

# BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES ON PAY AND RECOGNITION OF VOLUNTEERING

Ibero-American Association of Time Banks  
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## CURRENT RECOGNITION MODELS AND NEW PROPOSALS

### Summary



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## INTRODUCTION

The main report, from which this summary is derived, presents various proposals for best practices in the remuneration and recognition of volunteering — ranging from financial remuneration and legal recognition, to social scoring systems and alternative methods of monetising volunteering, such as Time Banks or local currencies, among other initiatives.

In this summary, we highlight those good practices that we consider to be of particular interest, either due to the target audience they address or their proven success in implementation. This is done without disregarding the Time Banks or the *Zeitpolster*

care model itself<sup>1</sup>, which — although not referred to here as good practices for ethical reasons, as we ourselves are the promoting entities of this study — have nonetheless demonstrated years of successful implementation, particularly for vulnerable groups in the field of care, such as the elderly. In the case of *Zeitpolster*<sup>2</sup>, there is also a direct connection to local and national institutions that support it, such as in Liechtenstein. Likewise, Time Banks have benefitted groups such as immigrants, who gain opportunities to establish new mutual aid networks and to have their cultures and traditions recognised and valued — among other social groups empowered by these initiatives.

Both models are addressed as good practices in the main report, of which this document is a summary.

The main report also includes general recommendations that we have deemed necessary to complement these new practices with the legal, technological, and financial foundations required for their development.

In this summary, we highlight the following four good practices for the recognition and promotion of volunteering:

#### **HOW TO PROMOTE VOLUNTEERING AMONG SEEMINGLY DISENGAGED YOUTH: THE AHA PLUS VOLUNTEERING PROMOTION PROGRAMME IN VORARLBERG (AUSTRIA)**

AHA PLUS<sup>3</sup> is a digital recognition and incentive system for young people who want to volunteer in the Vorarlberg region of Austria. Young people between the ages of 12 and 24 can take part in volunteering activities, earn points, and exchange them for rewards. Through the AHA PLUS *commitment certificate*, young people have the opportunity to demonstrate the experience gained from their voluntary work when applying for jobs or apprenticeships, thereby increasing their chances of success.

Associations, organisations, and municipalities use AHA PLUS to make their youth work and participation opportunities more visible and to make volunteering more attractive to young people. By publishing their activities so-called “calls” online through AHA PLUS, they reach more, and often new, young participants. Engaged young people help sustain clubs and organisations, and volunteering strengthens the connection between young people and their communities.

AHA PLUS has been successfully running and evolving in Vorarlberg since November 2017. Thanks to years of experience and ongoing development, the participation platform has become an established and well-functioning system in the region.

Participation in AHA PLUS is free of charge for both young people and for participating organisations, clubs, and municipalities. AHA PLUS is a project of AHA – the Vorarlberg Youth Information Centre – and is implemented and financed on behalf of the Office for

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.zeitpolster.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.zeitpolster.com/li/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aha.or.at/plus>

Volunteering and Participation, in cooperation with the Department for Youth and Family of the Vorarlberg Provincial Government Office.

### **USING ALTERNATIVE MONETISATION TOOLS FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS: THE TOREKE SOCIAL CURRENCY IN GHENT (BELGIUM)**

Social currencies, like Time Banks, can be an effective tool for rewarding or recognising voluntary activity, provided they do not conflict with the national legislation of each country or with the interests of traders, professionals, and companies that offer similar services or products to those provided through exchange networks using such currencies.

In this case, we present an example of a local social currency initiative: the Toreke<sup>4</sup>, developed since 2010 in the Rabot-Blaisantvest district of the Belgian city of Ghent. Torekes are a complementary currency backed by euros but are not redeemable by individuals. Like the euro, Torekes hold a defined value - 1 Toreke equals 10 euro cents. However, unlike euros, all transactions in Torekes are valued equally: for example, one hour spent picking up litter or reading to children at school will always be rewarded with 25 Torekes, regardless of the activity performed.

