

**'Maximising Potential'**

**An Independent Evaluation of Time Together  
November 2003**

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## **Executive Summary**

The first year of 'Time Together' has been subject to an independent external evaluation by 3Consultancy. The full evaluation report can be found on the TimeBank website at [www.timebank.org.uk/mentor](http://www.timebank.org.uk/mentor), or supplied on request.

Over a period of one month the external consultants conducted face to face and telephone interviews, focus groups and surveys involving over 20% of all participants as well as project staff, organisational partners and key stakeholders. The evaluation considered the formulation and implementation of the pilot, the value of the scheme as a tool for refugee integration, its cost-effectiveness, its potential for replication and the wider impact generated through the media and word of mouth.

### **Project Formulation and Implementation**

Given the enormous amount of work that TimeBank had to do to meet initial targets, devise the Time Together Guide, develop specialist training for mentees and mentors and create a market for mentoring amongst refugee communities, the start-up period demonstrates an entrepreneurial quality and dynamic energy on behalf of the TimeBank project staff.

*'The few staff delivering the scheme are highly effective and enthusiastic – very impressive– Mentor survey*

Given the pilot nature of the scheme, insufficient time was planned in to formulate the project and develop the founding partnerships. However, TimeBank's 'can-do' culture somewhat offset this potential problem through risk-taking and the commitment and hard work of project staff. The Project Board, while it has not involved refugees as it might have done, has proved to be an excellent sounding board, a network of specialists and a flexible decision-making forum.

The systems developed to pilot the scheme are comprehensive. The staff have created an impressive range of best practice methods to constantly monitor and evaluate the scheme. Additionally they have utilised feedback to consistently develop the scheme along best practice guidelines. One such development, while not yet sufficiently implemented, concerns the greater involvement of participants in their own matching. The registration process itself should also be developed to feature a greater degree of assessment against transparent criteria.

It is clear that TimeBank has a role in continuing to pilot new ideas within volunteer development since the consultants feel that the pilot systems are transferable to a range of ideas.

### **A tool for refugee integration**

The evaluation has found this mentoring scheme to be, without any doubt, an excellent tool for refugee integration. The consistency and level of the change

in mentees' perceptions of their own integration is startling. 90% of mentees rate mentoring as an excellent or very good method of integration. In conjunction with other survey results, as well as qualitative feedback, it can be concluded that mentoring is a particularly powerful and effective tool for refugee integration.

*"it was like being offered a future"* Mentee survey

There is evidence of refugees securing paid jobs once mentored, having being unemployed in the UK for some years. Increased levels of interviews attended and successful CV development are also reported. Whilst the passing of time and other variables (such as the work of specific refugee organisations and other community links) undoubtedly contribute to the increased feeling of integration experienced by the mentees, such practical achievements are important signs of increased levels of integration.

*"This is the best method of integrating UK citizens and refugees. So far, I have learnt to have self-confidence, know your objective before you step out and persist until the aim is achieved."*

Mentee survey

Moreover, the evaluation has shown that the two-way nature of the relationship fostered by the scheme has significant benefits for the mentor as well as the mentee. 63% of mentor survey respondents described their experience of volunteering with Time Together as rewarding in terms of their own personal development. The need for mentor support, in terms of sharing and resolving concerns and affirming self confidence is clear, but the benefits of providing such support are key to the scheme's overall success. The focussed yet relatively informal nature of the mentoring model and the way it is branded by TimeBank supports the effective recruitment of volunteer mentors who care about their mentees and work hard to support their increased integration.

### **Cost effectiveness**

Whilst unit-cost assessments often hide a great deal of qualitative value, the cost of initiating and supporting a mentoring relationship in the TimeTogether scheme was found to average £530. The scheme therefore represents a cost-effective method of supporting refugee integration. It is an excellent example of effectively 'learning through doing' and represents a model of best practice in supporting increased levels of integration for refugees in the UK. Moreover, mentoring works on a range of different levels. Not only does it impact on the people involved in the mentoring relationships but also on the wider community.

The funding of the scheme, from the European Refugee Fund, is conditional on the amount of time contributed by volunteer participants, which is in the region of 15,000 hours in the first year.

The cost effectiveness of utilising the existing TimeBank IT infrastructure to recruit mentors must also be highlighted. This has been an excellent use of

an excellent resource, seen in the high numbers of potential mentors who use the Time Together on-line registration procedure.

### **Wider impact**

An important aim of the scheme was to raise public awareness of the positive contribution that refugees make to the UK. Time Together works successfully to challenge negative perceptions of refugees. The evaluation found that participants naturally become ambassadors and active citizens. The scheme develops people who can speak up and who want to get involved in doing something to counterbalance the negative media focus on refugees and immigration.

Given that the issue of refugees and asylum seekers is still viewed as a controversial one within the UK, TimeBank has achieved valuable positive and inspiring media coverage in a relatively short period of time, including items on Scottish and English TV news, broadsheet features and a variety of radio and print coverage.

89% of mentors surveyed felt they had been effective in raising awareness of refugee issues with family, friends and colleagues.

*'I think the most important thing is talking to friends and colleagues and changing opinions on a local level.'* Mentor survey

77% of mentee survey respondents felt the scheme had helped them raise awareness of integration issues in their voluntary or professional workplaces. It is clear that the scheme is beginning to be known within wider refugee networks also; 44% of mentee survey respondents found out about Time Together through word of mouth.

Over the next year, TimeBank should build on its bank of successful case-studies, its vast network of contacts and its IT and media expertise to gear up the promotional side of the project. More work is needed to link the qualitative outcomes of the mentoring relationships to supporting ways of raising public awareness of refugee issues. TimeBank should for example explore the possibility of airing a film celebrating the scheme in Refugee Week 2004. Press and media focussing on targeted audiences could help promote the integration message to people who may not naturally be drawn to such a scheme and could therefore offer potential as a direct anti-racist strategy.

### **The future**

TimeBank's original vision was to test and develop a mentoring model that was economical, low-tech, and effective in terms of refugee integration; a model that could be rolled out or franchised nationally. To take the scheme forward, the consultants suggest TimeBank seeks additional funding to research the feasibility of further expansion into refugee communities outside of London.

Strictly speaking, asylum seekers were not to be targeted by Time Together, yet some mentors have partnered asylum-seeking clients who had not, at the

time of their match, been given full refugee status. While this was primarily caused by the need to fulfil target levels of participation in the scheme, officially opening the scheme to a wider client group would help in raising the public awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and support prejudice reduction in key communities. It would also serve to increase the supply of potential mentees in a market dominated by potential mentors.

The consultants feel that if the scheme is adapted effectively for each new location, it could be successful in a range of settings. To ensure success, strong local partnerships need to be formed early on in the planning stages. The consultants recommend that TimeBank should retain the branding, web-based recruitment and media focus, as well as national strategic overview of the development of the scheme.

