



**TimeBank Talking Together Programme
FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**



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1. Executive Summary

Background

- 1.1 The Talking Together programme was an 18 month pre ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) pilot led by the national volunteering charity TimeBank. It offered spoken English language training and mentoring support to UK residents in Birmingham and Leicester. The programme has been funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).
- 1.2 In delivering the programme, TimeBank worked closely with local community based delivery partners, with language teaching and support provided by volunteer tutors and volunteer mentors. Providing crèches for learners' children has been an important part of the programme. Learners were strongly motivated by improving their confidence in everyday situations, such as talking with other people, preparing for further study, accessing health and other support services, helping their children with homework.
- 1.3 The programme targeted a local cohort of the nearly 850,000 people in the UK reported as having no or poor English language ability (Demos 2014). In Birmingham, 4.6% have poor or no English; in Leicester the figure is 7.5% (DCLG). TimeBank has chosen to target its interventions at Ward level within each city, specifically those with the highest Multiple Deprivation Index scores and both the highest percentage and total number of individuals with poor or no English. Within these geographic areas Talking Together has worked predominantly with learners from the Bangladeshi, Somali and Pakistani communities. The programme has particularly set out to reach women between 18 and 40 years old as the 2011 Census indicates that women in these communities make up the largest proportion of non-English speakers.
- 1.4 The evaluation has been undertaken by HBMC, and brings together quantitative and qualitative data and information on both learners and volunteers. During the course of the programme, the evaluators have produced a series of papers, a mid-term evaluation and a Year 1 evaluation to support the programme team in their commitment to continuous improvement. This final report brings together all previous material.

Success of the programme

- 1.5 The Talking Together programme has significantly exceeded its target numbers of 1320 learners through its core 12 x 2 hour session classroom based programme. At completion, 1707 learners had been enrolled and 1571 completed, giving a retention percentage of 91%. Given classes are free and learners might be reasonably considered as 'hard to reach and retain' the programme has clearly done remarkably well to be within touching distance of retention rates in qualification based courses (Joada Allen, University of York, 2012).

- 1.6 The Talking Together model has been shown to be an efficient and cost effective approach to supporting pre ESOL learners and aiding their integration into British society.
- 1.7 Using respected local delivery partners was particularly beneficial in recruiting and retaining learners who might otherwise be extremely hard to reach.
- 1.8 The project's success has been built on the outstanding dedication of local volunteers and the commitment they have shown to the project. Above all, it has demonstrated the vital role that volunteers can play in building strong, united communities.
- 1.9 It also demonstrates a willingness by the programme team to be flexible, reacting proactively to 'what works', improving the curriculum and volunteer training materials, and developing effective local partnerships and collaborations. The practical focus on everyday challenges within the curriculum has also contributed, enhancing the confidence, motivation and ambition needed for learners to start considering their future goals.
- 1.10 The volunteer mentoring pilot programme added a further innovative dimension for learners, building their confidence and competence in speaking English. Mentors have given valuable support to mentees/learners complementing the classroom programme. Ideally, this programme should follow very soon after the classroom programme to ensure maximum benefit for learners/mentees. In addition, staff, learner and volunteer feedback suggests that mentoring input could perhaps be extended by at least one or two sessions if funding was available.
- 1.11 The programme has been successful in reaching its prioritised target audience – over 3 out of 5 learners:
 - Were from the target three communities, a proportion that increases to over 3 out of 4 when other Asian and North East African communities are included;
 - Were in the target age group of 18 to 40;
 - Had been in the UK 10 years or less;
 - Had no previous formal education or only education to primary school level.
- 1.12 Nearly 4 out of 5 learners were women. Over 4 out of 5 learners:
 - Were not working;
 - Were Muslims.
- 1.13 Talking Together achieved the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation Approved Provider Standard (APS), the national quality standard designed specifically for all types of mentoring and befriending projects. The volunteer tutor and mentor case studies underline the considerable benefits to the volunteers of their participation in this programme and the support received.

The volunteering experience

- 1.14 Talking Together has recruited and trained 92 volunteer tutors and assistants, and a further 52 volunteer mentors. On the whole, volunteers said that they have found volunteering on the project a positive and worthwhile experience. Specifically, they articulated a number of specific benefits including increased confidence, the opportunity to connect across different communities, encouragement to engage in other areas of voluntary work, gaining new skills, gaining teaching experience and motivation to pursue teaching as a career.

Value for money

- 1.1.15 The Social Return on Investment (SROI) exercise, carried out as part of this evaluation indicates for every £1 invested in the Talking Together programme, a benefit of £ 9.31 was obtained.

2. Programme and context

- 2.1 The TimeBank Talking Together 18 month pilot pre ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programme has offered spoken English language training and mentoring support to UK residents in Birmingham and Leicester. Talking Together was one of six projects funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to bring English language learning into the hearts of communities that can most benefit from such initiatives.
- 2.2 It is estimated that nearly 850,000 people reported no or poor English language ability in the last census. Some 4.2 million live in households where English is not the main language (Demos 2014). In some cases, people have been living in Britain for decades without having the opportunity to develop their English language skills. This can be a significant barrier to individuals successfully integrating and contributing to their community, building a career and fulfilling their ambitions (NIACE, 2015). Delivery of funded, locally-based ESOL courses has largely disappeared due to funding cuts with a drop from 500,000 learners across England in 2006/7 to 139,000 in 2013/14 (Demos 2014).
- 2.3 The Talking Together programme has worked predominantly with learners from the Bangladeshi, Somali and Pakistani communities. The programme has particularly set out to reach women between 18 and 40 years old as the 2011 Census indicates that women in these communities make up the largest proportion of non-English speakers.
- 2.4 Both Demos (2014) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (Policy Update 2014) highlight the need for projects such as Talking Together as the learners they engage are effectively excluded from mainstream provision. Even when they have a little English they do not possess a sufficient level to access a standard ESOL course at basic entry level one, a condition of DWP funding through colleges and similar providers.

3. The Evaluation

- 3.1 This report is the final evaluation of the Talking Together programme. Building on the mid-term report, it is intended to assess progress to date and assist TimeBank in securing effective follow up to what has been achieved. In the final report, the evaluators' focus has been on the set up of the programme, outputs and short term outcomes, and next steps.
- 3.2 As an evaluation process, this report is focused on qualitative information, its implications for delivery of the programme and sustainability of the programme's model into the future – with the aid of largely summary quantitative data supplied to DCLG. Some of this data is used to complement our findings, particularly in sections 2 and 3 of this report. In Section 6, this

report gives consideration to the experience of mentoring support provided alongside the tutoring role.

- 3.3 This report consolidates the work the findings and insights of our earlier interim and Year 1 reports. HBMC was commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the Talking Together programme, not of wider ESOL or pre ESOL programmes. In making our assessment, the evaluators nevertheless take into account wider contextual factors, including reduction in ESOL funding and opportunities, the extent to which approaches to ESOL are 'joined up' between different Government departments and agencies, including the Skills Funding Agency, and the tendency to see ESOL as a 'nice to have' rather than an essential service. These specific challenges are covered comprehensively in the Demos report 'On Speaking Terms' (2014), which we commend to you.
- 3.4 The evaluators would welcome feedback on this report. Further details about the work of the evaluators are provided at Annex 4 and Annex 5.

4. Overall assessment

- 4.1 The Talking Together programme has been successful in significantly exceeding the target number of 1,320 learners set in its agreement with DCLG as funder. Talking Together has trained 92 volunteer tutors and assistants, who have delivered 2040 individual classroom sessions, across 170 learner cohorts involving 1571 learners (who completed a minimum of 6 sessions). Some 52 volunteer mentors have also been recruited and trained. They have delivered 150 sessions across 25 mentoring cohorts involving 204 learners (who completed all sessions). In undertaking these tasks, the Talking Together team, volunteers, mentors and delivery partners have been concerned at all stages to establish and sustain a consistently high quality of delivery of the programme throughout.
- 4.2 The Talking Together programme has managed well the strategic and operational risks of setting up this complex programme with many players and interests and within a framework of limited resources. Necessary adjustments have been made on a proactive basis to ensure continued smooth running of the programme.
- 4.3 The open, accessible approach to teaching within the programme has made it easier for learners with little or no prior education to feel comfortable and engaged. The version II curriculum (in development, based on learner, volunteer and delivery partner feedback) will offer additional options to support such learners, even in mixed ability groups. The evaluators' assessment is that the TimeBank Talking Together programme has filled a key gap in provision at pre ESOL level, with a programme that is accessible and enables learners to progress well in a supportive environment. The

development of the new curriculum underlines the commitment of the TimeBank Talking Together team to continuous improvement.

- 4.4 The Talking Together programme is helping learners acquire confidence and competence in speaking English and overcome important barriers to their participation in wider society, including accessing public services, training and employment.
- The level of English for students who had attended secondary school and above increased by 46%
 - The level of English for students who had attended primary school or had never been to school increased by 44%
 - Learners confidence in shopping or using public transport increased by 66%
 - Learners confidence in speaking with neighbours and acquaintances increased by 64.4%
 - Learners confidence in dealing with teachers, doctors and other professionals increased by 65%
- 4.5 There is a practical need to understand wider benefits better. The wider benefits should be viewed not only from the perspective of the learner engaging far better with those services, but also from enabling providers of public services to offer more accessible and better targeted services. In addition, with vital information and access to services being increasingly placed online, there is a real danger that significant numbers of individuals will be excluded, through their lack of English and also through lack of experience or understanding of internet connected devices, such as smartphones, tablets and PCs/home computers. TimeBank has undertaken some interesting work in this area already, (1) offering 24 learners an intensive one day induction into use of the Internet for 'community benefit' and (2) 36 learners a programme designed to help 'hidden carers' better understand and access services. Details of these pilots are not the subject of this evaluation, but are available from TimeBank.
- 4.6 A successful programme requires initial and repeated steps to engage with the target audience and demonstrate the practical value and application of the offer. Working in partnership with local grassroots agencies has reduced the costs of possible disengagement of learners, for example through use of a single, 'centralised' training location, and so boosted attendance and retention. Given the success of this approach the Talking Together team intend to continue with it. The evaluators' assessment is that the Talking Together team has, through practical experience of working with a range of partners, developed sharper criteria for selection of suitable grassroots partners, i.e. those who combine local credibility and the skills needed to engage specific communities of the hardest to reach groups, with sufficient infrastructure to execute requirements of the programme to sustain delivery.

