Return Assessment 15
A. Exploring the Change 15
B. Measuring the Change 19
4.0 Conclusions and recommendations 24
4.1 Conclusions: 24
Appendices 26
Appendix A: Focus Group Schedule 26
Appendix B: Consent form 27
Appendix C: Outcomes survey Letter and Survey 28

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Theory of Change Diagram

List of Tables

Table 2.1: Process of creating the Theory of Change (ToC)

Table 3.1: Participant experience- key themes and quotations

Table 3.2: Outcomes map for Fair Shares

Table 3.3: Indicators and corresponding change values

Table 3.4: Computation of benefit –to-investment for Fair Shares

Table 3.5: Fair Shares Gloucestershire – SRA Impact Map

Definition of Abbreviations / Terms

1. **FS** - Fair Shares
2. **FG** (Focus Group) - Small number of people brought together with a moderator to focus on a specific topic. Focus groups aim at a discussion instead of on individual responses to formal questions, and produce qualitative data (preferences and beliefs) that may or may not be representative of the general population.
3. **CS** (Case Study) - a case study is a research method involving an up-close, in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject of study, as well as its related contextual conditions.
4. **SRA** (Social Return Assessment) - An outcome-focused methodology for understanding the wider benefits to society of a given intervention
5. **Attribution** - How much of the outcomes were caused by Fair Shares
6. **Deadweight** - What would have happened even if Fair Shares activities had not taken place
7. **Discount rate** - Interest rate used to discount future costs and benefits to a present value
8. **Displacement** – Extent to which the outcomes have displaced other outcomes
9. **Drop off** - The deterioration of outcomes over time
10. **Indicator** - A metric to measure changes in the outcomes
11. **PV** (Present value) - Value in today's currency of money that is expected in the future
12. **ToC** (Theory of Change) - A process for defining and understanding short, medium and long-term goals and the factors which help, or detract, from their realisation.

Executive Summary

In April 2015, Fair Shares commissioned the University of Gloucestershire to evaluate the Impact of a New Model of Time Banking as a means of establishing evidence on whether the programme is a fulfilling its aims to proactively support (primarily) older people and those with long-term health conditions through small clusters at a localised level.

The project aimed to:

1. Monitor changes in participants' well-being and resilience;
2. Explore participants' experiences of the time bank scheme, investigate the project's impact on people's lives, and gather feedback from participants;
3. Assess the project's cost savings and value for money.

A mixed methods approach was taken, involving case studies, focus groups and interviews, and development of a Social Return Assessment to identify and capture the appropriate outcomes experienced by participants, and to provide a value for money assessment of FS activities.

A range of benefits linked to participating in FS activities were identified. These include improved well- being, increased sense of security and belonging. The majority of participants were elderly people or people with complex health problems and taking part in FS resulted in increased social participation which had positive effects on their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging and purpose. The intimate, family feeling of FS was also regarded highly.

Improved skills and confidence through volunteering and interaction were identified as strong outcomes, especially in the Gloucester cluster where, in addition to a wider portfolio of 'hands on' activities, there is a more diverse group of participants with respect to age and gender.

Fair Shares clusters provide a social support network and encourage participation and volunteering of individuals who would often remain excluded, in particular the elderly and people with disabilities, or long term illness. Social interaction is considered the most important and dominant feature in respect of their liaison with FS. Time credits and exchanges are not seen as driving element.

Areas for improvement surfaced as well, especially during the final stages of evaluation. Most notably a need to improve methods of communication, build links between participants and FS staff, link 'in volunteers' and 'out volunteers' as well as different time banks in Gloucestershire and find ways to make FS more cohesive across the county were recognised.

With respect to identifying measurable outcomes, three outcome domains were identified through a journey of change exercise seeking to explore relevant outcomes in a chain of events. These were health and well-being; community life; and personal/social skills.

With respect to the efficacy of Fair Shares in addressing and alleviating issues around mental health and well-being, Fair Shares was shown to be having a demonstrable impact on the health and well-being of its members, and most notably in terms of reduced social isolation, improved confidence and purpose, increased personal resilience and a general alleviation in the symptoms of anxiety (feeling on edge) and depression (having trouble concentrating).

SRA findings suggest that every £1 invested in Fair Shares returns £1.04 to society in the social value across the three outcome domains of health and wellbeing, community life and personal and social skills. Subject to the limitations of case study scope and related issues, this represents an indicative 104% return on investment for Fair Shares Gloucestershire.

In consulting participants on the potential for FS to foster social enterprise, strong emphasis was placed on having a permanent FS meeting place, for example a 'café' run by volunteers where homemade cakes and preserves could be sold; setting up affordable service provision that would assist people with disabilities and elderly; and supporting day trips as means of addressing loneliness especially focused on elderly and people with health problems.

Acknowledgements

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We also thank all of the participants who gave their time to speak with the evaluation team about their experiences of Fair Shares and to those who completed the surveys.

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1.0 Introduction and background

Aims and objectives

Adopting a mixed methods approach, the proposed research focused on the evaluation of Fair Shares Gloucestershire project - a neighborhood system supporting older people and those with long-term health conditions through small clusters of time banking.

1.1 Evaluation aims and objectives

The project had the following three Aims:

1. Monitor changes in participants' well-being and resilience;
2. Explore participants' experiences of the time bank scheme, investigate the project's impact on people's lives, and gather feedback from participants;
3. Assess the project's cost savings and value for money.