With any expansion there is a danger that the 'personal touch', which is one of Time Together's strengths, could be lost. The current ratio between the number of participants and the number of staff in London and Glasgow would appear to be about the maximum possible with this client group, and is significantly higher than other mentoring schemes. It becomes increasingly difficult to monitor a higher number of relationships and the effectiveness of the project without increased investment in staffing.

The internal procedures, training plans and matching processes, as well as the various methods of evaluation and monitoring could quite easily be turned into a mentoring tool kit for other service delivery organisations and partnerships to roll out at the local level.

The consultants believe that Time Together is a visionary scheme, which is dynamic, and effects change. TimeBank should work with all relevant parts of the Home Office to further promote mentoring as an effective tool for refugee integration. Credit should be given to Matthew Thomson who led on the initial idea within TimeBank and to Sarah Arnold, Hailu Hagos, Meriem Omer and Afshan Saleem for carrying it forward so effectively.

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## Introduction

### TimeBank and Time Together

TimeBank is a high-profile UK campaign which aims to raise awareness of the value of giving time; inspiring and connecting a new generation of volunteers to share their experiences, time and skills.

In August 2002 TimeBank launched a new pilot project – ‘Time Together’ focussed on refugee mentoring. As a new idea to be piloted in the UK, it had two overarching aims:

- To build relationships between UK citizens and refugees, to break down barriers between cultures and to enable refugees to integrate into their new communities.
- To increase public awareness of the contribution that refugees make to the UK and make a real contribution to diversity in the UK by giving the chance for refugee voices to be heard.

A bid was submitted to the European Refugee Fund, managed by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) of the Home Office. The original bid was a partnership between TimeBank, The Employability Forum, Demos, the Foreign Policy Centre and The Prince’s Trust. Each partner organisation had a specific stake in the development of the project and an agreed role to play in its implementation. Within the funding bid, the following description of the pilot project was given:

“The project will provide 150 refugees with mentors in London, Birmingham and Glasgow. The mentors will be drawn from a range of backgrounds and will be selected on the basis of their capacity to introduce the refugees to different British contexts – with an emphasis on bringing these new citizens closer to their communities. The programme will offer refugees the chance to relate to people in employment and, where possible, access to workplace experience. Mentors and mentees will be trained at the beginning of the project, and the partner organisations will harness their support networks to explore diverse approaches and add local value to these sensitive relationships.

Research will be conducted into existing best practice in the UK and overseas, with a view to providing a set of development tools for key stakeholders, as well as an overview of current practices, key mechanisms, costs, measurements of success and adaptability of similar schemes in the UK and overseas. The scheme and the research will lay the basis for the design of a mentoring scheme for refugees in the UK that is focussed on community integration and employment. “

## Aims of the evaluation

As can be seen from the above outline of the project, TimeBank emphasised the pilot nature of the scheme, and the importance of on-going monitoring, evaluation and research.

TimeBank set the initial parameters for the independent evaluation as follows:

“An independent evaluation will need to address the following:

- How successful the project has been in achieving its aims.
- How effective the project has been in adapting to the needs of the client group.
- Whether the project needs to reassess its target audience/objectives.
- The projects incomes and inputs against its outcomes and outputs to measure effectiveness. (Focussing especially on soft targets).
- The percentage of refugees on the scheme who feel that they have benefited from the scheme in terms of integration.
- The percentage of refugees on the scheme who feel that the support of their mentor has been important in helping to achieve their personal objectives.
- The percentage of mentors who feel the time they have given has been a positive experience and personally rewarding.
- The cost-effectiveness of the project.
- The long term adaptability of the project.
- Suggestions for improvement and expansion.
- The conclusion will objectively address the question of whether mentoring is a successful tool in refugee integration.”

In setting these parameters TimeBank steered the external evaluators to investigate not only the incomes, inputs, outcomes and outputs of the scheme, but also importantly, the process of the first year of the scheme.

## Structure of this evaluation report

In order to gain a detailed analysis of the pilot scheme as well as an ‘holistic’ approach to the evaluation within the above parameters, the consultants created a model of evaluation which enabled close investigation into what were termed its ‘natural’ constituent parts. These parts fell into the following interconnected areas;

**Section 1** - Investigation and evaluation of the ‘pilot start-up’ of the scheme.

**Section 2** - Investigation and evaluation of the ‘running’ of the scheme.

**Section 3** - Investigation and evaluation of the marketing and media coverage of the scheme.

**Section 4** - Investigation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme and its ‘value for money’.

**Section 5** - Investigation and evaluation of mentoring as a tool for refugee integration.

**Section 6** - Investigation and evaluation of the adaptability of the scheme – looking forward.

This report is structured to follow the above model and each section provides;

- a. A brief narrative of what happened or what could be taken to mean ‘the story’.
- b. Findings, lessons learned and any recommendations.

The consultants focussed on the identification of the elements of the scheme that worked well, those that did not, investigation of lessons learned, and ways to improve the scheme for the future. Again, the emphasis on adaptability in TimeBank’s original tender document focussed the consultants thinking in this area. This is reflected in the final section.

The final chapter of the report provides a series of key conclusions by returning to the original parameters of the evaluation as well as highlighting the important recommendations and emerging themes.

### **Challenges of this evaluation**

It should be stated at the outset of this report that there were a number of important challenges to the evaluation of this scheme. In stating them here, the purpose of the consultants is to highlight these factors as key learning points for any future evaluation, or for any other evaluators of such a scheme. Additionally, these challenges of evaluation match the very challenges that the scheme has had to face within its pilot year.

- **Evaluating the notion of personal integration, and defining such a term.** A key issue within the very heart of the scheme is the aim of increased integration of refugees in UK life, culture and customs via the development of mentoring relationships with UK citizens. By its very nature it is problematic for any outsider to define someone else’s degree of integration. For this reason the consultants attempted to ask mentees (via the surveys) to self-assess their own experiences of whether the scheme aided their sense of integration within UK culture. Additionally, there are no clearly defined benchmarks to indicate when a person is integrated or not within a new country. The focus groups were utilised to explore this with mentors and mentees, and feedback was then translated into the questions used in the surveys. In this way, the consultants attempted to use a self-defined notion of integration as a basis within the surveys.
- **Timing and resource constraints**  
The timescale of this evaluation was tight, being four weeks from commissioning to draft report. The consultants worked to pilot the survey questions in the focus groups and to gain a snap-shot of the

scheme, its achievements and challenges. Additionally, there was a postal strike at the time of sending the mentee surveys out which may have affected the return rate. Further time and resources would have enabled the consultants to meet face to face with mentees/mentors and staff in Glasgow and Birmingham, as well as carry out further interviews with mentees and mentors.

- **Cultural issues and written surveys**

It should be noted that written surveys have their limitations when targeted at a refugee audience. The consultants identified that some refugees may feel inhibited in filling out a form because of their lack of written English skills. Additionally, feedback from TimeBank staff who recruit mentees identified that for some communities in Africa and Asia the written word is not a common method of communication. Again, if there had been more time, the consultants would have liked to have identified further numbers of mentees to evaluate their experiences of the scheme via further focus groups and interviews.