- 4.7 Delivery partners and volunteers feel that the practical focus on everyday challenges builds the confidence, motivation and ambition needed for learners to start considering their future goals. However, goal setting and goal support will continue to need to be a strong aspect of delivery. The Talking Together team have reflected this through the new mentoring inputs and using the NIACE Citizens Curriculum approach as a foundation to pilot a new group mentoring element called Talking Groups. Talking Groups comprises groups of 10-12 learners. The NIACE Citizens' Curriculum¹ has identified entry level ESOL as a priority. The evaluators' assessment, based on interview and case study work, is that this represents a sound balance that can provide strong support around the learner enabling the learner to develop her/his confidence.
- 4.8 Although take up of crèche places has been variable and unpredictable, the Talking Together team understands from learners and delivery partners that providing a free crèche opens up access for parents who would not otherwise be able to attend. The team's intention is to maintain this key service and we hope that funders will understand the basis of the commitment. The evaluators' assessment is that the TimeBank Talking Together programme has made prudent use of resources through crèches in enabling access for parents. The collaboration with delivery partners has ensured that this provision has meshed well and not duplicated pre-existing provision.
- 4.9 Friendship groups are formed in Talking Together programme classes which help people feel more confident and connected outside. To boost this impact the Talking Together team has undertaken mentoring sessions based on sub-groups of learners working on common aspirations. The evaluators' assessment, based on focus groups with learners, is that the networks formed are critical in sustaining learners' progress between sessions, and confidence in seeking support from all their networks, including families and relatives. This aspect underlines the commitment of the Talking Together programme to collect relevant data, analyse that data, and apply that learning in practical incremental improvements to the programme.
- 4.10 Learners and volunteer tutors in the Talking Together programme jointly felt that there would be benefits in providing more opportunities for holding practice conversations. This has been assimilated into thinking around a Version II of the curriculum, though the later sessions, where it's intended that additional volunteer mentors are introduced as part of the more seamless classroom/mentoring programme discussed below, will also reinforce this. The evaluators' assessment is that the merits of this flexible approach are strongly reinforced by feedback from learners around maximising the benefits of the sessions and the programme as a whole.

¹ NIACE Citizens' Curriculum seeks to develop core capabilities in language, literacy, numeracy, digital and health using a programme of study approached, shaped by learners and their needs

- 4.11 There is currently a perceived disconnect between the phase one classroom work and phase two mentoring groups. Learners and delivery partners would prefer a single learner journey, not two phases, that becomes more intensive and goal focused towards the end. The Talking Together team has devised a model to take forward which appears to address the need for a more seamless learner journey. They plan to integrate classroom and mentoring inputs, retaining learners through 16 sessions, split into 10 weeks classroom and 6 weeks mentoring. The classroom teacher and assistant will stay with the learners throughout, but mentors will come on board at session 11 through 16, increasing the volunteer/learner ratio and allowing greater attention to support the achievement of individual learner goals.
- 4.12 Social franchising can be understood as a model of working that enables diverse organisations to work together on a basis that is responsive to local need and able to secure economies of scale in pursuit of a social goal on terms that are financially viable. Flexibility and shared commitment between the delivery partners and TimeBank provide essential glue to enable the model to deliver well and equally importantly secure community engagement not open to 'top down' programmes. It will be important to explore the potential for collaboration between TimeBank and current or future delivery partners in sustaining a model that can deliver high quality pre ESOL training. As the client, there is a practical requirement on TimeBank to ensure that it has effective auditing procedures in place.
- 4.13 The evaluators' judgement at mid-term report, Year 1 end and final report stage is that the social franchising model appears to be working well. However, if TimeBank wishes to make all its resources available free, such as through a Creative Commons licence arrangement (see <http://creativecommons.org/>) there will need to be some consideration given to maintenance of quality across the board and the significant related costs involved in managing/delivering all the various operational and relational tasks associated with the full programme.

Some quotes from learners:

"I can now book appointment with my doctor...I can speak a little with the teacher of my children about their problems."

Now "if I require anything in the internet, I can do it myself."

"I can now talk, make people understand in English."

5. Learning and trends

- 5.1 The Talking Together programme supports individual learners with many different circumstances. They are not and never will be a tight homogeneous

grouping. The programme has operated in two separate urban locations each with their own history, characteristics and challenges.

- 5.2 By age group, the highest number of learners (337, 21%) were in the 31-35 age bands, and over three out of five learners (1115, 71%) were in the target age group of 18 to 40.
- 5.3 It is an explicit purpose of the programme to work particularly with three distinct communities (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Somali) with their own cultures and traditions. Over three out of five learners (1003, 64%) were strictly from the priority target three communities. This figure rises significantly (1417, 91%) when those from other Asian and North East African communities are included. There has also been some participation from other newly arrived minority communities adding to the heterogeneity of the learner community. In total, learners from a remarkable 68 countries of origin were recorded as participating: any future iteration of the programme needs to reflect this wider need in how it recruits delivery partners within its target Wards. While the targeting model used remains viable, i.e. use of Census and Multiple Deprivation scores, the targeted communities may differ significantly Ward by Ward. The overall programme approach and learner curriculum need not change to make this possible.
- 5.4 Around one in five learners (293, 19%) have been in the UK for 20 years or more, the oldest learner having arrived in 1944! Over three in five learners (1050, 62.22%) have been in the UK for 10 years or less. These figures provide valuable evidence of the capacity of the programme to address needs of very diverse learners, and to reach deep down to grass roots level to some of the acknowledged hardest to reach individuals habitually constrained by lack of confidence and experience.
- 5.5 At the same time, evidence suggests that there are some shared experiences amongst many if not all learners prior to their participation in the programme:
 - By far the largest number of learners (1380, 88%) were women, reflecting the primary focus of the programme, while (1214, 77%) were married, and (1077, 69%) had dependent children; a number were either divorced, separated or widowed, perhaps leaving at least some particularly vulnerable or isolated (82, 5%);
 - Well over four in five learners (1311, 83%) had no formal education or only education to primary school level. Around one in seven (219, 14%) had education to sixth form level, over one in eleven (137, 9%) were educated to College/FE/Sixth form level and one in thirty (52, 3%) at university level. This divergence in prior education needs to be managed carefully by volunteers, with large numbers with little or no prior experience in a classroom potentially struggling with those who may have more confidence and experience;
 - Over nine out of ten learners (1396, 89%) were Muslims, again reflecting the primary focus of the programme strongly;

- The strongest learner motivations at the outset were to improve the confidence to talk with other people (1323, 84%), prepare for further study (1017, 65%), get work (935, 60%), and help with children's homework (810, 52%); While a significant number, it's perhaps not surprising that fewer noted helping with children's homework as being a primary priority, with 84% having very little education themselves the challenge would be very significant;
 - Many learners are dependent in whole or part on State benefits whether in or out of work;
 - Many learners lack the income to make more than a limited contribution towards the cost of ESOL programmes – an important factor in attracting them to the Talking Together programme, which has been without charge;
 - Many learners have struggled with effectively accessing public services, including supporting their children at schools and accessing healthcare for themselves and their children;
 - Many learners have struggled to find work, due to their lack of confidence or competence in speaking English - some 87% of learners (1371) were not working;
 - Many learners have been sustained in their participation by the support of family members, who have reinforced the wider public message that those who live in this country need command of the English language;
 - We note also the importance of support from minority community organisations for potential learners to participate.
- 5.6 For some learners, access to childcare has been an important consideration in order to undertake the programme. It would be helpful for the programme team to explore learners' demand for and factors affecting their take up of childcare provision offered by delivery partners as part of their programme.
- 5.7 There is evidence that the programme initially attracted some learners who were more advanced in their English than pre ESOL stage. This can be explained by the lack of other ESOL provision and the commitment of these learners to take all the opportunities they can to improve their English. While this is wholly understandable from the perspective of these learners, and may be difficult to eliminate entirely, it is very important that delivery partners stay tightly focused in ensuring those with less developed English predominantly participate. Failure to do so could lead to some skewing of classes, making the role of volunteers more difficult, and pressure to use materials more suited to advanced learners.
- 5.8 It may be that some delivery partners were more used to working to straightforward numeric targets rather than the more defined needs and characteristics of learners for the Talking Together programme. The issue of more advanced learners being recruited was recognised by the staff team at an early stage and at mid-term, Year 1 end and final report stage has increasingly been addressed. A tight rein was kept on learner criteria by the Talking Together programme team, but discretionary energy of delivery

partners was also needed to access the most hard to reach in the target communities, not just the 'lower hanging fruit'.

- 5.9 The role expected of volunteer tutors is an important innovative element of the programme. Volunteer tutors have been recruited from a range of backgrounds, including some former CELTA² qualified teachers. We have noted the interest of those pursuing the CELTA qualification in wanting to practice and develop their skills.

Volunteer tutors undertake 3 days of training, a provision that has been increased from the 2 days initially provided. The view of the Talking Together team and the external lead trainer after delivering the first 2 training courses, was that additional time was needed to enable volunteers to practice and demonstrate what they had learnt, so providing a fuller basis for assessment as part of the selection process. At the end of the training, tutors receive confirmation that they are suitable for the role. Volunteer tutors have spoken positively to us about the quality and value of the training received.

- 5.10 A lot is expected of volunteer tutors within this programme. They are expected to be highly motivated, reliable and well organised, enthusiastic in engaging learners who lack confidence, and inventive in building on the core material developed. The contribution of the volunteer tutors is central to assuring a lean and cost effective system that can be replicated in the future.
- 5.11 Volunteer tutors are expected to see through one set of 12 sessions. Following the mid-term evaluation report, the Talking Together team has been able to follow up some volunteer tutors who have led more than one set of 12 sessions to learn about their motivations and how effective support for volunteer tutors can be consistently replicated.
- 5.12 Nearly half of all volunteers classified themselves of Pakistani or other Asian backgrounds, followed by White British at close to a quarter. By far the largest groups were in education/learning, closely followed by employed part-time (both over 1 in 4), together making up half of all volunteers. Nearly 3 out of 4 volunteered in Birmingham, the remainder in Leicester. Women made up around 3 out of 4 of all volunteers. The dominant age range represented was between 18-40 years, with the largest number aged 20-30. Recruitment was particularly successful through relationships with programme delivery partners or other local charities/services, the Do-It web site, social media promotion and via generic web searches. By far, the main reason to volunteer was to 'make a difference', followed by 'gain experience and learn skills'. Around 1 in 3 volunteers either dropped out of the programme before being placed or, after interview or training, were felt to be unsuitable for the roles available.
- 5.13 The EDAS Foundation was commissioned by TimeBank to carry out an evaluation of teaching resources (November 2014) to assess their appropriateness for delivery by volunteer tutors. The EDAS report assessed

² CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages) is an initial teacher training qualification for teaching English as a second or foreign language.

the overall strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum offered to learners and the need for any background/introductory materials. The report made a series of detailed recommendations for change in the design of the schedule, the themes of the modules and the lesson plan templates. The report also considered cost effective and easy to use ways in which the programme can be packaged. The TimeBank Talking Together team has reviewed how these and other recommendations can best be implemented, in discussion with a group of volunteers specifically convened for that purpose. Elevation Networks, who have to date delivered training on behalf of TimeBank, have been commissioned to redesign the programme to take account of all feedback received to date.

- 5.14 The original conception of the programme was that it would be predominantly based on a 12 week course with one session a week. In practice, there has been some move towards the model of a 6 week course with two sessions a week. This shift can be explained by the benefits for the learner of a more intense programme, and how the shorter course sustains higher levels of participation. Reflection and stakeholder feedback on the mentoring programme has enabled the Talking Together team to consider a single journey programme for learners of up to 16 weeks.
- 5.15 The programme has developed a clearer understanding of what qualifies an organisation to be an effective delivery partner. Initial selection was made on the basis of a working list and has proved to be largely successful. Criteria can be refined further for subsequent recruitment of delivery partners.
- 5.16 TimeBank has produced a useful risk assessment which is operationally focused. This covers safety in venues, stress and dependence, the needs of disabled volunteer tutors and mentors, and lone protection and protection of staff and tutors. Appropriate steps to mitigate such risks are identified.