Which were achieved through the following Objectives:

Objective 1: **Project efficacy** - evaluated by tracking changes in participants' well-being and resilience. Over the 3-year period, two surveys were administered to 30 people at the local level. Data was collected (by Fair Shares) at two time points over the period, in order to gather 'distance travelled' data to enable estimates of change in well-being and resilience This data also informed the simplified SROI estimates.

Objective 2: **Participant experience**

Detailed case studies were developed to explore participants' experiences of the new time banking scheme. Focus group sessions were deployed to investigate the project's impact on people's lives and feedback gathered from participants. Over the 3-year period, a total of four case studies were developed and five focus groups conducted.

Objective 3: **Simplified Social Return on Investment (SROI)**

Focus groups in the first year encompassed a theory of change exercise to explore and map the outcome of Fair Shares for participants over the short, medium and longer term. A limited range of indicators were identified to measure change in the salient outcomes as part of the surveys and case study work.

Salient outcomes and corresponding indicator values were identified and used to populate a Social Return Assessment (SRA) – a simplified SROI model - incorporating estimates of deadweight, attribution and drop-off to produce indicative benefit-investment ratios and in turn an indication of value for money of Fair Shares Gloucestershire.

1.2 Structure and purpose of this report

The purpose of this final report is to:

1. Present the methodology and findings from the impact evaluation of a New Model of Time Banking
2. Provide an overall summary and recommendations.

The remainder of this report is presented according to the following structure:

Section	Contents
Section 2	Describes the methods that were deployed to support the implementation of the evaluation
Section 3	Presents evaluation findings from the analysis of the focus groups, case studies and the SRA
Section 4	Summarises the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation

2.0 Methodology

This section outlines the evaluation methodology and presents this with respect to each of the evaluation components.

2.1 Process evaluation – participants experience

2.1.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups were deployed to explore participants' experiences and to investigate the project's impact on people's lives and gather feedback from participants. Focus groups explicitly use group interaction to help understand participants' behaviours, their understanding and perception of an intervention, at a level that would not be possible with an interview. Focus groups are ideal for exploring people's opinions, wishes and concerns.[1] A focus group schedule (see Appendix A) was designed to investigate Fair Shares impact, the positive and challenging factors of the scheme, together with general and specific perceptions, and recommendations for the future.

Information concerning the purpose of the evaluation was provided to all participants in addition to a voluntary informed Consent Form (See Appendix B). Data were analysed using an inductive thematic approach[2] which was employed to organise, identify and report themes within the data. Focus group transcripts were read and re-read and initial ideas noted down following which initial codes were generated and then collated into emergent themes.

Over the 3-year period, a total of five focus groups were conducted. Three focus group sessions were conducted in the first year of the project implementation, and subsequently two focus groups were held in the later stage of the project. A total of 44 participants took part.

2.1.2 Case studies

Case studies were used as a principal and concurrent means of establishing evidence concerning the processes and outcomes associated with the Fair Shares New Time Banking

[1] Barbour R.S., Kitzinger, J.(1999) Developing Focus Group Research; Politics, Theory and Practice, SAGE Publication
[2] Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.

approach. Owing to the variety of needs of participants, including complex health related issues, the selection of case study participants was undertaken by the FS project manager. Following identification by the FS manager, initial contact was made either by email or telephone in which information concerning the purpose of the evaluation was provided to all participants. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from participants during face-to-face interviews which were guided through a semi-structured interview schedule. The schedule explored general and specific perceptions concerning the impact of participation in FS activities and facilitated a discussion about their personal experiences. It also helped to establish evidence concerning the extent to which FS activities were responsible for how participants felt about themselves and any changes they perceived to have happened as a consequence of being part of FS community. Two case study participants were asked to keep a brief records of the FS related activities that they took part in for 3 to 4 weeks prior to the interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. One interview was conducted as a video recording where two FS time brokers were present as well.

2.2 Social Return Assessment

A Social Return Assessment (SRA) of Fair Shares Gloucestershire was undertaken, drawing on the consultation with participants over the course of the evaluation. An SRA follows the principles of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework, which is used to measure and account for the broader concept of value.

As an outcomes focussed methodology, SROI seeks to understand and value the most important changes that occur from an organisation, project or programme, rather than valuing only those things that are easy or straightforward to measure. It is also designed to be stakeholder driven, relying on consultation with those who are experiencing change and ensuring that recommendations are made to facilitate targeted and effective change for society. The main stages of SROI are set out below, together with a summary of the principles which underpin how the model should be applied.

Main stages of the SROI	**Seven principles of SROI**
1. Establishing scope and identifying stakeholders	Involve stakeholders
2. Exploring and mapping the outcomes	Understand what changes
3. Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value	Value what matters
	Include only what is material

4. Establishing impact	Avoid over claiming Be transparent
5. Calculating the SROI	Verify the result
6. Reporting, using and embedding	

The SRA was developed by the CCRI in a Lottery funded action research project in which Fair Shares took part as a partner Social Purpose Organisation (SPO)[34] in response to a need for more simplicity and flexibility in capturing and demonstrating the impacts of third sector organisations.

The SRA allows capture of the most important outcomes of a project or activity, and not just the things that are easy to measure. In so doing it allows the social, economic and environmental impacts to be assessed in a useful and meaningful way. And if required the value of these impacts can be compared to the initial investment to produce a ratio of benefits to investment.

The tool involves three 'stages' of work, with the second and third stages providing further sophistication to stage A. In this case level 3 was undertaken.