- **Evaluation of ‘public awareness’**

The overarching aims of the scheme are summarised in an ambitious statement which states that the scheme aims “To increase public awareness of the contribution that refugees make to the UK and make a real contribution to diversity in the UK by giving the chance for refugee voices to be heard”. The timing and resources of this evaluation did not stretch to being able to evaluate the ‘general public’ response to the scheme or to an evaluation in the public arena to assess the degree to which the scheme had made a difference to public perceptions of refugees. However, the surveys were designed to enable mentees and mentors to self-assess their own contribution to raising public awareness and the effect of this. Additionally, the media and press coverage is evaluated for its effectiveness in reaching new audiences and raising awareness of the key messages of the scheme.

## Evaluation methodologies

Different methodologies were devised and utilised as follows:

**Two focus groups** were held in the TimeBank national offices (London) – one for mentees and one for mentors.

**A survey** was devised for mentors and emailed out to each of the 142 mentors in London, Glasgow and Birmingham, asking them to email it back within 5 days.

**A survey** was devised for mentees and posted out to each of the 142 mentees in London, Glasgow and Birmingham, asking them to send it back within 5 days.

**Training and induction observation:** a 2 hour slot within the half day new mentee induction course, as well as a 2 hour slot in a training day for new mentors (London).

**Training observation:** also observed was the section of the training day when new mentees meet new mentors for the first time to explore

the meaning of culture, integration and identity as well as listen to an experienced mentor and mentee talk about their relationship and integration (London).

Staff within TimeBank did not play a part in either of the focus groups, and the instruction sheets attached to the surveys emphasised the confidential nature of the surveying process. In this way the consultants aimed to encourage both mentors and mentees to be honest and open in their feedback about the scheme, their experiences of TimeBank, and their opinions of mentoring as a method of refugee integration.

It should be noted that all focus groups and training attendance was achieved within London, so that face to face contact was not achieved with the mentees, mentors, staff or stakeholders in Glasgow or Birmingham.

**Stakeholder interviews:** In addition to the above methodologies, a range of stakeholders in the scheme were interviewed face to face, via email or telephone. **(See Appendices)**

**Literature and web search:** Additionally, a web search was carried out into relevant government policy and documentation relating to integration and immigration, voluntary sector work with refugees, and trends in mentoring practice within the UK.

**Desk review:** Finally, and very importantly, each piece of TimeBank documentation relating to the project was read and analysed including all documents relating to funding, internal evaluation and monitoring during the first year, minutes of Project Board meetings, self assessment reports, contact sheets between mentors and mentees, training plans and feedback, organisational policies and procedures relating to the delivery of the project, staff job descriptions etc.

In order to substantiate ideas and analysis within this report, the consultants make every attempt to show where findings and recommendations have originated within these methodologies.

## Evaluation of the scheme

### Section 1 - Investigation and evaluation of the 'pilot start-up' of the scheme

#### 1.1 What happened?

The original reasons for TimeBank initiating this pilot scheme amount to a combination of key factors coming together at a critical time. These factors amount to the Home Secretary's affirmation of mentoring as a useful method of refugee integration, TimeBank's profile at this ministerial level and within the Home Office, funding available for such schemes, existing IT and media infrastructure within TimeBank, and critically, the keen enthusiasm of a key member of staff, Matthew Thomson (Head of Development at TimeBank), to pilot a new volunteering scheme to complement the existing portfolio of campaigns. The original vision from TimeBank was to test out and develop a model that was relatively cheap to run, 'low tech', effective in terms of integration; a model that could be rolled out or franchised nationally.

It was envisaged at the outset that TimeBank's role in the original delivery partnership would be to utilise its existing web-based infrastructure to recruit mentors and promote the scheme. TimeBank's media and PR expertise and its partnership with the BBC would be utilised to raise public awareness, recruit mentors and support the recruitment of refugee mentees. Additionally, TimeBank would lead the partnership on the development of the tools and resources needed to implement and/or expand such a scheme in the future. These included policies, good practice knowledge, network knowledge, training ideas and specific sensitivities relating to integration and refugees. A Project Board co-ordinated by TimeBank would steer the project and give expert advice relating to refugee recruitment, employability, mentoring good practice and strategic development. The partner organisations (as stipulated in the original bid to the ERF) would offer the refugee brokerage service as well as the training for mentors, and the on-going policy research into mentoring as a method of integration.

Refugees would be recruited via the partner organisations and their networks, and TimeBank would not participate in the hands-on work of mentoring support. On paper, this partnership seemed a robust group of participating agencies. Such a partnership was needed to secure funding but also to gain validity for the initiative within the sector.

It was originally envisaged, both by TimeBank and the IND, that the mentees who would be involved in the scheme would be people who were recently arrived in the UK as these were thought to be the ones in need of such a scheme. In some contradiction to this, the IND did not give explicit permission to allow asylum seekers into the scheme.

However, it also seems to have become clear to the original project manager that a focussed mentoring relationship based on notions of personal and professional goal-setting might not work for people who had very recently arrived in the UK, due to the uncertain nature of their daily lives, and that the

scheme as it was originally envisaged might be more suitable for people who had had some time to establish themselves in the UK. There was also political impetus for mentoring to be offered to people who had been given leave to remain in the country. It seems that this issue has become somewhat blurred within the scheme as there are examples of many differing types of refugees and asylum seekers using the project, with a wide range of needs. This is picked up later on in this report.

The original premise was that by developing a goal-focussed mentoring relationship with a UK citizen, refugees would have a greater chance of integration. Examples of identifiable goals were securing employment and understanding UK culture. However, the emphasis of the marketing of the scheme for refugees was on integration generally, and not on the hook of increased employability, which the IND said was being fulfilled by other agencies and with which Time Together was not linked.

A Project Manager was recruited in September 2002 to develop the project; to manage the mentor recruitment, to work with partners on matching, co-ordinate the training provided by other partners and co-ordinate the expansion into Glasgow and Birmingham. In October 2002, a second member of staff was recruited by TimeBank to take on the role of mentee recruitment, training and support for the London based project. This new member of staff, Dr. Hailu Hagos, came from a refugee background, and had been the co-ordinator of a local refugee peer mentoring project before joining the Time Together project.

Very soon after Time Together was launched a number of factors became apparent. A number of the original partners were not in a position to deliver on the critical issues of mentor training and refugee recruitment. The number of mentees coming forward was very low and making in-roads into refugee community organisations would have been a very time consuming task, not to say a specialist skill which at that point was not available within the organisation. A great deal of in-house research and networking was completed (such as with Mentorpoint, and David Clutterbuck) and Mentorpoint initially delivered the mentor training in London and in Birmingham. RPS Rainer, who had developed a component for the NVQ in mentoring, delivered a training module on mentoring in a refugee context to complement the Mentorpoint training. The project staff utilised all of the above research to develop a specific training programme for the scheme. This has been adapted over time in response to participant feedback. TimeBank set about delivering the training and induction to mentors and mentees themselves. The first grouping of mentors and mentees was trained in London in December 2002. This was a number of months late when compared to the original project aims and deadlines.