6. Mentoring pilot programme

- 6.1 The mentoring pilot programme represented an important development within the overall Talking Together programme. The pilot programme was delivered from the end of February 2015 to mid-June 2015. The audience for the pilot programme has been learners who have completed the 12 session course (who become mentees for the purpose of the pilot programme), or new learners recruited to test results obtained through mentoring only. In total, 254 learners attended at least one session and 204 completed, giving a retention figure of 80% against a target of 300 learners. Unfortunately, two delivery partners failed to deliver their agreed learner numbers early on in the roll-out, so effectively the programme was unable to catch up and deliver its full target by its end of June completion date.
- 6.2 There has been a separate process of recruitment and training for volunteer mentors. Some have been as qualified and aspirational as volunteer tutors (e.g. undertaking the CELTA qualification). Training of mentors took place

over two days and has focused largely on developing facilitation skills. There is some suggestion in the feedback that mentors would benefit from more coverage of teaching skills, similar to the 'train the trainer' course provided for potential language trainers and assistants. A review is taking place to determine how best to train and support volunteers within the new 'seamless' delivery model. Clearly, a fuller training would likely impact positively on volunteer and learner alike, but this needs to be balanced against the increased cost for the organisation and time that volunteers have available or are prepared to commit.

- 6.3 Goals for mentees are set in Week 1 of the pilot programme. A practical programme to develop mentees' confidence has been developed for the programme with a trip in Week 5 centred on some element of civic or wider community engagement. Week 6 focuses on subsequent progression for mentees. Effectively, the TimeBank team currently has little control over the future trajectory of learners; in practice, they can only signpost in a rudimentary way as further support is beyond the remit of funding. It may be that further work and resourcing is required to assist mentees on their transition to another support provider, partnering with some key agencies that can help learners on their journey.
- 6.4 Delivering the mentoring programme has involved conversations with delivery partners, some of whom have proved over-optimistic about numbers they might recruit for the pilot programme. This has necessitated some element of redistribution of mentees between mentoring groups and so added pressure on staff. There have also been some variations as to how far delivery partners have attuned themselves to enabling delivery of mentoring support.
- 6.5 The pilot programme has indicated the need to reshape materials into a standard workbook format. However, by its nature, the mentoring relationship calls on mentors to undertake a degree of improvisation, so any workbook needs to reflect that reality. Smaller groups of mentees with 2 mentors have tended to work better than much larger groups of mentees with 3 or 4 mentors. Women only groups have also been welcomed. Role play in groups (e.g. accessing health appointments, handling feedback from schools) has been a popular element of the mentoring sessions.
- 6.6. Mentoring as practised on the pilot programme is a not wholly familiar concept to learners who have grown up in Pakistan or Bangladesh. Feedback indicates that the mentor's role requires more explanation and clarification to understand it as additional help. Notwithstanding this, the feedback from mentors is that they have enjoyed their roles, felt empowered to undertake their work, and welcomed the flexibility. Two mentors (and a number of other Talking Together volunteers) have written interesting blogs talking about their enjoyable experiences. You can access them here:

<http://timebank.org.uk/blog>

Feedback from mentors suggests that the mentoring programme could usefully be a little longer, although there are likely to be some cost

implications. It could be that the planned integration of the classroom and mentoring inputs achieves similar ends.

- 6.7 The mentoring sessions have provided valuable opportunities for mentees to practice English in a more informal social environment. Mentees have been given the opportunity to learn in a different way and to make connections beyond the classroom. The 1:1 discussions between mentors and mentees have assisted mentees identify their next steps to further improve their English.
- 6.8 Feedback from mentors suggests that the mentoring sessions are most useful with those who have reached a basic level in English, and can sit down and consider goals. Those with a very basic level are less able to draw full benefit from the mentoring sessions.
- 53% of students reported their level of English had increased
 - 57% of students reported their confidence in shopping or using public transport had increased
 - 60% of students reported their confidence in speaking with neighbours and acquaintances had increased
 - 62% of students reported their confidence in dealing with teachers, doctors and other professionals had increased
- 6.9 Having the right child care facilities has made a practical difference to participation, particularly where the learner/mentee is already familiar with the centre. Ideally, this mentoring pilot programme should follow very soon after the 12 classes programme to ensure maximum benefit for learners/mentees.

Some quotes from mentees

“We could try things out in the [mentoring] group which helps with confidence.”

“The group understands, I enjoy it and learn.”

“In small groups, we could concentrate and we got more attention. We talked more to each other and got support for our own level.”

7. SROI analysis

- 7.1 At the outset of the programme, HBMC developed a theory of change, which was then discussed with the Talking Together team. The revised theory of change is at Annex 2.
- 7.2 It was agreed to enhance the results of this evaluation by including a Social Return on Investment (SROI) exercise. This was concluded in June 2015 and the results are provided at Annex 3.

- 7.3 The SROI exercise was focused on economic and social aspects of return. It found many direct outcomes and benefits to learners, volunteer tutors and mentors. A number of indirect outcomes and benefits were also indicated.
- 7.4 Financial proxies were identified, principally based in research commissioned by the Government in the last 5 years. Issues of attribution, displacement and deadweight were considered.
- 7.5 The SROI analysis concludes that for every £1 invested in the Talking Together programme, a benefit of £9.31 was obtained.

8. Sustainability

- 8.1 The sustainability of programmes such as Talking Together face significant strategic risks which may be summarised as:
- Inability to find continuation funding to sustain such programmes in whole or part;
 - Failure to address the needs of a significant pool of potential future pre ESOL learners
 - Employers would potentially lose the benefits of greater competence and confidence of future pre ESOL learners who would have benefited from a continued Talking Together programme;
 - Loss of benefit to the public purse (e.g. greater labour market participation, reduced dependency on benefits) being achieved through the Talking Together programme;
 - Loss of access to data and information on the needs of pre ESOL learners;
 - Possible reputational damage to funders through not sustaining such programmes.
- 8.2 These risks may be mitigated by:
- A strong basis of collaboration between a contractor and delivery partners in seeking a workable model and funds for a continued programme;
 - Effective use of the outputs of this evaluation in seeking continued funding;
 - A relatively early examination by the funders of the benefits of the programme and an openness on their part to proposals that build on and/or replicate this programme;
 - Growing awareness on the part of public service agencies, particularly commissioners in local authority structures, that they have a significant stake in the contribution such programmes can make to community cohesion, effective access to services, and reduction in expenditure on what might be seen as 'dependency services' such as translation and interpretation – the appreciation of the need to 'invest to save' is more difficult in conditions where those agencies are facing significant reductions in their funding;

- Growing awareness on the part of non-statutory funders, particularly Trusts and Foundations, (but also private business where possible) of the individual and community benefits that the Talking Together programme or similar programme offers in terms of value for money.

8.3 It is a significant and continuing task for TimeBank to see the extent of the risks identified and how far such mitigation might be put in place.

9. Recommendations

This section contains the principle recommendations of the evaluators.

- To commend the Talking Together model as an efficient and cost effective approach to supporting pre ESOL learners and aiding their integration into British society;
- To retain a focus on local delivery, using respected local delivery partners to recruit and retain learners who might otherwise be extremely hard to reach;
- To recommend to Government that it continues its funding of the Talking Together programme, recognising that TimeBank's contribution includes finding and testing further innovations in delivery that continually enhance the benefits that it offers to learners and the cost effectiveness of the programme;
- To encourage groups of local authorities, other statutory agencies, schools and other interested employers to review how similar schemes could be funded, launched and sustained;
- To encourage local authorities and its funded ESOL partners to consider the needs of those currently unable to access formal ESOL classes due to entry requirements or other factors, such as centralisation of provision away from local communities, ensuring there is a seamless route to progress from 'sub-ESOL' to ESOL;
- To recommend to the Skills Funding Agency to change its rules so it is able to fund projects directly such as the Talking Together programme;
- To encourage BIG Lottery to ensure the place of similar pre ESOL and ESOL programmes to Talking Together within the terms of projects it might fund that promote integration;
- To commend the Talking Together programme to community organisers' programmes as an example of locally based programmes with high local engagement that promote integration;
- To commend the Talking Together programme to local authorities as examples of locally based programmes with holistic focus that draw diverse elements of need together and encourage self-help and mutual support in making essential progress in learning and using the English language in everyday life.

10. Acknowledgements

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Annex 1: Case Studies

Learner Case Study – Parveen - November 2014

Parveen wanted to improve her conversational English to participate fully:

“I wanted to learn English. It is essential to learn English to have a conversation with someone, anywhere that we go. It is very much necessary in this country.

I didn’t know any English. No I didn’t know any, I couldn’t even write my own name in English.

Now since I have joined Maya’s classes my English has improved but, yet reading and writing is not that good. Now since I have been coming to classes I hope to improve. We would like to continue learning.”

Parveen has been in the UK a long time:

“It is almost 30 years now since we came here. I did not get to learn English before this. Nowadays it is important, even kids say I must learn. You know earlier I would have to go very far to learn English.”

People in the local neighbourhood encouraged her to join the course:

“Neighbours and friends they all told me to go and join this course and learn English language.”

Parveen has found good support from her fellow learners:

“My class fellows were very good. Every one helped each other. If there was something we could not understand then we could ask each other about it. Everyone from class was good.”

The course has helped Parveen engage better with daily living tasks.

“Earlier I used to hesitate to speak English when if I went outside to buy something. I couldn’t understand then but now after classes I can go around by myself and buy things and attend to other matters at my own so it has helped me.

In the future there will be no problem as such with going around. It is already easy to talk with people now and I can understand them too. There is no hesitation left there.”

Parveen wants to promote the course to others like her who have been in the UK for a long time:

“Now since we have done this course from here we can tell those who have been here for a long time but yet can’t speak English about this class which is free and we could also tell them that if they could afford to pay to learn then pay and learn. If one has to pay for learning then one can do that too and participate in this course. I can help like this only.”

Living on benefits makes it difficult paying for a course like this:

“You know government give us very calculated money to live and that money hardly meets our requirement so we can’t pay any money.”

Learner case study – Antim - October 2014

Antim Roy was referred to the programme by a friend.

He wanted to develop his confidence and skills in speaking English better. This would motivate him to pursue further studies in English and apply his knowledge.

“I can speak English but felt the course would further help my spoken English and also improve my understanding of the language, its words and use.”

Antim valued the course:

“Peter was a very good teacher. He made time to help me in many ways. He raised my confidence and knowledge of how to have a conversation with people and understand what people are saying from 90% to 95%. He showed me the difference between speaking and writing in English which was also very helpful. I feel my speaking ability has improved greatly from Peter’s help.”

“Peter gave us and me a lot of material which I found very helpful. What was of particular help were the practical examples. The material was very good.”

Talking about his next steps, Antim said:

“Peter is why I am doing further studies. I have got admission at Solihull College. Peter provided information and encouraged me to apply.”

“Peter also helped me to secure a job as a volunteer with the British Heart Foundation. This is important in helping me put into practice what I learnt on the in-class course.”

In discussing his future needs, Antim said:

“I would like further help in reading, writing and speaking to build on what I have done so far.”

Learner Case Study – Farzana - November 2014

Farzana's motivations for attending Talking Together classes were strong:

"I could understand a little but couldn't speak at all when I had joined this course. My family always said to me that I must go and learn English.

If I had to make an appointment with hospital then it was a problem. And, if I had to go to hospital they would only speak English there. Even if I have to go to shops then it is problem too.