Stage A……. Exploring (and describing) the Change Stage B……. Measuring the Change Stage C……. Valuing the Change	Level 1: comprises *only* Stage A Level 2 comprises Stage A *plus* B Level 3 comprises Stage A *plus* B *plus* C

Stage A – Exploring and describing the change

Following some initial scoping this first stage of the SRA was principally about understanding what had changed for people as a result of Fair Shares, and why. Information was gathered through stakeholder consultation using storyboard workshops to understand these outcomes, how stakeholders might be affected and over what time frame the outcomes

[3] Courtney, P. Kambites, C and Moseley, M. (2014) Proving Our Value: The Gloucestershire Action Research Project. Final Report to South West Forum. Lottery Funded.
[4] Courtney, P. (2017) Conceptualising Social value for the Third Sector and Developing Methods for its Assessment. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations,* https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-017-9908-3

might play out. It was also about understanding how the outcomes might relate to each other and whether or how one outcome might lead to another, and how they played out over the short, medium and longer term. The process of acquiring the data and populating the resulting outcomes map is summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.2: Process of creating the Theory of Change (ToC)

Criteria	Information
Rationale for conducting the ToC exercise	To map out the likely outcomes of the project as perceived by FS stakeholders.
Stakeholder sample	People who **(1)** were active participants in FS (n= 26); **(2)** were locally responsible FS activities (n = 4 time brokers).
Data collection	FG/workshops led by the evaluation team using a standardised questionnaire and template to outline short, intermediate and longer term outcomes. Discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy.
Data analysis	All data were analysed using thematic analyses approach • Data were explored to identify the main types of outcomes that were relevant to the participants' in the short and medium to longer term.

Stage B - Measuring the change

This stage of the SRA sought to measure the outcomes identified in Stage A through the development of indicators of change for the outcomes deemed pertinent to measure. Not all of the outcomes were deemed significant enough to measure and measuring some outcomes may have led to double counting and in turn over estimating the impact.

In simple terms, indicators are ways of establishing that change has indeed taken place, and its rough magnitude. To capture this data a distance travelled survey was designed which used a series of statements relating to the indicators and asked respondents to rank where

they were for each on a 1-10 scale at that particular point in time. The surveys were administered twice over the course of the evaluation, in 2016 and 2017. A copy of the distance travelled survey is contained in Appendix C.

Stage C - Valuing the change

This stage was undertaken to produce a ratio of benefits to investment for Fair Shares. For example, a ratio of 2:1 would indicate that for every £1 invested in a project, activity or programme, £2 of social value is delivered. Although outcomes are monetised, it is about value, rather than money, which is simply used as a common unit to value the outcomes identified in Stage A and subsequently measured in Stage B.

In order to identify appropriate monetary values, financial proxies – or approximations – were identified for each relevant outcome. In reality there is no such thing as the ideal proxy, as in the real market, value is highly subjective and the value of something is really only determined by what someone is prepared to pay for it, which is not the same for everybody.

The calculation of a ratio of benefits-to-investment necessitated an estimate of the approximate amount that has been invested in Fair Shares over the reference period, which in this case was 3 years. For the sake of simplicity, this estimate was based on the value of voluntary income net of staff costs, as detailed in the annual report and financial statements for the previous 3 years.

Other factors taken into account in calculating a social return on investment for Fair Shares were deadweight – what would have happened anyway in the absence of Fair Shares activities, and attribution – the extent to which the observed change could be attributed to Fair Shares as opposed to other activities or interventions. Both metrics were estimated by drawing on previous, more detailed SROIs of activities in Gloucestershire, in this case that relating to the Active Together programme[5].

2.3 Evaluation Ethics

Ethical approval for all aspects of the present study was given by the University of Gloucestershire Research Ethics Committee (Ref.code:REC.08.15).

[5] Baker, C, Courtney, P, Kubinakova, K et al (2017) Gloucestershire Active Together Evaluation. Final Report to Gloucestershire County Council.

All appropriate ethical guidelines were observed and taken into account to protect participants involved in the study. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were assured through adherence to the University's ICT security system protocols including password protected computer access. All written material was stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office and participant identities were protected using pseudonyms known only to the evaluation team.

3.0 Evaluation Findings

3.1 Participants experience

3.1.1 Focus groups

Focus groups were used to investigate the project's impact on people's lives. Over the period of the project implementation five focus groups were conducted. Data were analysed as described in Methodology section.

Social aspects were recognised as most important outcome to which majority of participants made repeated references. This includes having opportunities to come out of isolation, leave their house, interact with people and make friends which have the potential to create long lasting connection between people.

Social interaction was the key driver of participation in FS activities. This demonstrated the need for contact with other people, sharing time together and providing opportunity to develop and deepen friendships. FS activities act as a catalyst for interaction between people in which activities are not ends in themselves but a means of developing sense of connection, mutual trust and happiness.

Social outcomes are important for helping people to feel less lonely and be appreciated and valued for who they are. This is particularly important for those with complex health issues – physical and mental. Some of the activities also provide a most welcome breathing space for friends and family who act as carers.

A range of other benefits linked to participating in FS activities were identified. These include improved well- being, increased sense of security and belonging. The majority of participants were elderly people or people with complex health problems and taking part in FS resulted in increased social participation which had positive effects on their self-esteem, confidence and sense of belonging and purpose. The intimate, family feeling of FS was also regarded highly.

Improved skills and confidence through volunteering and interaction were identified as strong outcomes, especially in the Gloucester cluster where, in addition to a wider portfolio of 'hands on' activities, is a more diverse group of participants with respect to age and gender.

Flexibility in terms of participation in FS activities was highly valued by participants, as the scheme arrangement works well for people who are unable to take part regularly due to their heath, or family commitments.