## **1.2 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Interviews with TimeBank staff and subsequent analysis raise a number of key lessons learned within the start-up of this pilot:

The encouragement from government to test out such a scheme was an important factor in making it happen, together with the support from Rachael Reynolds (Home Office representative).

The project staff acknowledge that the original partnership agreements should have been researched, written and signed off before the implementation of the scheme. Staff felt that they had not taken enough time in the early planning stages of the partnership to test out the original agreements.

The 'market' for refugee mentees within London should have been researched and formally identified before the scheme began. Staff report that in some senses this market had to be 'created' due to the patchy understanding of this model of mentoring within refugee communities. Creating trust and understanding, especially with key refugee community leaders, would clearly take time, and would need to be carried out in partnership with existing refugee agencies and specialist networks who could vouch for TimeBank's validity.

Staff also pointed out that refugee communities potentially perceived such a scheme as top-down 'assimilation' rather than a two-way integration process. This is mentioned later in this report, as a learning point in relation to the marketing of the scheme in refugee communities. It reiterates the importance of good relationships with refugee communities and having staff with specific knowledge, skills and understanding in this field.

In addition to the previous two points, staff reported that initially locating the market for mentees was difficult as the IND do not keep an open and freely accessible database. TimeBank did plan to send out information packs via the IND to all those people given permission to stay in the country. However this method of marketing proved ineffective, and TimeBank staff now believe that a letter from the Home Office with a leaflet would not have been a successful method of promotion bearing in mind that most mentees are recruited via word of mouth. This evaluation report supports this finding.

Given the enormous amount of work that TimeBank had to do to meet the targets, devise the Time Together Guide, develop training for both client groups and create the initial market for the refugee mentees, the consultants think that this start-up period shows where the staff used their entrepreneurial and dynamic energy to make the scheme work given initial problems.

This sense of risk-taking and the 'can-do' attitude at the beginning of the project made the difference between it being a success and a failure and is a great credit to the project staff. A poor start which could have potentially led to overall failure would have cost TimeBank dearly in terms of organisational credibility within refugee communities as well as government.

## **Section 2 - Investigation and evaluation of the 'running' of the scheme**

### **2.1 What happened?**

The consultants considered every aspect of the running of Time Together in this evaluation. This part of the report is divided into the following elements:

- 2.2 The Project Board.
- 2.3 Staffing.
- 2.4 Policies, procedures and paperwork.
- 2.5 Recruitment, training, matching and support systems.
- 2.6 Internal evaluation and monitoring.
- 2.7 The development of Time Together in Glasgow and Birmingham.

Each of the above elements is described, followed by any findings, lessons learnt and recommendations for development.

### **2.2 Project Board**

The Time Together Project Board met approximately every six weeks during the pilot year. The Board was originally intended to include representatives from each of the original partners. However, when this did not happen in practice, the Board was scaled down to comprise the following; the originator of Time Together within TimeBank, Matthew Thomson, a representative from the Employability Forum, Patrick Wintour, a representative from RETAS, Andy Gregg, an independent consultant representing refugee community organisations, Tesfaye Gojjie, and a funder/ Home Office representative, Rachael Reynolds. Currently, the Project Board includes an additional TimeBank staff member (Andrew Dick) and no longer includes the Home Office representative. Sarah Arnold (Time Together Project Manager) attends and reports to the Board.

The work of the Project Board has changed over time. Initially, the aim was to offer access to potential mentees, enable a connection to the 'bigger picture' on refugee integration as well as provide 'non-managerial supervision' for credibility and accountability (to the funder and to the sector). Although no formal terms of reference exist for the Project Board, all current members agree that its strength has been in providing a strategic focus as well as a forum to discuss detailed project-running issues. It no longer has a formal role in identifying potential mentees. Minutes of all meetings are recorded and the consultants have had access to this paperwork as part of this evaluation.

#### **2.2.1 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Although there are no formal terms of reference for this group, it has proved vital to the success of the project. If this over-seeing structure was to be replicated elsewhere in the country, it would need clear terms of reference and accountability. The consultants also feel that if repeated on a local level, the term Project Board may be misleading, and instead steering

groups/advisory boards may be more useful. See **Section 6 on Adaptability and Looking Forward** later in this report.

The Board has been effective in supporting staff and maintaining an important connection to the 'bigger picture'. For example, the Employability Forum has been commissioned to write a high profile document ('Welcome to the UK') for refugees granted leave to remain. This document will promote Time Together as an opportunity for refugees, thereby widening the potential market of mentees. The Project Board provided TimeBank with access to knowledge and networks in the mentoring and refugee field. This was important in the start-up.

The Board has provided an excellent sounding board for project staff. However, staff report its limitations in not having a diverse representation, specifically from refugees and women. Ex-mentees/mentors from the scheme who have relevant skills or backgrounds could be recruited onto the Board as a good practice example of user-involvement. This would also mirror the model of developmental integration.

Sarah Arnold regularly reports on the project's progress and developments within London, Glasgow and Birmingham. The Project Board members demonstrate a very clear understanding of the London picture, but lack some detailed experience of the other city schemes. This could be detrimental in future strategic planning and possible replication of the scheme where local knowledge is necessary. It might be helpful in the short term to have a UK-wide meeting of staff, Board and key stakeholders to compare and contrast experiences and project learning.

Longer term however, the consultants would recommend a replication of the 'project board structure' at a local level as suggested above. See **Section 6 on Adaptability and Looking Forward** later in this report. The London-based Board could then take on a UK-wide strategic role, overseeing key issues and achievements and feeding these to the TimeBank Board of Trustees.

### **2.3 Staffing**

Initially, one full-time member of staff (Sarah Arnold) was recruited as a TimeBank development worker to work on the scheme. She is based in TimeBank's London office. The expectation was that Time Together would function as other TimeBank campaigns. TimeBank's role (and the focus of Sarah's work) would be the recruitment of volunteer mentors for the project and co-ordination of the project. The expectation was that the partner organisations would recruit mentees as has previously been described in this report. Dr Hailu Hagos was recruited because of his contact with refugee communities through his previous work on a peer mentoring project. This staffing structure mirrored the mentoring programme with one person responsible for the mentors and one for the mentees.

#### **2.3.1 Current staffing**

The consultants feel it is useful to note the current staffing and their tasks and areas of responsibility in relation to Time Together since this can help in

considering whether the work is structured to most effectively deliver the service. Current staffing is as follows:

**Sarah Arnold – Project Manager**

- Overall responsibility for the Time Together co-ordination across 3 cities.
- Set up project in London, Birmingham and Glasgow.
- Monitoring of mentoring relationships in London and Birmingham.
- Support of mentors in London and Birmingham.
- Implementing and developing best practice methods and dissemination across 3 cities.
- Training development and direct training of mentors in London and Birmingham.
- Development of overall implementation policies across 3 cities.
- Matching of mentors and mentees in London and Birmingham.
- Ongoing support of mentoring relationships in London and Birmingham.
- Reporting to Project Board on progress across 3 cities.
- Time Together publicity development – website copy.
- Work with TimeBank media and communication team.
- Networking, promotion and building relationships with key refugee organisations.