The name *Torekes* - derived from the Flemish word for “Turkish,” a nod to the mixed immigrant and Flemish background of many residents in the neighbourhood - symbolises the community’s diversity. Torekes can be earned, both digitally and in physical banknote form, by volunteering in various district projects, either individually, as a group of residents, or through local neighbourhood organisations. These projects, listed on the currency’s website, cover a wide range of activities, such as reading to children at school, offering free sports classes, collecting litter, helping out in community gardens, and more.

Torekes can be exchanged for goods and services in local shops and even in businesses outside the neighbourhood with the project’s website or app indicating where they are accepted. The participating businesses are later reimbursed in euros by the city council.

### **INVOLVING AND EMPOWERING VOLUNTEERING AMONG PEOPLE WITH FUNCTIONAL DIVERSITY OR DISABILITIES: THE EXPERIENCE OF A EUROPEAN ERASMUS+ PROJECT, CAPABILITY TB (SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ITALY, GREECE)**

CAPABILITY TB<sup>5</sup> is a European Erasmus+ project coordinated by six European organizations and developed between 2019 and 2022. It is based on the idea that Time Banking is a tool for social participation that can offer valuable opportunities to all people, without distinction.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://torekes.be/nl/home/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://capacity-tb.eu/es/pagina-web/>

The consortium includes five organizations working in the field of disability and mental health: AMICA (the project coordinator) and COPAVA (Spain); CECD Mira Sintra (Portugal); KSDEO EDRA (Greece); and CSS Forlì (Italy). In addition, the consortium includes two expert organizations: FORBA (Austria), specializing in the collaborative economy, and IED (Greece), specializing in digital platform development.

The main objective of the project was to develop a training programme<sup>6</sup> and a digital platform<sup>7</sup> to promote the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities and their support persons through the use of Time Banking. The aim was to enhance their competences attitudes, knowledge, and skills and to improve their social inclusion and active participation.

According to the World Bank (2022), 15% of the global population lives with some form of disability that is, approximately 1 billion people worldwide. Despite efforts and strategies put in place by both public and private institutions, the full participation of people with higher support needs remains a priority challenge due to physical, attitudinal, and social barriers that place them at risk of social exclusion.

CAPABILITY TB promotes the idea that Time Banks provide an opportunity to focus on individuals' abilities rather than their limitations; to foster the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in the community by building new social networks or strengthening existing ones; and to encourage support and mutual aid on a voluntary, non-financial basis, thereby helping to remove barriers and reduce inequality.

#### **IMPLEMENTING A TIME-BASED PENSION MODEL TO PROMOTE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND ELDERLY CARE: ZEITVORSORGE IN SAINT GALLEN (SWITZERLAND)**

In 2012, the municipality of St. Gallen in Switzerland a city with more than 75,000 inhabitants launched a pioneering time donation project for older people, in cooperation with regional and local social and care organizations.

The core idea of this initiative is the accumulation of time as a form of personal future security for participants. These participants are typically older adults over 50 years old who are still healthy, active, well-educated, and interested in social engagement. They support other elderly people in need and their families in everyday tasks, and in return, receive time credits that are stored in their personal accounts. This model operates similarly to traditional Time Banks around the world: the hours accumulated can later be redeemed by the participants themselves when they need support, with the services provided by others who are also accumulating hours for their own future use.

With this model, the city of St. Gallen aims not only to increase the long-term security of care provision and reduce the rising costs of elderly care, but also to give greater

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<sup>6</sup> <https://platform.capacity-tb.eu/login/index.php>

<sup>7</sup> <https://timebank.capacity-tb.eu/>

recognition to volunteer work, promote active ageing, relieve pressure on family caregivers, and strengthen social ties among the elderly.

As outlined on the project's website<sup>8</sup>, the provision of time exists in a space between unpaid voluntary work and paid employment. It involves activities where professional services are typically not required such as help with household chores, leisure and recreational activities, maintaining social relationships, assistance in the digital world, minor repairs, support for family caregivers, companionship, and some administrative help. For each hour of service provided, participants receive one hour of credit. The maximum amount of time that can be accumulated is capped at 750 hours.

The city of St. Gallen guarantees that the time saved can be exchanged for services in the future. This model serves as a complementary welfare system to the public one an additional form of pension designed to make life easier for elderly people, with the clear goal of preventing loneliness and isolation by fostering social connections through a local Time Bank network.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.zeitvorsorge.ch/>