Fair Shares clusters provide a social support network and encourage participation and volunteering of individuals who would often remain excluded, in particular the elderly and people with disabilities, or long term illness. Social interaction is considered the most important and dominant feature in respect of their liaison with FS. Time credits and exchanges are not seen as driving element.

Despite the fact that significant number of positive benefits was identified and valued by participants, areas for improvement surfaced as well, especially during the final stages of evaluation. Most notably a need to improve methods of communication, build links between participants and FS staff, link 'in volunteers' and 'out volunteers' as well as different time banks in Gloucestershire and find ways to make FS more cohesive across the county were recognised. Similarly, a lack of appreciation and feeling of not being welcomed by FS staff resonated strongly with some participants and insufficient resources in terms of funding and staff capacity were outlined as a barrier to fulfilment of ideas that volunteers have in respect of FS growth and sustainability. Key themes that emerged from the data analyses are illustrated by participant quotes in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Participant experience- key themes and quotations

Key themes	Example quotations
Reduced social isolation, friendship, trust	*"MS led me being depressed and I didn't go out. My daughter suggested [FS] walks and I've been doing it ever since"* *"Coming out and meeting new people from isolation [5 years] I couldn't put a sentence together because I didn't have conversation or anything like that. It is coming out of isolation and going somewhere you've got a group of friends, people you know"* *"In terms of outcomes of friendship and things like that, that's grown organically. That's one of the benefits of FS but it starts out as being a by-*

	product but ends up being much more important than anything else"
Increased sense of security, belonging and general well-being	*"I like coming to FS meetings; I don't panic about it because all people in FS are good people- no anxiety. It is lovely, like one big family''* *"It's a bit of a lifeline actually"* *[FS]" is a safe environment, it's incredible sometimes"* *"Never know who is volunteer; it's just a group of people having a laugh- home from home"* *"I think people feel as if they can be themselves. They don't have to put on a front"*
Improved skills and confidence through volunteering and interaction	[*FS] "Got me out of the house and got my confidence back. Knew how to do DIY anyway but it made me realise that I can do it all by myself"* *"Learned to do more practical things and can do things without moaning. Now have self-belief and enjoy tasks"* *"I learned new skills, learning skills I never knew I had"*
Flexibility	*"I really like the hours; the hours are good. Flexible''* *"Fits around the school run/children illness- don't have to feel guilty about fitting to a deadline or missing a day"*

3.1.2 Case studies

Case studies were developed to comprehensively explore participants' experiences with the FS scheme. Suitable participants from all three clusters were identified by the respective FS project manager and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted by members of the evaluation team. In addition two case study participants were asked to note down all activities connected to FS for the duration of one month and reflect on them. Detailed, structured discussions were held during the interview.

The case studies analyses mirrored the focus groups in respect of themes that were identified as dominant.

Case study 1: Improved skills and confidence through volunteering and interaction

B is 30 years old. He heard about Fair Shares several of years ago from his friends. Initially he was not interested in joining, as did not find the scheme appealing. A few years ago he decided to try it and has been part of FS for nearly four years now. He takes part regularly three times a week and is involved in different activities.

"*I come here on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. Monday is our pool club and I really love it, Tuesdays because is woodwork and again Fridays. I go to City Farm on Thursday because I enjoy gardening."*

Recently he started to participate in other 'irregular' FS activities, helping out at crafts markets, and supporting FS volunteers and staff. He has learned a variety of skills (hard and soft) thanks to being involved and his confidence and self-esteem has grown.

"We've been selling some cheese boards at the market, but I also have been making some benches for a company. I've learned all the skills since I've came here, learned all my skills here.
Markets really made my confidence. I am definitely more confident speaking with people that I really don't know, like if I have to ring up my electric company and stuff like that, FS helped me to be more confident.
I get support from FS, I get support from xx, and I can come in and say I want to do this but do not know how. I find woodwork sometimes a bit difficult but xz is always there to help with things that I find quite difficult. I like woodwork, gardening, I like the hours as well, it is not too early so I can handle it. I like the way they help you, like I've said they support you there, I just really like FS and feel happy there."

Friendship:
I've made friends with teachers and members of staff. Woodwork and gardening are my favoured. I like xz and the woodwork; I like gardening, always liked gardening, but I think xx is really amazing. I don't really have a favoured among those two.

Responsibility:
I'm more responsible than I was really. I went to college and that but I wasn't that responsible. I'd thought I take a day off and that. But with FS, I really enjoy it; woodwork is fascinating, always something different. I'll make a cheeseboard, I'll make a bench, and I'll make a mirror, so you don't know what you'll be doing. I like it. You know when you wake up in the morning and think; I wonder what we will be doing today? You know. You don't know what you'll be doing and that is good.
I also feel more responsible. It has changed me and feels more responsible.

Well-being:
I think I feel like I'm having good days. Because every time I turn up at FS, the staff is there and I can talk to them and stuff. So you come in and leave happy. I think that just shows how happy I am because everyone is really brilliant, so I would say I'm just happy to be part of FS really.

Case study 2: **Reduced social isolation, social support group/network**

W moved back to Gloucestershire from London when her children were small, about 8-9 years ago. She grew up in Gloucestershire and wanted to raise her daughters in a quieter environment, enjoying a rural lifestyle. Soon after the move her health deteriorated and she suddenly faced a life battling long-term illness and disability while raising two children at the same time. She felt isolated and joining FS resulted in gaining teaching qualification and setting up a support group for disabled people.