Capacity – currently approx 112 mentoring relationships (in London and Birmingham)

**Dr Hailu Hagos (full time & leaving) - Mentoring Co-ordinator (London)**

- Outreach to refugee organisations and communities.
- Mentee recruitment.
- Mentee induction.
- Monitoring and support of mentees.

Capacity – currently approx 112 mentees in London and Birmingham.

**Meriem Omer (part-time) Mentoring Co-ordinator (London)**

- Outreach support.
- New business analysis and strategic development guidance.
- Training development.
- Mentee support.
- Refugee recruitment and networking to maintain refugee referral systems.

**Afshan Saleen – Glasgow Co-ordinator (in post since March 2003 – 25 hours per week)**

- Glasgow Time Together Co-ordinator.
- Mentee and mentor recruitment.
- Mentee induction and mentor training delivery
- Matching of mentors and mentees.

- Monitoring of mentees and mentors.
- Outreach to refugee organisation and communities.
- On-going mentoring support.

Capacity – currently 30-35 mentoring relationships.

## **Management**

### **Matthew Thomson – Director of Development**

- Matthew developed the original blueprint for the scheme, wrote the funding bid, initiated the project and systems and oversaw all aspects of the scheme until September 2003.

### **Andrew Dick – Head of Campaigns (started August 2003)**

- Overall management responsibility for the Time Together project and team.
- Project Board member.

### **Una Gillon - Glasgow Volunteer Centre**

- Supervision and line management of Afshan Saleem.
- Connects Time Together into overall work of Centre.

## **2.3.2 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Sarah Arnold had an extremely steep learning curve. She has met the challenge very well and must be credited with a great deal of the success of the project. She is also responsible for a huge number of mentoring relationships and a diverse range of duties.

In light of what mentors and mentees have asked for in relation to many of her duties, the consultants would suggest that the role could be reviewed and more specialist areas could be separated. For example, there is a great deal of feedback suggesting that there is more work needed throughout all the three city-based schemes to link the qualitative outcomes of the mentoring relationships to supporting ways to raise public awareness of refugee issues. Likewise, there is feedback from mentors and mentees asking for more understanding and involvement in the matching process. See **Section 6 on Adaptability and Looking Forward** later in this report.

Aligned with this point is the finding that staff (in London and Glasgow) currently lack much spare capacity to deliver on-going training programmes or to develop new methods to support the maintenance of the mentoring relationships. This is reflected in feedback from both mentors and mentees.

**‘I’ve not had this type of conversation before, it’s very interesting sharing from other peoples experiences’**

Mentee in focus group

The consultants suggest that staffing could be reviewed by breaking up tasks into the following distinct areas: refugee/ general outreach & assessment, training, ongoing support, reporting & evaluation. This does not necessarily

mean an increased investment in staff but rather this model may clarify areas of responsibility; who is responsible for what bit of the process.

There have also been difficulties in being able to consistently recruit suitable mentees for the London scheme. The consultants believe that some strategic outreach and networking development is needed to build on the work carried out by Hailu Hagos and Meriem Omer. Co-ordinating a group of successful mentees to outreach into refugee communities to promote the scheme could be a way to swiftly increase user-involvement. But again this would need careful co-ordination and preparation to ensure a quality assured level of communication.

The Glasgow scheme seems to run somewhat independently of the London model and there is inconsistent communication regarding processes such as training models, contact and induction of mentees and ongoing support of the mentoring relationships. There needs to be a stronger managerial link made between Glasgow staff and London staff to continue learning from different approaches and to avoid worker isolation.

The recruitment of a staff member with direct experience of working with refugees and refugee organisations seems to have been key to the recruitment of mentees, in both London (Hailu and Merium) and Glasgow (Afshan), and the consultants suggest that this should be replicated in the new Birmingham staff post which is planned for the second year.

### **2.4 Policies, procedures, paperwork**

This section relates entirely to the policies, procedures and paperwork that have been developed by the London based scheme. The systems and procedures related to the Time Together project have changed considerably over time and this reflects the pilot nature of the scheme. For example, the Time Together Guide, produced quite early in the process, describes a very formal system of mentoring. This has changed and adapted somewhat over time to create a more flexible and informal model of mentoring across all three cities; what project staff describe as a 'hybrid' between befriending and focussed goal-centred mentoring. The prime purpose of the guide was to provide reassurance about the mentoring project to users and for mentors and mentees to use it to plan their relationship and record their progress.

There are comprehensive systems and procedures to support every aspect of Time Together, as follows:

- **Recruitment:**  
Registration of mentors and mentees takes place via the web. The website is a particular TimeBank strength and the information about Time Together is clear and informative. There was some feedback suggesting problems with applying online for some people but the consultants tested the system and found it to be straightforward and accessible. Mentors and mentees complete a three-page registration form which is returned to TimeBank.

- **Mentor training:**  
The Time Together Guide contains a huge amount of information; about the mentoring scheme, about refugees in the UK and a directory of useful contacts. There is also a workbook section which gives mentors and mentees structured exercises they can work through. There is an overall evaluation form for completion at the end of the relationship as well as 'meeting sheets' for mentors and mentees to keep a diary of their relationship.

Mentors and mentees are also given an Ethical Code of Practice for Mentoring which clearly states the boundaries of the scheme. There is a 'de-selection policy' which outlines how candidates can deselect themselves at any point from the Time Together project (before, during and after the training or matching process). There is also a procedure for TimeBank to deselect people who do not demonstrate the appropriate qualities for either a mentor or a mentee.

Mentors and mentees receive comprehensive sets of resources when they attend the training or induction. These resources include information on mentoring, integration and expectations of the scheme, and mentors and mentees are asked to evaluate the training at the end. The mentee training (a half day session) is specifically structured to ensure that participants gain a clear understanding of the boundaries of the scheme, the mentoring relationship and what they can and cannot expect from Time Together.

- **Matching:**  
Mentors complete a mentor matching form which asks them to prioritise 10 criteria in terms of their importance (**see Appendices**). These include location, profession and gender, for example. This form is returned to TimeBank staff who create very short personal profiles of each mentor. Mentees are given this list and asked to prioritise their choices of mentors. They are not guaranteed their first choice. TimeBank assign mentors to mentees and telephone numbers are given out with an expectation that people will make contact within one week.
- **Ongoing relationship monitoring:**  
Staff within the London scheme aim to make contact with pairs (via the telephone/email) at least once every 2 months to record the progress of the mentoring relationship. Periodically, mentors and mentees are also asked to complete other more detailed feedback forms. Staff are also asked to carry out self-assessment as part of their appraisal process and this includes giving feedback on each aspect of their work, and ideas for development.