I would like to learn to speak, write and read properly. I want to learn to speak English; it's necessary to live in this country."

Family support and good personal organisation made her attendance possible:

"My family told me that they would look after my house work and that I should just go and give time to class and learn English. "I would normally finish my house works before class. If there were any left then I used to do them after classes. I always made it to class on time and left on time."

The atmosphere in the class helped her learn:

"We all class fellows used to study together. Whatever we couldn't help each other with then we would seek teacher's help for that. It was a very good class."

The course has supported Farzana's ambitions:

"If I shall continue to learn in school for next two years then I am sure my English will become much better. I first want to improve my English and then look for a job that is after I have improved my English. I want to clear driving licence test too. I want to learn to drive as it is very much required for life."

Farzana thinks charging learners for courses like Talking Together would be a problem:

"I want to educate those who don't know English with as much that I have learned here and I know. But I can't study if I have to pay for it because what money I get hardly meets my budget for food and other necessities. So I cannot continue to study if I have to pay. Now, because these classes were free I attended them and am thankful for that."

The six week course has been a good start with much more to learn:

"Before classes I couldn't speak English and nor could I understand it. Now after taking classes I can make my appointments and go and visit doctor by myself. I can even speak little English with my friends and family and my kids. But still I cannot write English. I will try to learn to write in the future.

I have learned a little and if there are any further free English classes then I would like to join them too. I require English for my better future. I cannot pay to learn and because it was free so I managed to attend it."

Learner Case Study – Naseem - November 2014

Naseem was referred to the course via the Job Centre.

“Job centre instructed me that unless I learn English I won't be able to find any job.”

Naseem was able to adjust her sign in time at the Job Centre so that she could attend classes:

“My sign in time for job centre was 1 pm which I then got changed to 12 noon because my class here was scheduled for 1 pm. I also used to finish all my house work swiftly so that I could come here to learn.”

Naseem has learnt a lot in the six week programme:

“I have taken this six week class from Maya. I have learned both reading and writing. Also spellings, joining the words and about everything Maya taught us well.”

Naseem also explains the contribution of her fellow class students in helping out with her English:

“My class fellows did help me a lot. Whatever I couldn't understand then those who knew better would tell me. We described things to each other. This is how I would understand everything. Then there was Maya, she would explain things herself too. Maya was a very good teacher.”

Naseem's children have helped her consolidate her learning in class:

“Whatever I learned in Maya's class that I would go and share with my kids at home. Then they would also help me to learn better by pointing out my mistakes and telling me what is right. They taught me meanings of the words, for example, they told me what does word 'What' means. They would tell me the answers to the questions and would also help me do my next day lesson. Additionally, they told me how to learn things and what to learn. So all this has helped me a lot and my kids supported me in learning this.”

Naseem has found benefits of the course in her everyday life:

“Now I can speak English at home with my kids and can even make an appointment with doctor and visit him by myself and for that I do not need anyone's help any more. I go there myself. I can speak with the doctor in English.”

Naseem plans to learn more:

“I want to continue learning English in future too. This is so that I can understand and speak it better than now. Now it will become easy for me to find and do any kind of job. I want to learn more so that am able to speak English better. I have recently bought myself a computer and I work on that too. I am trying to make my English perfect. I also want to take driving test and for that English is a must.”

Naseem was prepared and willing to pay for such a course, should a charge be needed to be levied in the future to cover costs.

“I have taken these classes for six weeks and have learned a lot from them and if these classes were paid classes then I would have even paid for it because learning English is very important.”

Learner Case Study – Razia - November 2014

Razia realised it was essential to learn English:

“I am living in this country and recognise the value of English language here. Even children at home, today, speak English instead of their mother tongue. That is why I considered it essential to join English learning classes.”

Attending the course has made a real difference to her:

“I could understand English to some extent but speaking was a problem, writing then was also an issue, my spellings were very poor. Now I can not only understand English better but can also write it better. I got a lot of encouragement from the teachers.”

Razia has welcomed the support she has been given to attend and benefit from the course:

“My neighbours and other acquaintances have always helped me, they have always encouraged me to attend classes regularly and learn English language. When I was at classes, sometimes, they would look after my kids for me. They have always encouraged me to attend classes to learn English language and reasoned with me that I should never miss any class. They told me it’s very important to learn English if I want to live in this country and that I ought to go and register myself for the classes and learn the language.

My brothers and sisters have also helped me a lot by encouraging me to go and learn English. I have had a lot of support and encouragement from everyone and the importance of English language in this country was very explicitly explained to me.”

Razia managed her tasks at home so that she could attend the classes:

“Work was left behind; it happens. All those things that I had to do but was unable to do them due to the classes, I used to leave them for weekends. It was important for me to learn English. I didn’t want to miss my English language classes due to any work or any other thing.

If there was anything that had to be done daily then I would do that after classes.”

Razia found the course has been of great practical help:

“If the phone rings and the call has to be taken and in English language, for example it could be from the job centre or somewhere like that then I can answer easily. Earlier, I could not even answer calls. Now I can talk with them. Before I could understand what they are saying but it was hard to reply but now it is all very easy for me. Specially, kind of teachers we had they taught us very well.

Now if I go shopping or go to one of many other places then English helps there. If it is some appointment, say about Parents Evening at kid’s school, they will tell you all in English language. It has helped me with that too.

Now I can question them (teachers). Previously, I couldn’t even speak with them. Though, even then I could understand them. If it was some complaint from my side or theirs I could understand it but then couldn’t reply to them. Now things have improved a lot. To some extent now I can communicate with them and ask things that I have to.

Well you know previously, when I had to make an appointment with doctor or for anywhere else, I would need someone else to do that for me. Now if you call me, from what I have learned, I can make my own appointment, be it with doctor or anyone else, I make it myself.

Outside if have to converse with anyone then I can speak English and communicate with them. I don't hesitate and can explain myself."

Razia wants to take her understanding of English further:

"I want to learn to write too. I have problem with writing English. I can't write. I would like additional English classes here. There are English classes conducted elsewhere too, but the way it is taught here is unique and best. Firstly, they don't waste any time here and they encourage us to not talk about other things, whereas, in other places even teachers that are from our own community get involved in irrelevant discussions. There we would only go and talk and come back didn't get to learn much. Here they communicate in English language and they encourage us to speak English, no matter how bad it is. Here they provide encouragement so it is better here."

Razia favours such courses being free:

"I think free is better for us. If we have to pay then it will become hard for us to continue. I live separate from my husband and have kids too so it will become hard for me to pay money. Then if the fee is less, still learning English is so important that I will pay for it. Condition is that fee may not be very high."

Razia encourages others to take up the courses:

"I keep telling those in my neighbourhood and who wish to learn English, not to waste any time and wherever they can get admission to classes they must join and learn English language."

Razia praised the venue and facilities:

"Where I learned English, it was best place, very comfortable. Everything was right. I have learned well from there."

Learner Case Study – Zahida - November 2014

As a recent migrant, Zahida found a pressing need to improve her English:

“It was crucial for me to learn the English language. English was essential for living in this country. Seven months ago when I arrived in this country then couldn’t even read or understand letters, addressed to me, I had to always wait for some family members to return home and read the same to me. Now since I have joined this programme, I can not only read my letters but I can easily handle my appointment matters at my own.”

Without classes, Zahida found that she was making a lot of unhelpful mistakes:

“My English Language was hopeless, then. I used to greet with Good Morning when it actually was afternoon and later when it was time to say Good afternoon I used to say good Evening. I didn’t know much about English language. In the beginning it was hard, even, for me to know the class timings, but now I have improved a lot....”

Zahida values the encouragement that friends, family and neighbours gave:

“Neighbours and all of my family members had stressed the value of learning English language and to do it quick, because, later they tell, I might not get time to do it. Life will become busier, they said. So I considered registering myself for the classes and thought the sooner it is the better it will be....”

Support from fellow student learners was a real help:

“We used to ask from each other about what we couldn’t understand. You know how it is, there are some students who are weak and then there are some who are good at learning, there are those who can learn things fast and those who learn slow....Due to Urdu language facility we were not only able to understand things better but we also were told how to respond in English. This is how it was made easier for us to speak English language. We could speak English with each other and also teach each other.”

Zahida found she could balance classes and work in the home:

“After I wake up, I do my dishes and attend to other chores. I try to finish all my works in morning and then come to class. If there was anything that was left then my family took care of that for me.”

Zahida thought that the course had proved of great practical help to her:

“Learning English language has helped in many ways. Now I can attend phone calls, if it is a message I can take one and send one too. Previous to that when phone used to ring then I would just stand there not sure to pick or not. This way many calls got missed. I couldn’t even tell my numbers. Now I can tell numbers.

Now for the whole day I speak English. If it is shopping then I no more need to ask from anyone about prices. I can budget things myself now. Previous to this I used to just stand there in shops thinking; what to buy? How much will I have to pay? Also, how much will I have to give? English has benefited me a lot with shopping. All the staff there in shops is not, necessarily, Pakistani, many are English... I feel lot better. Now if I have to get medicine from chemist, or if I can’t find doctor then I can order. I can provide my address now.”

In turn, Zahida could help others:

“I can help those from my neighbourhood. There are, in fact some old women in my neighbourhood who often have appointments with the doctor. They will either have pain in

knees or ankles and they happened to have already missed their doctor's appointment. They ask me that how do I manage? As, I have just arrived in England. I tell them that I have been going to English learning classes. They advise me not to quit because this way I can continue helping them too. I can understand better, they say.

There are two or three women, whom I know, they have registered their names. They want to join the next classes. Those who are weaker than us now want to join classes to learn English language. They also need to learn English. Job Centre has also been telling them the same thing. Now they all say they want to learn to speak English."

Learning English is important in preparing for the future:

"I hope that this Life UK Test, the test which might not be difficult for those who have been here for long now and they may not need any help with that but what about me? I have arrived here very recently. People say the test is very hard. Although I have two years visa but that will eventually finish. As I am free now, yet have no children so I wish to learn English now. I want to have lots of experience and then I shall be able to pass that test too."

Zahida feels that the course being free was critical to her participation:

"I was happy that these classes are free so I gladly came to attend these classes. Next, what if I have to pay? Well, my husband is already on benefit and only if he had a job then I would have been able to pay. If I have money then I could pay, but you know we only get £72 from benefit and it is already hard to make the ends meet, all needs of home and shopping etc. I don't even have any saving out of which I could, possibly, be able to pay. If these classes are free it is better, we don't have any problem then."

Volunteer Tutor Case Study – Richard Glenholmes

Richard came to the Talking Together programme from London with an interest to want to teach on an ESOL type course. He felt that he brought “awareness and respect for different cultures.” He had done 3 days unpaid internship charity voluntary work with the British Red Cross, which lasted 3 months:

“I looked for volunteer work, particularly teaching ESOL, where I could engage with people from different cultures.”

Richard found that he was teaching women older than the target group. It was a group of women with families and who did not previously know each other. He commented on the relationship he developed with his students: *“Having led the class at the Golden Hillock Centre in Small Heath I have been amazed at the bond I have formed with my students.”*

At the start there were 9 students and 7 completed the course:

“I was very lucky in being able to tailor lessons to each student as numbers were low, allowed me to find out and test with them what was working well or not.”