I've met [the local FS time broker] at the children centre when my girls were toddlers and he approached me there and told me about FS. I've got involved as could meet people and make friends. Soon I've started meeting x, who's got a mild Down's syndrome. We've started to meet for an hour and now it is 30 min. a week during the school term time, helping him with his reading, literacy and school work. I've been doing it for a long time now. It started maybe in 2010. I did not expect it to go on for such a long time, but I intended to obtain a teacher qualification, meeting with x was part of that. So I have a teaching practice. I would like to be working and am qualified to teach adult literacy but it is quite a barrier to be disabled and get employed.

Apart from regular weekly literacy lessons she takes part in a variety of activities at her local FS. Being disabled and relatively young she wanted to organise a group of like-minded people with disabilities so that they could meet regularly, support each other and take part in common activities.

Last year I'd mentioned to [FS project manager] at some point that I would like to organise a group of disabled people to get them out and about a bit. She helped me and we took that on; we've organised that, we meet once a month in a café and do a few activities as well. We'd tried out these bicycles for disabled people, people on wheelchairs, electric bikes and all others. This group with disabled people, we've done a few things as a group that has been positive, even if it is occasionally. The links between people are good, and I would like to see more activities going on.

I really like the community aspect of it [FS], bringing people together, we have parties, I've met a variety of people around the town, and I've noticed that there are particularly older people and disabled people, two groups of people that can often end up quite isolated.
The community [FS] links with people; personally it encouraged me and inspired me, getting this teaching qualification.

The groups [FS] are not enclosed, quite often I meet someone new, people nowadays are more isolated and struggle to get out of the house more. It is good to know that there are people who you can ask for help, the first point of call.

Case study 3

D has been involved with FS as a volunteer since it started. She moved to Gloucestershire several years ago, but at the time of the move she was working near Birmingham. Gradually she became heavily involved with FS, running FS allotments, helping friends and neighbours and in this project helping FS to "bring streets or likeminded people together".
For her "the big thing about FS is friendship. Being with other people, it [FS] brings everybody together, people that you would not normally meet or have anything to do with".

When I moved here I was still working. Especially in the winter I had to go out very early and came back late, so did not meet the neighbours, well I did meet them but did not really get to know them. Initially it felt that I really didn't belong. We had a dog, when the dog got older, we do a lot of hillwalking, active things and the dog could not really do it anymore, so we needed someone to keep an eye on the dog. That is how it started.

I got quite involved early on. I was helped a lot with the neighbourhood project, where FS used to be based and was part of it. So I got involved with the management, when that closed I ran FS for about 2 years on my own. I kept it going until a new FS person came along; that made life a lot easier...

Currently I run the FS allotments. I have 4-5 people that come occasionally, usually when the weather is good, or good things to pick. It is quite large area. Also have students from the special needs college to come. And some of them have got autism, or some sort of disability. When they first come they would not look at you, they would not come anywhere near you. You can see the gradual change over the years, they come near you, they shake your hand and look in the eye, and it is lovely to see the change. They come every week during the term time, they like, seems to like a particular job, one likes digging, the other pushing, we've got push lawn mower, they got different tasks.
I would like GPs to refer people to the allotment. We would like to have the social prescribing, it is good and they [people] don't have to come in regular times, they can come when they feel able. Being outside is beneficial from psychological as well as physical reason.

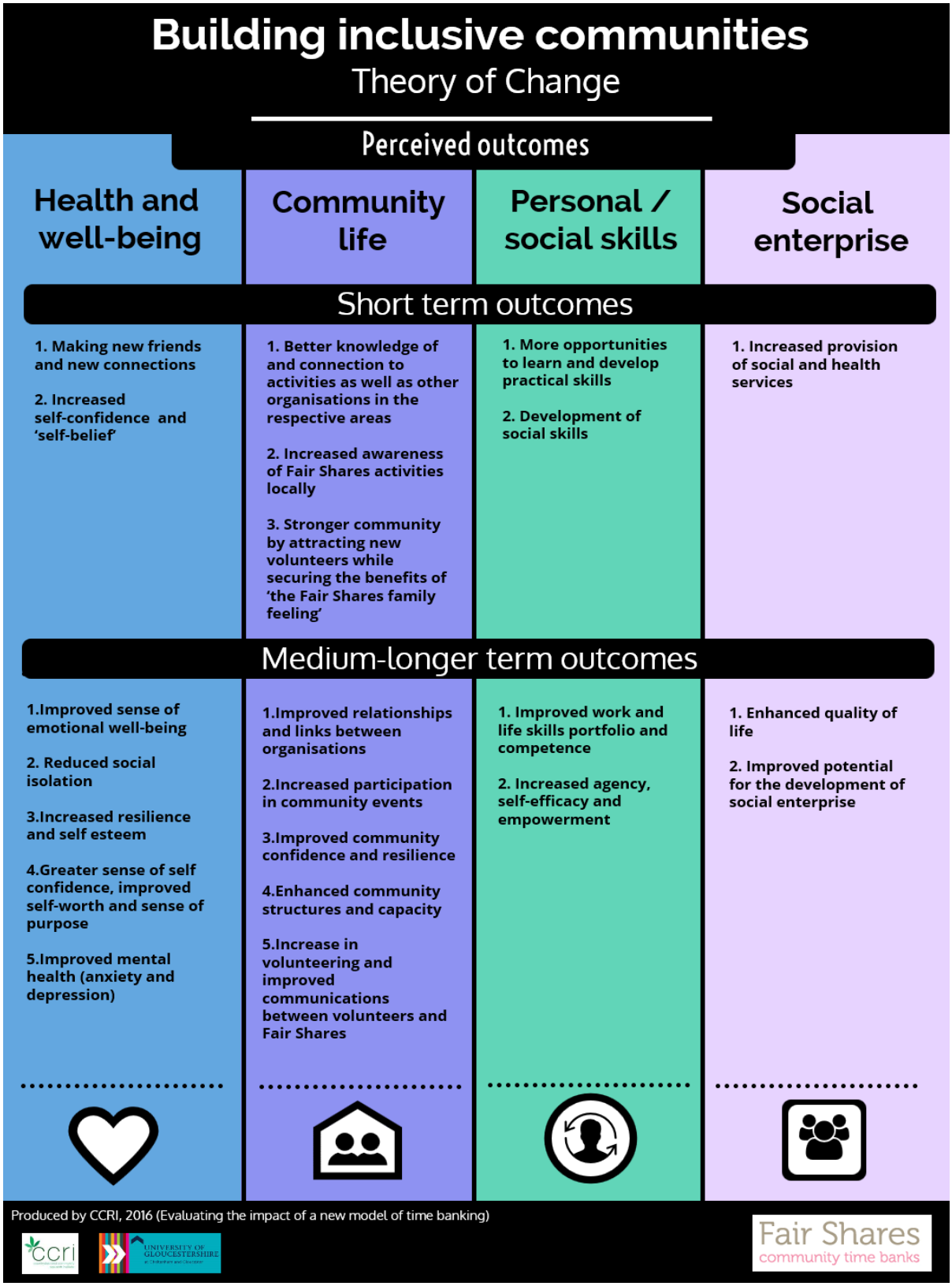
I just like to help people; it is part of my nature. I just like being with people and like to be doing things. Also it goes to the goodwill pot, when I'm old and would not be able to do things there will be someone to help me. I'm sure that there will be. I just feel so bad that people are alone and have no friends and never go out and don't see anybody…
I've made really good friends through FS, really, really good friends. It helped me to be more of the community really.