#### **2.4.1 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

The existing policies, procedures and paperwork make up a comprehensive toolkit of resources which work across all three cities.

The guide is a very well written and attractive document which contains a wealth of information. It receives very positive feedback from most people and is used not only as a training tool, but also for promotional purposes.

**“Very professional literature and methodology was very good – excellent documents”**

Mentor

The first copy of the guide was fairly expensive to produce, and the consultants wonder if more flexible mentor/mentee materials might be more cost-effective. These could be updated and added to over time. This would also offer a cheaper way to update the signposting section at the end of the guide which is readily used by both mentees and mentors. There was some feedback suggesting that the guide was too formal and did not fit the needs of some mentoring relationships.

**“The booklet wasn’t terribly useful for me as I had just done friendship creation”**

Mentor

The mentee registration process could be developed into more of an assessment process, perhaps utilising the model of integration the consultants developed in this evaluation (see **Section 5 on Mentoring as an Integration Tool**). Mentees could gain more of a sense of what integration might mean for them at this early stage. This would help to clarify what can be expected from the mentoring relationship (and its limitations). An early personal assessment at this point of the process could be useful for evaluation purposes in the future, as it could be used to ascertain a mentees’ personal goals and the subsequent outcomes and impact of mentoring over a period of time. However, a more robust assessment process may well be at odds with the wish of the project staff to keep the scheme “low-tech”.

## **2.5 Recruitment, training, matching and support systems**

Mentors are recruited via the website and through a number of advertising media in London, Glasgow and Birmingham.

Most mentors who apply to TimeBank are invited to the mentor training. This forms part of the project staff’s assessment of individuals. In London and Birmingham the training is a full day and in Glasgow it is two half day sessions. The aim of the training is to offer a structured opportunity to set up and manage expectations on both sides. There is much discussion of boundary-setting, action-planning and goals. The training has changed over time. It has become more about case studies and listening to personal experience rather than giving ‘how-to’ training. This matches the empowerment model of mentoring; in the training it is the mentors who are empowered and given a ‘can-do’ approach to their mentoring role.

The mentee surveys demonstrate that they hear about the scheme mostly through friends and family. Staff however report that a growing number of mentees are referred from refugee community organisations and colleges due

to relationships built up by the mentoring co-ordinators. Potential mentees generally make contact with the Mentoring Co-ordinator and complete a registration form. The Mentoring Co-ordinator meets them and they are invited to the half day mentee induction. The consultants were informed that the requirements for mentee attendance on the scheme are refugee status and a reasonable standard of English.

There are clear gender criteria in the matching process. Male mentors can only work with male mentees. Female mentors can be matched with either gender.

The process of matching has changed. Initially mentors and mentees in London were matched based on information gathered about them during the induction and training process. A mentor matching form has now replaced this and is specifically utilised in London and Birmingham (see **Appendices**).

On-going support is via telephone and email for London/Birmingham based pairs. London mentors and mentees are invited to separate social evenings every 6-8 weeks. The support offered in Glasgow is more hands-on with a six-weekly support group for mentors. Direct support and advice is given to the mentees in Glasgow, who often drop into the office. Mentees also drop into the TimeBank office in London and many mentors and mentees choose to have their weekly meetings there. A mentor's e-group is also in existence and a web forum for all participants in the scheme has recently gone online.

### **2.5.1 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

The surveys and focus groups indicate that the majority of participants and respondents are very happy with the application process, training, matching and support.

**“The testimonial on the website was very useful, so I suggest putting a few more up. When you sign up, you are fired up with enthusiasm and want to know as much about the actual experience as possible; part of this is identifying with the current mentors: Can I imagine myself doing what this person profiled on the website does? Can I imagine being profiled in future?”**

Mentor survey

**70%** of the mentor survey respondents felt that the administration of the application was very good.

**54%** of the mentor survey respondents felt that the length of time it took from application to matching was very good. Within this some respondents highlighted that they had to wait a significant amount of time between application, training and matching. However this probably relates to the early months of the scheme where mentee recruitment was problematic.

Discussions in the mentor focus group also highlighted the fact that the training and matching processes had developed and changed a great deal over the pilot year and had improved a great deal.

**“The whole process was very easy and hassle free. The ability to do everything by email is very helpful and Sarah always responds very quickly to any queries.”**

Mentor

**“I wasn’t matched immediately but was always kept informed as to what was happening so didn’t feel forgotten about.”**

Mentor

**“The few staff delivering the scheme are highly effective and enthusiastic – very impressive.”**

Mentor

71% of the mentor survey respondents ranked the training as very good in terms of its relevance to mentoring.

78% felt that the training was very good in relation to imparting information about boundary setting.

**“Training is on par with any professional training I have seen.”**

Mentor

**“I was particularly impressed with the training and the way it made us think about the parameters of the mentoring, targets, action planning etc.”**

Mentor

However, the mentor focus group and surveys highlighted some differing opinions of the usefulness of the training in preparation for the mentoring;

**“Compared with the training and goal setting etc this has been nothing to do with my mentee. Not one of getting notes out – very different to the excellent booklet of TimeBank’s but it all depends on what the mentee wants.”**

Mentor

**“The goals can help as a structured approach and can speed up the process of helping some people. The reporting back and action planning can really help some people.”**

Mentor

**“I would shift the emphasis from theoretical exercises etc onto the actual experience. I also thought more emphasis could have been given to the wider context of refugee coverage in the press. The myths on the website are a good start, but they could have been expanded into an ice-breaking discussion at the outset – especially as many of the people on the training course said they were primarily motivated by bad press coverage (like me).”**

Mentor

The consultants would however note that the training has changed significantly over time and that the above comment is probably someone from an early training group within London.

The induction is very effective for mentees because it clearly states the boundaries of the relationship, the expectations and the empowerment model of mentoring.

**84%** of the mentee survey respondents felt that the information about goal-setting and action planning was very good and **83%** felt that relevance of the induction to the mentoring relationship was very good.

Both mentors and mentees agreed that it would be useful to spend more time together in the training and matching stages as this is both powerful and useful. There could well be a greater role for mentor and mentee 'ambassadors' here too.

**"We met some mentees and this was very rushed and I would have liked to have just sat and talked to people who had been on the scheme because it was such a new thing for me."**

Mentor

The matching process is a critical factor in the success of the mentoring relationship.

**"My match is perfect – we get on well, we have similar interests academic backgrounds and things in common – a brilliant match."**

Mentor

There was a great deal of feedback from mentor and mentee surveys suggesting that although the matching process worked on the whole, people would like to know more about how they were matched. The surveys throw up a significant proportion of mentor respondents (**44%**) who ranked the matching process as only OK rather than very good or excellent. This feedback may well be drawn from people who were matched before Sarah Arnold brought in the mentor matching form. However, although matching appears to work very well generally, it still seems to rely on staff 'instinct' to a great extent.