The majority of learners were from Pakistani, Bengali and Indian communities. The facilities at the Bangladeshi Community Centre worked well:

“Nazia was great in ensuring those students needing a crèche were able to access and get it, also chased up and kept track of attendance and non-attendance in terms of post student support. The Golden Hillock centre is a great asset. So helpful.”

Learners’ levels of English Proficiency were very diverse:

“For some of the students the challenge was speaking and writing, for others was it basic speaking, while another student had good writing skills but speaking was a problem, while one lady could speak and write well but was not listening well.

My weakest students who required extra help performed much better in group learning activities where their confidence was high; they were relaxed and conversational. When tested individually in front of class they felt the pressure and would seize up. The problem was not eagerness to learn nor ability; it was a confidence obstacle. The ladies were very afraid to get things wrong and any mistake would cause them to withdraw and panic. The issue may have come from an age or cultural barrier as their education at a young age would have been very different from the methods we used. To counter this I adapted the lesson plan to make it much more conversational and funny with mock shopping role plays alongside creating comedic characters.

With three of the struggling ladies there were ‘eureka’ moments where we shared a joke while learning and they instantly became relaxed. After this comfort level was reached, the change was astonishing. The ladies were much more involved in the class, and they participated constantly. It was so nice to see them enjoying themselves and able to learn in an environment where mistakes are not punished but celebrated.”

Richard thought that the syllabus provided a useful foundation for learning support to students in developing their proficiency in the language:

“The curriculum does work very well as a base. The modules were at the right level to introduce weak students to new vocabulary while still challenging those who knew it. The lesson plans had only been tailored slightly but this should be done anyway to meet the classes’ varied needs

He felt a number of modules lacked depth and best worked by being merged with others. Mentoring would help at an early stage in the course. Some resources in the appendices needed to be expanded but there was scope for sharing materials between volunteer tutors.

There was scope to do more to recognise cultural celebrations and differences:

“I feel Schools, Doctors and Public Services could have been better integrated by looking at making contact with and accessing local services.”

The overall result of the course and support was that learners were well placed to sign up for doing ESOL at college:

“One of the (previously struggling) ladies, on her initiative, has enrolled on an ESOL class at a college as she enjoyed herself so much. The change in her is shocking. I cannot believe she is the same person. Three other group members have also signed up to college courses and beg me every week for homework and to take the board sheets home to practice with their children. It has made the experience so rewarding for myself and them. The entire programme has been a pleasure, definitely my favourite part of the week.”

Richard thought there would be benefits in a refresher course for volunteer tutors if they are teaching again – *“a lot gets forgotten in a few months and you want to ensure trainers are using the right technique.”*

Richard considered that the course has given him the confidence and impetus to learn and study English further with a view to being a CELTA teacher, after securing the Certificate. He added: *“It has been a brilliant experience and I hope I am around to help out again.”*

He thought his work as a volunteer tutor would help his employability:

“I am now going to two interviews for teaching assistant work in London and taking my certificate of completion as a volunteer tutor on Talking Together. I’m sure this will help my chances.”

Richard received a grant to complete his CELTA qualification, based on his Talking Together volunteer experience. Richard has now completed his CELTA qualification.

Richard had found the experience both special and highly rewarding on a personal level:

“Another unseen delight has been the chance for me to connect with a community I have never been involved with. Even with our limited English we have really got to know each other and we have had so much fun. It is a shining example of how different people and communities can integrate and have the same laughs and feelings.”

Volunteer Tutor Case Study: Anousha D Hossein

Anousha Hossein found out about TimeBank and the Talking Together programme from an advert for volunteer tutors in the Guardian Jobs section. She wanted to apply for teaching related assignments. She has a language teaching qualification:

“Having done CELTA an English Certificate for teaching adults in September 2013, the opportunity provided by TimeBank was a good way to put these newly learnt skills into practice, whilst also being able to engage in community-based voluntary work.”

Anousha considered her key skills and attitudes were “being patient, open-mindedness and understanding of others as well as listening“, “handling different people and need”, and “in ways that is more about making a difference.”

Anousha taught a group of 22 women students at Ashiana Community Centre on a 6 week course teaching twice a week. There were 12 to 15 regular attendees towards the last couple of sessions. The majority were married with families, with most were of Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage.

Her assessment of the learners was:

“There were students of varying abilities in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. This was a challenge as the programme and the training focused on speaking. Nevertheless, the majority of students had done a class like this before and had some familiarity with topics, content and expectations.”

Anousha felt positive about the learners’ experience and what they gained from the programme:

“It was really good and heartening to see stronger students in English helping the weaker students in class, whether it was explaining things, or helping them verbally express things better.”

“I enjoyed the overall experience and found my time teaching students highly rewarding.”

Anousha thought the course worked as a pull factor for both the local community police and liaison officers to raise their presence and profile to the women learners, and enable the learners to give something back to the community:

“A member of the community police sat in class and distributed their pamphlets on domestic violence. She had a nice way with learners. Her presence worked well to build a level of trust and respect between the local community and the police.”

Anousha thought class numbers could impose a limitation:

“In too large a group, and with varying abilities, I did not have the opportunity to sufficiently address questions and respond to relevant requests from some individual students. It is difficult to practice real speaking in a big group due to time constraints. This places limitations of students practicing new learnt skills with other students. To overcome this in the last few lessons, I had the help of a teaching assistant, who sat with weaker students, while I assisted the rest. I still used the same lesson plan/content for both groups of students.”

In terms of course content:

“It was good to know what to teach each week and basic plans were useful. More detailed guides would have helped as part of module information, for example managing people with both lower and higher English proficiency levels. It would also have been good if there was time to be able to explore more with students other topic areas.

Course content was useful but often too general. It would have been useful if there was more of a tailored approach to be able to meet students’ need, which was made difficult by large groups and time. For example, I felt we were rushing through topics and not able to get learners to think enough about doing or performing practical everyday activities.”

She felt very positive about her experience as a volunteer tutor:

“I enjoyed the overall experience and found my time teaching students highly rewarding. It has encouraged me to engage in other areas of voluntary work.”

Volunteer Tutor Case Study: Peter McBennett

Peter's interest in teaching English grew as a result of travels to Argentina back in 2008 and his most recent trip to China in June 2013 where he taught ESOL. He undertook and successfully completed a CELTA Cambridge based English teaching qualification to teach adults:

"I wanted to get back into the classroom in order to regain my confidence and motivation again. A friend recommended TimeBank and I made contact and applied to be a volunteer tutor.

I really wanted to see if I could do it, and also gain a different experience from my time teaching in China, where the approach to teaching and learning is over structured, rigid and regimented, and where students are not taught to work in teams or groups."

Peter spoke very positively about the training for the programme:

"Training was a good refresher for me and the trainer was excellent with great energy about her, particularly good at getting people involved. It helped me review my teaching skills as well as meet others."

Peter taught an all-male group for 12 weeks. The age range of the group was 28 to 45, married with families and working in the restaurant business on a shift and irregular hours. All but one were Muslim. The group started with 10 and by the end of the course there were 8 students, of whom 7 gained a Certificate. Peter thought Ramadan may have contributed to drop out, with low energy levels and the manual labour challenges of working in a fast moving restaurant environment during the day as well.

There was another volunteer tutor, a woman, and like him a CELTA qualified teacher teaching women in the Centre. They helped and supported each other's teaching and shared information and materials.

Peter found important differences with the CELTA course:

"In the CELTA courses a major difference was the way students construct and present the English Language. You start with the meaning then move onto the form then pronunciation. In this course you start with the meaning, move onto pronunciation and then last the form (i.e. breaking the word down, writing down and then speaking.) The CELTA course provided opportunities and ability for developing and giving the learner more involvement in their learning."

"Compared to the CELTA course, learners' skills on this programme varied more with regard to greater diversity in speaking, reading and writing as well as listening ability and capacity. While there were a number - I would say around 3 - who were pre-entry below Level 1, others I feel were level 2 and possibly 3."

One response he made was to develop extra material for higher level students.

Peter spoke positively about the course content:

"The curriculum and syllabus was useful in helping me prepare and provide a basic foundation for my class which I could build on, where the class plan was good idea on what to teach."

There was scope for improvement and development:

“The course content provided a solid framework but insufficient depth. The course could have benefited the tutor more by providing further exercises to do from scratch using the telephone as part of homework between sessions. A number of modules could have been better integrated or merged and possibly advice on helping the tutor adjust/adapt the syllabus as one progresses through the course.

The people at very low ability levels need 1:1 mentoring from the outset in e.g. alphabet, handwriting and basic phonetics, possibly some kind of text book suggested for this, and as part of having a separate course induction for students, prior to them moving onto the scheduled and set modules.

In terms of outside support more help with exploring and linking learning to voluntary work opportunities, where learning is more about doing than proxy.”

As students have variable internet access, he thought that there should be less emphasis on learning by the internet.

Some students would benefit from mentoring to help their progression to ESOL classes. Peter noted that 2 or 3 of his students were going on to Solihull College to take ESOL at Level 3.

“What was interesting was that while the students’ overall level of vocabulary was good, the real challenge was forming sentences and this they found much more difficult. While I was able to involve individual students at a 1:1 level in the course after helping them overcome their speaking and listening challenges, the collective sense of student need and involvement in class could have been helped if I had a learning assistant or trainer able to ascertain progress in how students are learning and get a better picture of collective need impacting on language proficiency.”

In terms of learner progression, Peter felt:

“There needed to be more on the nuts and bolts of language - that is how to form a sentence to put in the lesson plan as part of tutor pre-class prep and to flesh out more in-class.

There could have been observation of classes and opportunities for the tutor to provide a brief portfolio of their personal skills development and evidencing this possibly via some kind of more formal log or record both by them and their observer of their learning.”

The course could be integrated with other developments in ESOL:

“More could be done to assess students coming into class, finding the levels of students possibly by a short exercise as part of their application onto course where materials from Solihull College are available and can be easily adapted for such purpose.

Having a Taster course for ESOL at level 1 is something that could be explored where what is taught is more linked to basic listening skills and help with developing students’ listening skills, where one could also pilot making the overall course longer than 12 weeks, which may not be sufficient.”

Peter felt that the course had been very positive for him personally, and helpful to him in considering doing languages at Open University.

Volunteer Tutor case study: Rakhyia Begum

Rakhyia has a degree in sociology and a background in community work over 10 years including paid employment with a Saheli women's group around Birmingham and time spent with East Birmingham Community Forum (EBCF).

Her work in the community included work with women only organisations in projects empowering women through education and training. Her role was to help them to develop confidence and knowledge to enable them to access and make use of such opportunities.

Rakhyia spoke about her previous experience:

"I had no prior teaching experience before participating in this programme. I had gained wide experience and knowledge of the social care needs of children and families, people from migrant and minority backgrounds through volunteering roles. This included being a counsellor for Childline, a volunteer at Liverpool Hope and as a volunteer at a drop in centre. I also undertook work with faith communities during my time at York University. With these experiences, I developed skills in effective communications and listening which are very useful in pre-ESOL support."

She explained her reasons for getting involved in the Talking Together programme:

"The first was as a result of having two young children. My motivation was to search out part-time work. I was made redundant due to lack of funding for my post, and a friend at work sent me information about this ESOL training and the Talking Together programme to become a volunteer tutor to teach ESOL. I decided I had nothing to lose. This could also open doors to other possibilities."