3.2 Social Return Assessment

A. Exploring the Change

Data collected for the Theory of Change (ToC) allowed for the creation of a conceptual model, presented diagrammatically in Figure 3.1 This centres around a theme of '**building inclusive communities'** and represents a high level outcome that identifies what the FS project is fundamentally about, as perceived by the stakeholders and illustrated by the following quotation:

'through participation in courses and activities [FS] aims to encourage and support those who are able to help one another…..[FS] aims to contribute to building inclusive communities, recognising that everyone has something to contribute to their community'



With respect to identifying measurable outcomes, three outcome domains were identified through a journey of change exercise seeking to explore relevant outcomes in a chain of events. These were health and well-being; community life; and personal/social skills. A

fourth domain relating to the role of Fair Shares in developing social enterprises was also identified for purely qualitative exploration. The range of outcomes identified through the journey of change exercises within each of the 3 domains are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Outcomes map for Fair Shares

Outcome themes	Short term outcome	Medium-longer term outcomes
Health and well-being	1. Making new friends and new connections; 2. Increased self-confidence and 'self-belief'	Improved sense of emotional well-being; Reduced social isolation Increased resilience and self esteem Greater sense of self confidence, improved self-worth and sense of purpose Improved mental health (anxiety and depression)
Community life	1. Better knowledge of and connection to activities as well as other organisations in the respective areas 2. Increased awareness of FS activities locally 3. Stronger community by attracting new volunteers while securing the benefits of 'family feeling' [to FS]	Improved relationships and links between organisations Increased participation in community events Improved community confidence and resilience Enhanced community structures and capacity Increase in volunteering and improved communications between volunteers and FS
Personal/social skills	2 More opportunities to learn and develop practical skills 3 Development of social skills	Improved work and life skills portfolio and competence Increased agency, self-efficacy and empowerment
Social enterprise	Increased provision of social and health services	Enhanced quality of life and Improved potential for the development of social enterprise

The survey contained one open question relating to the fourth outcome domain – social enterprise, for which qualitative and therefore exploratory (not measurable) data was gathered. Responses to these questions indicate that participants would like to see widening and strengthening of activities that are 'on offer' within FS. Strong emphasis was placed on having a permanent FS meeting place, for example a 'café' run by volunteers where homemade cakes and preserves could be sold:

'A café / community meeting place to combine with a charity shop activities = of the local tradespeople… offering local organic produce – community allotment surplus'

Setting up affordable service provision that would assist people with disabilities and elderly:

'Possibly some sort of gardening scheme to help those people who through physical or mental problems cannot manage their gardens themselves. Also, a lot of disabled and elderly people cannot manage housework anymore, perhaps a low cost regular weekly help service? Regular visits from schemes like these help to allay loneliness and isolation'.

Supporting day trips as means of addressing loneliness especially focused on elderly and people with health problems, as demonstrated by following quotation:

'Extra encouragement to people that live alone to get out and enjoy trips/days out so they can begin to make friends and improve the feeling of self-worth.'

There was a difference noted with respect to the responses between participants from Gloucester and the other two clusters within Gloucestershire. In Gloucester there is a more mixed base of people participating in respect of age and gender and broader range of activities on offer regularly throughout the week in comparison to Stroud and Stonehouse. This resulted in significantly different responses. Social enterprise as means of funding of FS activities resonated strongly in Gloucester, whereas in the other two clusters emphasis was placed on social activities focused predominantly on vulnerable people in society, as illustrated by the following quotation

'I feel that mental illness and loneliness (not just with the elderly) are massive things that need to be looked at. Whether you are 60 or 16 these 2 things affect us. We all need a friendly face, chat and a cuppa.'

B. Measuring the Change

All indicators of change for corresponding outcomes and related survey questions are given in Table 3.3, which also contains the self-reported distance travelled in the various outcomes. This is expressed as a percentage, calculated from the difference between the rankings in 2017 from the equivalent scores for 2016.