**"If there was a period of time after the matching so that the mentor and mentee could assess whether it was the right match, this would help the mentees a lot."**

Mentee

**"Fortunately I've got a very nice mentor but it's better to know your mentor's personal details before the matching date."**

Mentee

**“In advance, criteria should be given to mentor and mentee where they can express their expectations and qualities. Involve mentor and mentees in the process of pair selection and develop the criteria for it.”**

Mentee

**“Improve the matching procedure with specific criteria to be introduced. Organise more gatherings and regular follow-up meetings and sharing experiences about Time Together.”**

Mentee

Once again the consultants would note that some of the above comments could be from people matched and trained in the early stages of the London project, and that the process has been changed as a result during the pilot year.

Feedback from the mentees focus group and surveys is focussed on wanting to meet someone who comes from the same professional background. Mentors seem to be more flexible about this issue, and this perhaps highlights a tension in the scheme.

**“I don’t think that profession needs to be the reason for a good matching – it’s just about how you get along together – but if people need more practical help then it would be better.”**

Mentor

**“It would be better if you would give more priority to profession as a matching criteria.”**

Mentee

**“I found it easy to match with my first mentor, though she was younger than me. We are both teachers.”**

Mentee

**“At first it was difficult but I soon found we have lots in common, our age and interests.”**

Mentee

Reading a selection of the mentor/mentee contact sheets from London and Birmingham, it appears to suggest that where matching hasn’t worked, it seems to break down mainly on the mentee side, with mentors having difficulty meeting up with mentees or mentees dropping out of the scheme. The training has been developed as a response to ensure both parties understand the expectations of the mentoring scheme, and its limitations. As suggested before, the success of the matching process could well be improved with a more involved assessment process supported by a matching process that increases the direct involvement of mentors and mentees.

**“I don’t know what criteria were used: it wasn’t ever made explicit. My mentee and I met very briefly in the initial general session, and**

**then made our own way from there – we were both confident enough to be able to cope with this, but there may be value in considering whether a third party from TimeBank could sit in on the initial face-to-face meeting, just for 15 minutes, to ensure that basic information and expectations are shared formally at the outset."**

Mentor

**"Not quite sure of the process – were we being judged by the trainer on the training day or was it based solely on the application form?"**

Mentor

**"It would be good to organize some kind of meeting between mentor and mentee rather than just leave it as a kind of "blind date" where you have to ring someone who probably does not speak much English on a mobile phone to arrange a meeting in a public place where it might be hard to meet each other."**

Mentor

Staff in London do offer TimeBank space for people to meet and report that some mentors and mentees do drop-in on an ad-hoc basis. Interestingly, the Glasgow Co-ordinator has chosen to develop the matching process using the 3-way initial meeting model as suggested in the above quote.

The mentor focus group discussed the flexibility and boundaries of the scheme in great detail. Their lengthy discussion points to a level of flexibility that could be built into the scheme given a more sophisticated assessment process and increased levels of monitoring and support.

**"The problem I have is from the training because after a while you build up trust and you want to invite them home as that's actually how they would get a sense of UK culture but its very strict that this can't happen and I feel it's a drawback of the system in the first year. I would like to sign a waiver to take full responsibility. We should both be able to decide as we are both adults when this happens."**

Mentor

**"It's very difficult to have quite important chats in places like Starbucks – seems almost quite insulting. I have some very intense discussions and it's just not the most relaxing place."**

Mentor

**"One of the things I like doing is cooking and its perfectly natural for friends to come round to eat and open my house to that person – its quite frustrating."**

Mentor

**“If the relationship flourishes and you become friends it is difficult to follow the scheme guidelines, like keeping an emotional distance. It would be more helpful to explain how to handle that kind of relationship rather than to discourage it.”**

Mentor

**“I understand the reason for strict guidelines about always meeting in neutral places etc. However, in the winter, with little money to spend, and sometimes with the mentee’s young children in tow, it is often difficult to find appropriate places to meet in comfort.”**

Mentor

Also, the restriction on male to female matching was important initially but seems restrictive in a project that has become more flexible. Again, a more in-depth assessment and vetting could resolve this.

Overall, the current recruitment, training, induction and matching of mentors and mentees works very well in the London and Glasgow context, for the type of mentees who come through onto the scheme; there is low drop-out at each stage.

There was some feedback from mentees and mentors about ‘preaching to the converted’; that mentors involved in this scheme already hold liberal views with regards to refugees in the UK and that the campaign could widen to recruit other types of mentors;

**“All of us are pretty liberal who do this; we already know a lot about this. Maybe TimeBank needs to try to involve more Daily Mail readers in the scheme to change their perceptions. If that’s a goal.”**

Mentor

**“The train I get in the morning is a perfect recruitment area for these types of people.”**

Mentor

The surveys and focus groups suggest that the biggest need for mentors is affirming their self confidence in being able to get along with their mentee and their ability to offer help and advice. This key learning point could be further integrated into the training programme. People need to be told they are doing an excellent job and to share their worries and concerns about progress.

**49%** of mentor survey respondents reported that their main concern before they started mentoring was that they would not get on with their mentee (this was a concern for only **13%** of the mentee respondents).

A further **29%** of the mentor survey respondents cited their main concern as being skill/ knowledge base.

**“Before I met my mentee I had worries about the relationship – could I help him – would I have anything to offer him? Maybe there would be something I could not handle or grasp – worse case scenarios like getting into trouble with the authorities or whatever, I was a bit scared about this but its not happened.”**

Mentor

**“Could I help this person – I wondered if I have failed him as he hasn’t been able to get a job at the standing he had in his own country – How much have I done and how much could someone else have done to help him?”**

Mentor

Mentees also talked and wrote about their fears and concerns before meeting their mentors. These are worth highlighting here as they give an insight into important issues that could be included in future trainings and inductions;

**“It wouldn’t improve chance to get more work.”**

**“Mentoring would not help me get a job.”**

**“Feeling that I’m wasting their time.”**

**“Developing trust and confidence with the mentor.”**

Mentees

Mentors who attended the focus group reported that they had enjoyed the focus group experience because it had been a very structured discussion, enabling them to meet others and talk about their experiences of the scheme.

**“There’s a lot of ups and downs with refugees – their lack of self esteem and you have to be prepared to stay with the person when they go through this.”**

Mentor

**‘It’s quite a big job to do this – we are important to these people.’**

Mentor

Mentors said that the social evenings organised within the London scheme were not as potentially helpful as opportunities like the focus group for this evaluation. They preferred the structure of the focus group. This could be further replicated by the project staff.

**“Have more formally organised meetings as I have not met the mentors I trained with again and would like to share experiences at another review or training day.”**

Mentor

Other creative methods of offering support came from each focus group and through the surveys. Ideas included external-led focus groups, mixed events for mentors and mentees together, topic-based sessions, workshops and speakers, trips to city sights for pairs, and review meetings after 6 months to

track progress and learning. These methods of support are time-heavy and would need to be built into the capacity of any staff member.

The Glasgow Co-ordinator reported that she was in the process of developing ways of mentors and mentees to meet more frequently in groups, such as to celebrate Eid and to have parties and trips out to meet each other's children and socialise on a wider basis.