Rakhyia rated the training for the programme:

"The trainer was excellent and of great help to tutors in developing their engagement skills with learners. The trainer gave good 1:1 feedback and support on tasks such as giving presentations. The training provided an invaluable safe environment where you could develop your teaching and learning practices in ways that facilitated confidence. I would have liked more on techniques of teaching and learning beyond directed learning to engage with the full range of people where English is not their first language."

She contrasted the background of learners at the two centres where she was engaged as a volunteer tutor:

"They were very different in terms of learner profile, proficiency, and confidence in English. The Somerfield Centre consisted largely of people from Pakistani, Somali and Bengali backgrounds, while the Jet Shop Centre had a higher proportion of beneficiaries from Eastern European Czech and Slovakian backgrounds."

Learners gained a lot from the courses:

"They gained an awareness of different activities for everyday existence and life in another country and developed confidence to engage with such activities."

Rakhyia commented on course content:

"The syllabus was a useful starting point for learners. There were some very helpful modules such as train timetables and using maps to locate streets and key points.

I felt the depth and work within each module was often too basic and directive. I feel many of the modules could have benefited by being merged as not all modules content took 3 hours

to deliver. Introduction and Greetings, and possibly Public Services and those relating to customer services are examples where this could work. Learners could be encouraged to let the tutor know what else they would like covered in terms of content or do with them (e.g. tenancy issues, household problems). I did take steps to engage them in what they wanted covered after going through the formal module material and resources.”

Rakhya's view is based on her perspective on learners from her community:

“Many from the Pakistani community had good skills in terms of numeracy and listening skills including knowledge of the alphabet for example. Others were able to verbalise more than others around different things. The course content and structure was not able accommodate and reflect this sufficiently. Many had basic English but were poor at verbalising what they feel and understand due to confidence issues and not just being about proficiency and ability factors.”

And volunteer tutors too:

“I personally learnt more about myself in the course of the programme. It enhanced my confidence to gain new skills and carry out associated tasks around e.g. managing admin and also planning things including being assertive with authority, as well as enhancing and strengthening my existing skills around pastoral care. I needed to do a lot more research and gather more information than I expected.”

Rakhya believes it is essential the course is followed up for learners:

“It was not clear for me what post module session support they received or were able to access. This is essential to embed what they were taught and learnt as part of the course. Learners need space to get together to reflect on class sessions. For me there needs to be a three prong approach that holistically connected and reinforced their written, verbal and expressional English communication skills within the context of the programme.”

Volunteer tutors are a powerful resource for the programme:

“There were various email and virtual ways tutors could communicate with each other. This could be supported by more spaces for face to face contact through residential and other gatherings to meet to share and learn about good practices.”

Rakhya is very positive about the outcomes of the programme for herself:

“The programme has also inspired my confidence to explore and look into other associated teaching and training courses. After the 12 weeks which comes to a close on 20th August 2014 I am looking to doing a PETAL course at college.”

Mentor Case Study: Sharon Baker

Sharon Baker works as a private tutor in French and Spanish, and has a Certificate in teaching English as a Foreign Language. She is currently studying for a Master's degree in Education and Applied Linguistics.

Sharon has experience of volunteering, particularly for specialist disability charities. She wanted to find an opportunity to undertake different volunteering, helping refugees with their English. She describes herself as uncomfortable about current anti-immigration rhetoric painting an unfair picture of recent migrants. She thought the Talking Together programme would make good use of her skills and interests.

She applied to do both the mentoring and language training. She sees mentoring as a more holistic role with parallels to her supporting and signposting work for disability charities. The 2 days training were useful, helping her to get a good sense of TimeBank's aims and objectives, and the nature of the Talking Together programme.

As a mentor, she worked with a group of 6, with mentees drawn from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Ethiopia. All mentees were women and had completed the 12 week language training. Confidence issues remained, particularly when required to negotiate complex systems. Sharon had a fellow mentor working intermittently with her supporting the group.

Sharon considered that all mentees were at a similar stage of development in their grasp of English. She found the content of the sessions to be very practical with mentees encouraged to get to know each other, talk about their families, shopping and using services, preparing for the trip, undertaking the trip (in the case of her group to a Vintage Victorian Tea Room in Birmingham), and focusing on steps to strengthen English in the future. All had smart phones, helping access relevant information.

There was good attendance of the sessions by mentees. All the mentees wanted to do formal ESOL subsequently. One mentee wanted to look for work in social care. Two others had further study plans, aside from improving their English.

All the mentees had supportive family environments to learn English in, including support from their husbands. They made little or no use of translation and interpretation services even when in hospital.

Sharon found it rewarding to volunteer as a mentor. Living in rural Worcestershire, she particularly enjoyed the contact across cultures involved and encountering different world views.

Sharon considers that the mentoring programme would be even stronger if there were a couple more sessions to consolidate learning and to encourage mentees to use their English and to avoid running the risk of losing the progress that they had made. She found in practice that the mentoring sessions involved more preparation time than originally advised. There was a need to create more resources to support the mentoring. These should be downloadable from a dedicated website.

Sharon is now working on the TimeBank Hidden Carers project.

Mentor Case Study: Aruna Thompson

Aruna Thompson brings a strong personal experience to her work as a mentor. Arriving in the UK as a teenager in the 1970s, she and her brother found themselves supporting their mother who spoke very little English. Her siblings can recall their mother being shouted at in a market because she did not understand what was being said to her. Forty years on, this experience continues to upset Aruna, which is why helping others with the English language is so important to her.

Aruna's mother was a determined woman and struggled on but had no support apart from her children and family to draw on.

Aruna herself left school at 17, worked in an office until she had her first child, and subsequently undertook childminding and evening work. Enrolling on an access course at Stourbridge College, she progressed to successfully complete a Business Studies degree at Wolverhampton University. These experiences of practical need for support and being able to progress herself motivates Aruna to help others with very little English.

Aruna found details of the Talking Together mentoring programme when looking for opportunities to volunteer. She liked the idea of the mentor's work in giving confidence to learners. The training was good and helped her to focus on enabling the mentees to reach their goals.

As a mentor, Aruna supported two groups of mentees. All the mentees she worked with were women, and ages ranged from 20 to 36. Mentees were drawn from diverse communities.

The first mentee group had 15 mentees and Aruna worked with three other mentors. The group of mentees contained a number of learners who had gained more confidence in speaking English. In such a short programme, it is necessary to be realistic about what can be covered, and know well the basic pack of materials. By the end of the second week, she had got to know her mentees and about their needs.

The second mentee group had 10 mentees and Aruna worked with one other mentor. Of the 10, only 5 were of a level where they could progress straight away to ESOL Level 1 classes. The trip in week 5 was a confidence booster for mentees, and allowed the mentors added insight into the progress mentees were making. Asking mentees to come to the front of the group and speak for 2 minutes was also very useful in building confidence. Recognising the speed that English may be spoken by first language speakers is often a challenge; Aruna encouraged the mentees to build their confidence by asking mentees to repeat what they had said.

The mentors brought different expectations about their roles. Aruna concluded that working with fewer mentees and two mentors for each group worked better. The second group of mentees had done more to help each other, and had more space to engage with the mentor.

Aruna recalled the story of one mentee who had a headache and went to their GP. A breakdown of communication followed. The mentee was given shampoo for lice, which she was going to take as medicine, and only just stopped in time.

Throughout the mentoring sessions, Aruna and her fellow mentors were focused on encouraging mentees to take the next steps after the programme had finished. A few mentees were interested in progressing into paid jobs. A number of mentees were interested in volunteering, including at schools. However, getting to start volunteering sometimes appeared difficult - with checks and other requirements.

All the mentees Aruna worked with wanted to do ESOL classes. However, one of the difficulties mentees faced was that ESOL classes required a financial contribution that was hard to find, and did not have crèches like the Talking Together programme. Aruna thought that TimeBank had an important role in working to persuading others to remove barriers to progression.

Aruna enjoyed her work as a mentor. She felt that the mentoring had opened doors and hopefully access into a new world for the mentees. She would like to teach English and felt that her experience of the two groups had given her the basis for this. She would like to continue mentoring.

Annex 2: Theory of Change

EVALUATION OF TALKING TOGETHER PROGRAMME WORKING PAPER ON THEORY OF CHANGE

1. Introduction

This note is designed to identify the theory of change applied by the Talking Together programme, and to feed into the overall evaluation process. This note has been revised by HBMC following discussion with TimeBank.

2. What do we mean by theory of change?

One US definition (Mackinnon, Amott and McGarvey 2006) of theory of change is that it 'describes a process of planned social change from the assumptions that guide its design to the long-term goal it seeks to achieve. A theory of change takes a wide view of a desired change, carefully probing the assumptions behind each step in what may be a long complex process. Articulating a theory of change often entails thinking through all the steps towards a desired change, identifying the preconditions that will enable (and possibly inhibit) each step, listing the activities that will produce those conditions, and explaining those activities that are likely to work.'³

Cathy James (2011), a UK based consultant, sees theory of change as 'an ongoing process of reflection to explore change and how it happens – and what that means for the part organisations play in a particular context, sector and/or group of people:

It locates a programme or project within a wider analysis of how change comes about:

- It draws on external learning about development
- It articulates organisations' understanding of change – but also challenges them to explore it further
- It acknowledges the complexity of change: the wider systems and actors that influence it.'⁴

Both approaches indicate a degree of flexibility as how theory of change might be understood in the context of the Talking Together programme. They both underline that devising a theory of change is an iterative process and one that should provide enlightenment and insight to those developing and implementing the programme.

³ Anne Mackinnon, Natasha Amott and Craig McGarvey – Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning & Evaluation, Grantcraft 2006

⁴ Cathy James – Theory of Change Review (commissioned by Comic Relief) 2011

3. **What is the theory of change applied by the Talking Together programme?**

This note is based on our adaptation of the six core questions for theory of change Matthew Forti⁵ applies and the six pitfalls he advises organisations to avoid in determining their theory of change. The points made below should be treated as work in progress and suitable for development and addition.

Who is the Talking Together Programme seeking to influence and/or benefit?

The Talking Together programme has several groups that it is seeking to influence and/or benefit:

- **Beneficiaries:** The Talking Together programme seeks to support beneficiaries grow their competence in English thus enabling them to access education, training and employment; and as a support to those beneficiaries to play a greater role in their local communities.
- **Volunteers:** The Talking Together programme seeks to support volunteers to build their confidence and gain experience in teaching, mentoring and facilitating, enabling them to further develop their skills and qualifications in education, training and community settings, including teaching English to speakers of other languages.
- **Local communities:** The programme seeks to strengthen the ability of communities to draw a stronger contribution from beneficiaries, who have been through the programme and are thus in a stronger economic position to help and support others; to facilitate greater community cohesion; and to enable local communities to make greater and more effective use of volunteering.
- **Government, local authorities and other public service agencies:** it wishes to benefit the public purse through reducing the need within specific communities for some expenditure on interpretation and translation; through reducing the need for benefits through the programme enabling beneficiaries to participate in the labour market to a greater extent; and through greater competence in English for the beneficiaries to foster increased community cohesion and integration. The programme wishes to influence public policy and expenditure through showing that such programmes as Talking Together meet their objectives, represent good value for money and should be replicated elsewhere in the country with public support and funding.
- **Local private sector businesses:** it wishes to influence local private sector businesses to provide greater employment opportunities for those whose proficiency in English has been improved through the Talking Together programme.