Table 3.3: Indicators and corresponding change values

Outcome	Indicator	Survey Question(s)	Distance travelled
Reduced social isolation	Reported change in feeling lonely; feeling close to people in local area	4, 6	+8%
Improved self-confidence and purpose	Reported change making a difference to life and that of others; trying something if it might not work	2, 7	+6%
Improved mental health	Reported change in feeling on edge or having trouble concentrating; feeling happy	5, 9	+8%
Improved personal resilience and self-esteem (emotional well-being)	Reported change adapting to change / bouncing back from illness	10, 11	+5%
Improved links and relationships between organisations	% organisations and interest groups reporting improved links with other groups and wider community	Secondary estimate	+14%
Improved community participation and volunteering	Reported change in volunteering and involvement in community	1	+9%

	activities		
Improved community confidence and resilience	Reported change in involvement in local events; club membership and volunteering	1	+9%
Improved physical, social and life skills and training	Reported change in having skills for work and life	3	+4%
Increased agency and empowerment	Reported change in trying something if it might not work; obtaining help and support to stay healthy and independent	7, 8	+5%

The only outcome not captured by the survey relates to the links between organisations, and this was estimated using secondary data from comparable SROIs. All other outcomes relating to individuals reveal distance travelled values of less than 10%, indicating relatively small, albeit consistent, self-reported changes in the outcomes highlighted through the theory of change.

One objective of the study was to explore the efficacy of Fair Shares in addressing and alleviating issues around mental health and well-being. The first four outcomes in the table relate to this, and show that Fair Shares is having a demonstrable impact on the health and well-being of its members, and most notably in terms of reduced social isolation, improved confidence and purpose, increased personal resilience and a general alleviation in the symptoms of anxiety (feeling on edge) and depression (having trouble concentrating).

C. Valuing the change

Financial proxies for all 9 measurable outcomes were identified and these are given in Table 3.4, together with the other principle SRA metrics, including estimates of deadweight, attribution, drop-off (the extent to which the change might be anticipated to fall away over time) and of course stakeholder numbers. Recent data indicates that there are currently around 350 members and 70 organisations in Fair Shares Gloucestershire. Together with the indicator values and financial proxies these figures are used as a basis for calculating the present value of benefits (discounted by a rate 3.5% p.a. to account for the change in the value of money over time) for each outcome, and for the entire set.

Calculation of a benefit-investment ratio for Fair Shares

All of the information set out in the previous sections was brought together in order to calculate the impact and produce an indicative SRA ratio for Fair Shares. To arrive at the ratio, the discounted value of benefits is divided by the total investment:

$$\textbf{SRA ratio} = \frac{\textbf{Present Value}}{\textbf{Value of Investment}}$$

Total PV in relation to the levels of total investment in Fair Shares is summarised in Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Computation of benefit –to-investment for Fair Shares

Total investment 2015-17	**£178,042**	
Present value (PV) of all benefits	£185,308	
Ratio of benefit-to-investment	**1.04:1**	

Findings suggest that every £1 invested in Fair Shares returns £1.04 to society in the social value across the three outcome domains of health and wellbeing, community life and personal and social skills. Subject to the limitations of case study scope and related issues, this represents an indicative 104% return on investment for Fair Shares Gloucestershire.

Table 3.5: Fair Shares Gloucestershire – SRA Impact Map

Outcome	Change Score	Deadweight	Attribution	Financial Proxy	Proxy Value (£) / Unit	Drop-off rate (Duration)	Present Value (PV)*
Reduced social isolation	0.08	0.07	0.56	Average spending on social interaction	57.2 per person p.a	0.25	£2,215
Improved self-confidence and purpose	0.06	0.07	0.56	Value attributed to positive functioning for volunteers based additional median wages earned	£2,940 per person p.a	0.25	£76,942
Improved mental health	0.08	0.07	0.56	Mental health service costs per individual (anxiety and depression)	£942 per person	1	£11,536
Improved personal resilience and self-esteem	0.05	0.07	0.56	Cost of Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to build psychological resilience and self esteem	£1,240 per person	1	£9,380
Improved links and relationships between organisations	0.14	0.11	0.53	Cost of time spent collaborating	823 per org p.a	0.25	£9,613
Improved community participation and	0.09	0.11	0.53	Value of volunteering in England	1497.6 per person p.a**	0.25	£56,797

volunteering							
Improved community confidence and resilience	0.09	0.11	0.53	Value to an individual (aged 25-49) of feeling like they belong in their neighbourhood.	2252 per person p.a	0.25	£84,554
Improved physical, social and life skills and training	0.04	0.15	0.49	Cost of employability skills training in regular sessions with councillor/coach	£1,650 per person	1	£8,556
Increased agency and empowerment	0.05	0.15	0.49	Well-being valuation of improved autonomy and control	1400 per person p.a	0.25	£25,785
Total							**£185,308**

* Discounted to 3.5% following UK HM Treasury standard
** Based on living wage rate of £7.20 per hr) multiplied by average number of hours per week volunteers undertake in UK = 4.