⁵ Matthew Forti – Six Theory of Change Pitfalls to Avoid, Stanford Social Innovation Review, May 23, 2012

What results is the Talking Together programme seeking to achieve?

The immediate results that the Talking Together programme is seeking to achieve are twofold, namely that:

- Beneficiaries from the Somali, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Birmingham, Sandwell and Leicester should achieve a higher level of competence in English, improving their English proficiency.
- Enhancing the capacity of volunteers to train others in a similar way

The longer term results sought are to replicate and scale up the Talking Together Programme in other settings in England (based on learning from the programme).

Over what time period will the Talking Together programme achieve those results?

From start to finish, the Talking Together programme is seeking to achieve these results over an 18 month period.

Key milestones are:

- Setting up the working infrastructure for the programme
- Considering the context in which the success of the programme will be forged
- Developing partnerships with local agencies
- Selecting volunteers and matching with local agencies
- Running the classes
- Developing mentoring processes

How will the Talking Together programme, TimeBank and others make this happen?

The Talking Together programme centres on the provision normally of 12 week courses and learning materials for beneficiaries offering a variety of engaging, informal and flexible learning opportunities, together with life, employability and IT skills development that is flexible and adaptable to the needs of beneficiaries. In order to deliver the programme, volunteer tutors are recruited and trained, and partnerships developed by TimeBank with local providers. Further expertise will be provided through mentoring of beneficiaries.

Where will the Talking Together programme do this?

The Talking Together programme will be delivered in parts of Birmingham, Sandwell and Leicester.

Why does TimeBank believe this theory will bear out in practice?

There are several reasons why TimeBank believes that Talking Together programme will be successful:

- The value of English for Speakers of Other Languages teaching is widely established throughout the UK, helping learners develop their opportunities in education, training and employment, and achieve greater independence and self-reliance;
- The value of learning English for Speakers of Other Languages is widely recognised through Somali, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Birmingham, Sandwell and Leicester and beyond;
- A mix of provision in the programme including women-only classes, use of mentoring, and facilitating involvement of parents of young children through crèches in the programme;
- Focus on functional English;
- There are tutor volunteers willing to provide the required support;
- There are good quality materials online and mobile resources and printable PDF documents available to support learners;
- There are partners willing to support in the Talking Together programme;
- Public agencies are supportive of initiatives, such as the Talking Together programme, and the Government has publicly endorsed the programme, which is also understood to enjoy cross party support;
- Cultural sensitivity with which the whole programme has been developed and will be implemented;
- TimeBank's refugee mentoring scheme Time Together achieved remarkable results: 90% of beneficiaries reported they felt at home in the UK following their Time Together mentoring relationship and 98% reported an increase in English language proficiency after their mentoring support;
- Track record of TimeBank in working with companies to deliver employee-supported community initiatives;
- Low set up costs for future delivery.

4. Limitations of the programme in relation to theory of change

The Talking Together programme has a number of limitations built into it in relation to the theory of change above:

- The programme is restricted to a specific geographical areas (parts of East and West Midlands) that may or may not be typical of England as a whole for the purposes of scaling up and replication;
- The programme is restricted to three specific minority communities may or may not be typical of other minority communities in England for whom the programme might be of benefit. However, there may be participants in the courses from other minority communities;
- The programme is centred on the 18 to 40 age group, which may limit insights for the programme's value for older age groups. However, there may be some participants in the courses who are over 40;

- The programme has finite resources limiting the capacity to meet the needs of all those within the communities who might benefit;
- The delivery partners may be under-resourced for what is required from them to run the programme, potentially in lacking sufficient infrastructure to support the programme;
- Allowances for core/administrative costs may prove to be unrealistic, thus limiting volume and/or quality of data and information gathered
- As expenses for beneficiaries have not been budgeted for, this may limit participation and/or representative character;
- The programme faces a continuing challenge to establish direct causality in complex urban environments where many other factors (e.g. shifts in unemployment, changes in public funding) may affect outcomes for beneficiaries;
- Providing crèches are an expensive item in the programme and may not prove to be a fully replicable feature of the model;
- The programme has finite resources for the evaluation.

5. Potential inhibitors bearing on the theory of change

The following potential inhibiting factors could be significant for the assumptions built into the theory of change set out above. It is recognised that some of these factors are beyond the control of those running the Talking Together programme.

Potential inhibiting Factors	Mitigation
Inability to recruit sufficient volunteer tutors to deliver to beneficiaries	Constant push on recruitment
Volunteering model not appropriate to ends sought	Testing of model at early stage to see whether it needs modifications
Inability to recruit sufficient or right partners for the programme (e.g. inadequate funding, social franchising model not working well)	Reasonable payments to partners Grass roots agencies recruited with lower overheads
Beneficiaries are not motivated to take advantage	Constant push on recruitment Focus on what individual beneficiaries gain through their involvement
Beneficiaries who are recruited might not be representative of needs within specific communities for the Talking Together programme	The programme represents a start rather than a fully completed exercise. It can establish grounds for more comprehensive approaches
Resources and staffing structure are not	Close monitoring and

sufficient for the tasks of the programme	proactive allocation of resources across budget lines
Loss of key personnel in TimeBank	Staff job rotation, shadowing and open project meeting file
TimeBank not wholly committed to Talking Together Programme	Focus on the sustainability of the programme and demonstration of 'what works'
Warm words from external stakeholders but lack of real support in practice	Coordinator has key role in developing relationships. Ensure appropriate incentives offered to secure involvement
Failure to achieve targets set by DCLG	Regular monitoring against targets to establish progression
The programme is short term and could have insufficient time to pilot and improve	Ensure project does not over-extend; keep things simple
Lack of clarity in policy of incoming Government in May 2015 leading to (a) different priorities or (b) favouring different ways of delivering the same ends or (c) lack of finances to support replication/ scaling up	Engage the interests of other funders and sponsors (non-governmental) in what the Talking Together programme can do and achieve
Continuation of current Government but (a) it is not convinced by the results of the programme or (b) it welcomes results but no further resources to commit or (c) it looks to local authorities to fund replication/scaling up but (i) they do not have resources to support this or (ii) they have different policy priorities	Engage the interests of other funders and sponsors (non-governmental) in what the Talking Together programme can do and achieve

Hilary Barnard and Hament Patel

HBMC

ANNEX 3: SROI FOR TALKING TOGETHER PROGRAMME

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is HBMC's Social Return on Investment (SROI) report for the Talking Together programme.
- 1.2 Data and information on the content and delivery of the programme is provided in the main body of the report.
- 1.3 Information on stakeholder interests are provided elsewhere in this report.
- 1.4 This report takes into account earlier SROI reports estimated the value of ESOL training, notably:
 - Gateway Portsmouth Interim Project Evaluation Report, August 2013
 - Alana House
- 1.5 This report has been produced in consultation with the Talking Together team.
- 1.6 Assumptions are explained in Section 3.

2. Theory of Change and SROI

- 2.1 HBMC's theory of change paper is provided at Annex 2.
- 2.2 This SROI exercise focuses on two bottom line aspects of social return:
 - Economic: the financial and other effects on the economy, either macro or micro;
 - Social: the effects in the individuals or communities' lives that affect their relationship with each other.

Environmental factors, while generally extremely important, are considered less relevant to this study.

3. Assessment of Direct Outcomes

3.1 The list of direct outcomes is based on extensive discussion involving learners, volunteer tutors, mentors and delivery partners and TimeBank Talking Together programme staff. It draws on factors identified in published SROI studies and their calculations of values.

Beneficiary group	Direct Outcomes	Benefits	Financial proxies
Learners in the workplace	<p>Greater ability to access low skilled work including cleaning; catering, restaurants, stores and retail</p> <p>Greater ability to communicate in the workplace, making less errors</p> <p>Greater ability to understand the employer's needs and requirements, and be able to undertake more complex/demanding training</p> <p>Greater ability to follow policies and procedures including Health & Safety thus reducing accidents in the workplace</p> <p>Greater ability to set up own businesses or become self-employed, adding to flexibility in the labour market</p>	<p>Acquisition of new or improved skills by learner, increasing their ability to participate in the labour market and sustain paid employment</p> <p>Some reduction in dependency on state benefits</p>	<p>Assume access to low skilled work applicable to 200 learners Participation in labour market - £7/hour x average 20 hours/week = £140/learner Annual value - £28,000 Ten year value - £280,000</p> <p>Assume reduction in benefit of £20/week for 200 learners = £4,000 Ten year value - £40,000</p> <p>Basic skills training estimated at having an Net Present Value of £20,000 in 2008/09 values (cited by BIS Research Paper no.38, 2011 – Measuring The Economic Impact of Further Education) –</p>

			<p>assume value remains at £20,000 – assume applicable to 100 learners – total value of £2,000,000</p> <p>Increase of £10,000 in individual income leads to increase of £3,500 in Government income and benefit reduction, also leads to increase in employer's profit of £1,000 to £3,000</p> <p>Fujiwara 2013 – Wellbeing & Civil Service (Cabinet Office/DWP) – value decline in household income of £17,300 per annum through not being able to meet up with friends a number of times a week – lack of English ability and confidence is very significant barrier to making friends and social contacts Assume applies to 100 learners, total value is</p>
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			£1,730,000
Learners as parents	<p>Greater ability to participate in the learning of their children;</p> <p>Greater ability to participate in games and leisure activities with their children;</p> <p>Greater ability to take more part in oversight, safeguarding and welfare of their children</p> <p>Greater ability to address health needs (including mental health) of their children, and supporting appropriately their children at GP surgeries, clinics and hospital visits</p> <p>Greater ability to show more appreciation of their children's interests, including use of the internet</p> <p>Improved family relations</p>	<p>Earlier interventions in healthcare for learner's children, avoiding the need for more expensive treatments, and less missed school days for children</p> <p>More protection for children reducing demand for expensive crisis admissions, and greater possibilities for learner to communicate with specialist services that may be involved</p> <p>Stronger learning environment for children, raising aspirations, valuing school performance and reducing NEET outcomes</p> <p>Reduction in GP visits</p> <p>Reduction of inappropriate use of healthcare services including A & E</p>	<p>Annual cost of child in care - £100,000 – assume 1 child for 6 years - £600,000</p> <p>Learners avoiding substance misuse – 20 sessions @£50/session; assume 10 learners – total saving of £10,000</p> <p>Lifetime cost of children being NEET (uprating Godfrey and Hutton 2002) - £350,000/child Assume 5 children – total of £1,750,000</p> <p>Portsmouth study (2013) suggests improvement in emotional wellbeing (embraces savings to the NHS) at £3,450 per learner – assume applies to 100 learners, total of £345,000</p> <p>Avoidance of domestic violence – serious</p>

		<p>Parents better able to relate to their children, facilitating their integration into mainstream community life</p> <p>Avoid children being taken into care</p>	<p>assaults – £40,000 each - assume 10 learners affected – saving of £400,000</p> <p>Cost of other assaults – £5,000 each - assume 10 learners affected – saving of £50,000</p> <p>Groot (2006) suggests value of person’s social network at £2,800 per annum; greater value to women calculated at £3,700 per annum; greater safety net as a whole equivalent to £7,600 per annum – not included in calculations</p>
Learners as citizens	<p>Greater ability to understand better civic responsibilities, including acting within the law, voting, avoiding anti-social and criminal behaviour, and incorporating these behaviours in their own and their families’ practice</p> <p>Greater willingness of learners to volunteer with their own and wider communities to improve quality of life of the community and contribute to the provision of better services</p>	<p>Understand better the threats posed by violent extremism</p> <p>Be role models for community engagement and participation</p> <p>Positive contribution to cohesion/inclusion</p>	<p>Cost of custodial sentence - £40,000 assume 1 avoided – saving of £40,000</p> <p>Low level criminal activity – cost at £1,000 - assume 3 avoided - £3,000</p>

<p>Learners as consumers</p>	<p>Greater ability to shop for necessities without assistance, ensure more balanced diet, budget appropriately and avoid debt</p> <p>Greater ability to shop around and to avoid being conned/scammed</p> <p>Greater ability to access mainstream public services, including health services and public transport</p> <p>Greater ability to support dependents with care needs</p>	<p>Reduction in dependency of public and other agencies on translation and interpretation services</p> <p>Earlier interventions in healthcare for dependents, avoiding the need for more expensive treatments, and enabling less expensive care for dependents</p> <p>Some avoidance of healthcare treatments through better nutrition</p> <p>More protection for vulnerable adults, reducing demand for expensive crisis admissions, and for learner to communicate with specialist services that may be involved</p>	<p>Poor eating and personal care, including obesity – assume 300 learners affected – saving of £200 per annum – 10 year saving - £600,000</p> <p>Less prescription medicine as a result of increased confidence and self-esteem – assume affected 50 learners – saving of £15/month/learner - £9,000</p>
<p>Learners as individuals</p>	<p>Greater confidence</p> <p>Greater clarity about the next steps they</p>	<p>Less need for others to translate</p>	<p>Daniel Fujiwara (Valuing The Impact of Adult Learning, LSE 2012) -</p>

	would take	Better orientation to wider surroundings Reduced tension/anxiety General wellbeing	£300/year to individual health impact of part time learning – assume 1000 beneficiaries - £300,000
Volunteer Tutors	Progression of volunteer tutor's learning/ accessing new opportunities (e.g. to CELTA) Acquisition of new and development of existing skillset Gaining employment through volunteer tutor role Health and wellbeing of volunteer tutor	Increased employability of volunteer tutors including in more skilled roles Positive alternatives at challenging point in life Work experience in teaching	Fujiwara 2013 – Wellbeing & Civil Service (Cabinet Office/DWP) – increase in life satisfaction scores volunteering at least once a month as equivalent to increased household income of £13,500 per annum – assume applies to 100 tutors - £1,350,000
Mentors	Progression of volunteer tutor's learning/ accessing new opportunities Acquisition of new and development of existing skillset Gaining employment through mentor role Health and wellbeing of mentor	Increased employability of mentors including in more skilled roles Positive alternative at challenging point in life Experience and skills in group work	Fujiwara 2013 – Wellbeing & Civil Service (Cabinet Office/DWP) – increase in life satisfaction scores volunteering at least once a month as equivalent to increased household income of £13,500 per annum – assume applies to 20 mentors – £270,000

<p>Delivery partners</p>	<p>Continued viability of local community organisations</p> <p>Sustaining key community service</p> <p>Continued employment for staff</p> <p>Skill development for staff in co-ordinating roles</p> <p>Further development of volunteer base of individual delivery partners</p>	<p>Greater integration and community cohesion</p> <p>Increased capacity of community organisations spending money in their own communities</p> <p>Avoid redundancy costs that would arise if organisation's staff were laid off</p> <p>Avoid benefits dependency of those who would otherwise be made unemployed</p> <p>Continued provision of support for volunteers</p> <p>Being commission ready for wider provision, whether in ESOL or in different service</p> <p>Complementing other providers</p>	<p>Portsmouth study (2013) suggests similar calculations as for volunteer tutors and mentors – not included in calculations</p>
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4. Indirect outcomes

- 4.1 The Talking Together Programme makes a significant contribution in indirect outcomes, many of them with medium and long term positive outcomes.
- 4.2 The list of indirect outcomes is based on extensive discussion involving learners, volunteer tutors, mentors and delivery partners and TimeBank Talking Together programme staff:
- Less dependency on translation and interpretation services
 - Broadening of friendship networks contributing to bonding and bridging social capital in local minority communities, and greater community cohesion across all local communities
 - Less demand for specialist services by learner and their family
 - Reduce number of families falling within Government's 'Troubled Families' category
 - Small business development
 - Improved tax base for HMRC and greater contribution to tax revenues
 - Greater scope for public service improvements as a result of resources released by reducing demand on services
 - Potential of Talking Together programmes a model for replication across other urban areas in England able to realise savings

5. Factors that might reduce the benefits

As part of the SROI, the section below considers factors that might reduce the benefits from the Talking Together programme.

5.1 Other causes of these changes might have applied (attribution)

It is our assessment that the direct outcomes arise as a result of the Talking Together programme and not due to other factors. We make this assessment for the following reasons:

- The significant reduction in ESOL funding and particularly in relation to pre ESOL work has meant that learners did not have access to other free courses

- Through group work and case study interviews, there is significant evidence that unfunded ESOL/pre ESOL courses were beyond the means of learners
- There were no initiatives in areas of Birmingham and Leicester that could have substituted for the Talking Together programme and secured the same results
- While the support of family and friends is extremely important to learners, there were no more informal programmes that could substitute for the Talking Together programme
- The Talking Together programme has been able to lever other elements of support strengthening learning and confidence in English
- The Talking Together programme is a unique offer to volunteer tutors and mentors
- The delivery partners had no other funding that could have enabled them to undertake this programme

5.2 **Activities that have been displaced by the Talking Together programme? (displacement)**

It is our assessment that the Talking Together programme has not displaced other programmes or initiatives. We make this assessment for the following reasons:

- Previous providers of ESOL had substantially scaled down their programmes and significantly reduced community access prior to the inception of the Talking Together programme
- There is no evidence to suggest that the existence of the Talking Together programme has stifled any initiatives by local authorities or other funders in the areas where the Talking Together programme has operated
- There is no evidence that there are risks associated with the benefits generated by the programme

5.3 **What would have happened anyway? (deadweight)**

It is our assessment that if the Talking Together programme has not been initiated, there would have been no provision in the area of pre ESOL. We make this assessment for the following reasons:

- The criteria of the Skills Funding Agency work against the provision of pre ESOL courses
- Local authorities and other local public funders are under the greatest financial pressure and focused on what existing provision they will cut rather than consider any new funding position

6. Overall assessment

By their nature, any estimates of SROI are highly approximate. It is recognised that any figures produced will naturally be open to debate. To guard against conservative estimates of benefit have been used throughout, and reliance placed principally on a study undertaken for a Government Department within the last 5 years.

The total cost of the Talking Together programme was £ £1.05million. Based on 1571 learners, the average cost/learner is £668. This figure includes the costs of volunteer tutors, mentors, delivery partners and TimeBank Talking Together team and associated costs. It is recognised that the cost/learner who participated in the mentoring sessions will be higher than the average figure and those who only participated in the classroom sessions will be lower. Based on 2190 classroom and mentoring sessions and taking into account all of the costs of the programme, the average cost per session is £ 479.

Taking the financial proxies identified in Section 3, produces a total value for the benefit of £9,777,000; in other words, for £1 invested in the Talking Together programme, a benefit of £ 9.3114 is secured.

Hilary Barnard

HBMC

30 June 2015

ANNEX 4: Evaluation Tasks

HBMC was commissioned as evaluators at the outset of the Talking Together programme in March 2014. The evaluation work has been led by Hilary Barnard, the founder of HBMC, assisted by Hament Patel.

A1.1 HBMC has produced 11 sets of papers for the evaluation. All these papers have been reviewed and signed off with TimeBank.

- Project Plan for the evaluation;
- Working Paper on Qualitative Information;
- Theory of Change;
- Data on relevant demography and trends in Birmingham and Leicester;
- Note on developing case studies;
- 10 case studies (4 volunteer tutor, 6 learner; 2 mentor);
- Working with delivery partners – based on in depth 1:1 interviews with 6 delivery partners;
- Mid-term report, November 2014;
- Year 1 report, May 2015;
- SROI analysis, June 2015;
- Final report, June 2015.

A1.2 The evaluators' work has included:

- Monthly meetings and frequent email exchange with Dave Conroy, Programme Manager (face-to-face and in depth phone calls);
- Interviews with mentors and with mentoring team at TimeBank, June 2015
- Advice on evaluation of different models, March 2015
- Meeting with TimeBank Talking Together team re mentoring programme and NIACE Citizens Curriculum, Birmingham, January 2015;
- Focus group with volunteer tutors, Birmingham, December 2014
- Focus group with delivery partners, Birmingham, December 2014
- Attendance at presentation of Demos report 'The Full English', December 2014
- Meeting with TimeBank Talking Together team re overall performance and challenges, Birmingham, October 2014;
- In depth phone meeting with Alex Shaw, Elevation Network (agency delivering training for volunteer tutors);
- Visit to delivery partner, Birmingham, August 2014;
- Review of information requested about the programme and its delivery;
- Review of data and information submitted in monitoring reports by TimeBank to DCLG;
- Review of criteria for selection of delivery agents;
- Review of original bid documents submitted by TimeBank to DCLG;
- Review of wider literature on public policy regarding ESOL:
- Devising questions for facilitated focus group sessions with learners;
- Devising questions for interviews with delivery agents.

ANNEX 5: ABOUT HBMC

HBMC is a specialist strategy, evaluation and organisational development consultancy. It was founded by Hilary Barnard in 1991.

Since 1991, HBMC has worked with an exceptionally broad range of charities, social enterprises, not for profits, educational and professional, Government and other statutory agencies, in the UK and internationally including:

Charities, social enterprises and not for profits: Volunteering Matters, Parkinson's UK, Worshipful Company of Weavers, PAC-UK, NDCS, Trust for Conservation Volunteers, In Control, Methodist Church, Black Health Agency, London Friend, Hospice UK, Relate, MS Society, London Tigers, Bridge Mental Health and Lloyds Bank Foundation

Educational and professional: Francis Crick Institute, RIBA, ICSA, NIACE, CILIP, PSHE Association, Bishopsgate Institute, National Children's Bureau, National Governors Association, London Film School, and RWS and RE

Government and other statutory: Department of Health, Skills for Care, IDeA, Children's Workforce Network, CABE, Westminster and Gloucester City Councils, Swindon Borough Council, and the London Boroughs of Newham, Greenwich and Lewisham

International: Article 19, ORG, International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, Health Foundation/MaiKhanda (Malawi), CISV International, The Refugee Council, Columbus Partners and NAPIMS (Nigeria)

Hilary has written widely on strategy, governance, leadership development and organisational change. He is co-author of Strategies for Success (NCVO) and Improving Equality and Diversity (ACEVO). Hilary has an MBA with distinction in strategic planning. He is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD and a member of the Organisational Development & Innovation Network, and the Experience Network of former charity Chief Executives. He is a former Senior Visiting Fellow at Cass Business School.

Hilary was assisted by Hament Patel in conducting the evaluation. Hament brings over 20 years' experience as researcher and educator, including development of innovative action research working with service users in health and social care, and in the development of participatory evaluation around community based challenges and issues. Hament is a member of the Patient & Public Reference Group of the College of Optometrists.

The HBMC website can be accessed at www.hilarybarnard.com and enquiries sent to hilarybarnard@aol.com