4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions:

- The project demonstrated that small clusters at a localised level could potentially proactively support older people and those with long-term health conditions. However, realistic time scales, sufficient management and support capacity need to be firmly in place from the start.
- Professional long-term facilitation and support is required for clusters to 'work' most efficiently and effectively.
- Application of the SRA evaluation approach enabled the evaluation to uncover and understand the complexities of the project from the perspective of those that it affected.
- A focus on outcomes revealed broad sets of benefits covering health and well-being, community and personal/social skills as well social enterprise (as a means of future funding for FS activities).
- With respect to project efficacy Fair Shares is having a demonstrable impact on the health and well-being of its members, and most notably in terms of reduced social isolation, improved confidence and purpose, increased personal resilience and a general alleviation in the symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Findings indicate that every £1 invested in Fair Shares returns £1.04 to society in the social value across the three outcome domains of health and wellbeing, community life and personal and social skills.
- A need to improve methods of communication, build links between participants and FS staff, link 'in volunteers' and 'out volunteers' as well as different time banks in Gloucestershire and find ways to make FS more cohesive across the county were recognised.
- Similarly, a lack of appreciation and feeling of not being welcomed by FS staff resonated strongly with some participants and insufficient resources in terms of funding and staff capacity were outlined as a barrier to fulfilment of ideas that volunteers have in respect of FS growth and sustainability.
- The evaluation could have proved more effective had it started as planned at the beginning of the project, not been hindered by delays, avoided difficulties in setting up the clusters, and not been subject to changes within the project management teams or incompatible project timetables.

4.2 Recommendations:

- Ongoing evaluation is challenging and time consuming and requires systematic coordination and communication on all levels as well as sufficient capacity and funding.
- Evaluation methods need to be tailored to the target group abilities.
- SRA as an outcomes-based assessment can help a time banking organisation argue its case for project funding, to better manage its projects, to develop the awareness and skills of its staff and volunteers, to better understand the reach and needs of its stakeholders, to collect and store useful information, to effectively monitor and evaluate what it does, and to better and more convincingly communicate the value of its work to funders, partners and local communities.
- The FS management team are advised to reflect on participant experiences relating to information provision, resources and communication with participants and links between volunteers, and to make any changes they deem necessary.

Appendices

Appendix A: Focus Group Schedule

Section One: Background

1.1 Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
1.2 Can you tell me a bit about how you got involved in time banking?

Section Two: Time Banking

2.1 Can you describe Fair Shares's time banking scheme to me?
2.2 What were your views and expectations of the scheme prior to being involved?
2.3 Has the scheme met your expectations? Why was this?
2.4 What have you learnt about yourself and/or others by being part of the scheme?

Section Three: Evaluation of time banking

3.1 What have you enjoyed the most about Fair Shares?
3.2 What have you least enjoyed?
3.3 In your opinion, would you describe the time banking scheme as useful for a) individuals; and b) communities? In each case - If so, why? If not, why not?
3.4 Is there anything that you think might improve the scheme?
3.5 What recommendations would you give to Fair Shares to help them reach out to more isolated groups (e.g., older people, adults with mental health issues)?

Section Four: Theory of Change

4.1 Could you describe the Fair Shares project area as it is now, and what you hope the programme might achieve for the community?
Think about the activities that you are involved in, or others that you are aware of or have some knowledge about. (Give example)
4.2 Drawing on your experience of these Fair shares activities, what kind of changes have you noticed/would anticipate that happen fairly immediately, say in the first few weeks? (Give examples)
4.3 Following this idea through, what changes did you notice/would you anticipate seeing over the medium term, say in the first 4-6 months?
4.4 Thinking about how some changes might lead to others (for example making new friends might reduce feelings of loneliness and in turn give people confidence), what do you see being the longer term changes that result from Fair Shares?
4.5 What barriers do you foresee in implementing the actions or activities, and what might prevent the positive changes you have identified from coming about?
4.6 Imagine that you hadn't got involved in Fair Shares, what would your life be like? Would it be much different? Would any of the changes that we have discussed happened anyway without Fair shares?

Appendix B: Consent form

Written Informed Consent

Title of Project:

Evaluating the Impact of a New Model of Time Banking

Lead Researchers:

Professor Paul Courtney
Katarina Kubinakova
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GL2 9HW

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I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm to act as a participant.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, that I will not be identifiable from the data collected during the research, and that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.

I further understand that the data collected may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and provide consent that this might occur.

Print name: _____

Sign name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Outcomes survey Letter and Survey

FAIR SHARES SURVEY

Dear Participant

Thank you for taking part in this survey. The survey is linked to an ongoing evaluation project and the results will help us to understand the impact of Fair Shares work on a local level.

The University of Gloucestershire Ethics Committee has reviewed and approved this proposal. Please be assured that all results will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your details will not be revealed at any point to any third party organisations. Your participation in the evaluation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions about the survey or the Fair Shares Evaluation, please do not hesitate to contact Katarina Kubinakova, University of Gloucestershire: phone: 01242 715397, or e-mail kkubinakova@glos.ac.uk.

We very much appreciate your participation.

Yours faithfully

Katarina Kubinakova

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, where

0 = Strongly Disagree and 10 = Strongly Agree.

1. I frequently volunteer or get involved in community activities

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. I feel that I am making a difference to my life and/or the life of others

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. I have a wide range of skills to help me at work or in my daily life

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. I feel able to maintain family and social life and avoid loneliness

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. I am often bothered by feeling on edge, or by having trouble concentrating

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. I feel close to the people in my local area

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. I will try something even if there is chance it might not work

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. I know where to go if I need help so that I can get the suport I need to stay independent and healthy

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Overall, how happy would you say you are (where 10 is extremely happy)?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, where **0 = Not True at all and 10 = True nearly all the time**

10. I am able to adapt when changes occur

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

11. I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardship

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

12. Fair Shares would like to partially self-fund some of its activities in the future by setting up social entreprise. What would be your recommenation to make this step sucessful and which areas would you like to see supported by the funding?

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Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

Evaluating the Impact of a New Model of Time Banking Final Report

Contact:

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