One mentee survey respondent was particularly vociferous about support needs;

**“Time Together needs more training and support structures. It’s not the responsibility of the mentor only. Don’t leave all the effort to the mentor and mentee one they are matched. We need more support from the organisation till we achieve the last goal. For example, sometimes we need access to computers, how to write applications, complaints or claims. We need photocopy, email access and we need references. All this process is difficult to deal with your mentor only.”**

Mentee

Finally it should be mentioned that both mentors and mentees had a number of their own ideas as to how the scheme could be developed and that incorporating participants in all three cities in this discussion would be an excellent method of further developing the user-involvement policy for the scheme.

## **2.6 Internal evaluation and monitoring**

As has been previously discussed in this report, Time Together has carried out a huge amount of internal monitoring from the beginning. This has included a significant amount of testing out ideas and systems. The project has been evaluated at each stage of its development and monitored at each level. For each element of the running of the project described above, there is a method of evaluating that element including:

- Internal evaluation reviews and self assessment reports amongst the Time Together project staff.
- Internal evaluation by the Project Board members and two independent consultants with refugee backgrounds.
- Feedback forms completed by mentees and mentors after every training session.
- On-line contact/tracking sheets completed approximately every 4-8 weeks by project staff with every mentor/mentee (via telephone/email) to assess their progress and support needs.
- Evaluation forms sent to mentees at the end of year 1 to track and document their self assessment of their progress and identify any issues arising for mentee co-ordinator (London).
- Mentor and mentee support/social groups are run every 6-8 weeks (London and Glasgow).
- Feedback of refugee referral agencies is gathered monthly.

- An interim report was completed for the European Refugee Fund.
- Media coverage evaluation by Media Team.
- Mentoring processes and procedures evidenced and submitted with self assessment and appraisal report by project co-ordinator (London) to gain Approved Provider Status from the National Mentoring Network.
- Regular telephone contact between London Project Co-ordinator and Glasgow Co-ordinator.

### **2.6.1 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

The techniques used to internally evaluate and monitor Time Together provide an excellent model for setting up a pilot project. As has been reported, many elements of the scheme have changed over time and all the changes have been in response to an aspect of the internal evaluation and monitoring.

Staff report that the internal evaluation and monitoring systems created a huge amount of paperwork and it may be worth reviewing these beyond the pilot programme. A higher level of evaluation and monitoring is required for a pilot than an ongoing project that has been tried and tested. Fewer, more robust evaluation and monitoring techniques may be sufficient but also possibly more efficient. For example, the internal evaluation and monitoring systems are mainly qualitative at the moment. It would be good to build in some on-going methods of quantifying increased levels of integration. The responses could then be turned into statistics which could be useful for future evaluation purposes.

The two-monthly mentor and mentee email and phone contact in London/Birmingham is patchy at the moment and not totally robust; phoning takes time and email loses some of the human element. The number of people staff have to contact is high and the work required to evaluate and monitor the relationships has affected London capacity. Since the Mentoring Co-ordinator (London) has also suggested that written work for mentees is a problematic method for evaluating and monitoring, these ongoing techniques for evaluation and monitoring should be rethought.

Because Time Together is also a campaign, TimeBank need a good consistent stream of stories and advocates. There is a need for an ongoing system to get these personal stories across the whole of the scheme. However, this requires significant staff time. Thinking about this should be done in partnership with the Media team, and in tandem with a review of the current mix of roles and responsibilities of the London project staff (see the findings and recommendations on staffing in this section of the report).

There seems to be some duplication within the evaluation methods, probably because of the pilot nature of the project. The evaluation methods such as the contact sheets also focus on qualitative feedback and numbers of meetings. This alone cannot necessarily prove the effectiveness of mentoring. Again, a more robust assessment process would allow for a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the mentoring partnerships over time.

It is worth noting that staff have found this external evaluation process to be helpful in drawing out ideas and themes. This may suggest the need for more robust staff support and supervision structures, which the consultants have not evaluated in this report. Alternatively, a form of external evaluation could be built into the project; a 6 monthly external evaluation by the Project Board, for example.

### **2.7 The development of the Glasgow and Birmingham projects**

The processes of setting up Time Together in Birmingham and Glasgow have been fundamentally different. In Birmingham, funding was not available for a staff member and so the intention was for the project to be overseen from London. The aim was for Time Together to create a link with a refugee organisation/network and for them to co-ordinate the project locally. TimeBank would provide the volunteer mentors via the web site, and the training would be run on-site in Birmingham by London staff. In some ways, Birmingham represents an attempt to franchise the campaign.

However, the Birmingham project has not been totally successful. The links with refugee organisations and communities have faltered and the consultants have found it difficult to get a true picture of the current situation in Birmingham. There are mentor and mentee relationships in operation, but staff contact with these pairs seems to be patchy (approximately 22). Mentors were specifically targeted through the Nursing School, but this seems not to have been a totally successful idea with problems occurring in planning and delivering training to these mentors. Critically, there seems to have been problems due to a lack of a Birmingham base for the project, as well as cemented partnerships with local organisations.

Ideally, the consultants would have travelled to Glasgow to see the Time Together project in action and to meet the staff member. The part-time staff member is based in the Glasgow Volunteer Centre, which brings many gains for the scheme, as well as challenges for the staff member.

Afshan Saleem (Glasgow Co-ordinator) co-ordinates the outreach work to refugee organisations and communities, the training of mentors and the induction of the mentees. Matching is done through individual one-to-one introductions with mentors and mentees and there a six-weekly support session for mentors.

Training in Glasgow is an amended version of the London programme (created in collaboration with the Training Officer at the Volunteer Centre), with a greater emphasis on boundaries of confidentiality within the mentoring relationships.

In Glasgow, mentees appear to drop into the office more frequently than in London and Afshan talked about the significant amount of time she spends in supporting the mentees with advice and information. Afshan is supervised by the Centre Manager.

### **2.7.1 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Each geographical area is different in terms of make-up of potential mentees and mentors. The local political climate concerning refugees and asylum-seekers is also very different. The Glasgow Co-ordinator reports that she believes at least two-thirds of the mentees in Glasgow are asylum-seekers. This fact goes some way in explaining why the training in Glasgow is an adapted format of the London training, since mentees have real fears with regards to their refugee status being known in public. It also may explain the increased support needs of the mentees and the advisory role that the staff member finds herself in. The training for mentors in Glasgow focuses a great deal on the importance of confidentiality.

**“People (mentees) don’t want others to know if they are refugees or asylum-seekers in Glasgow.”**

Glasgow Co-ordinator

This quote from a mentee sums up people’s fears:

**“As a refugee I wouldn’t think that anyone from Scotland would want to be my friend.”**

Mentee

What is clear from these quotes and findings is that a period of pre-planning and research into the local social and political environment is critical when developing the project in a new location.

In discussions with London staff, varied reasons for the relative failure of the Birmingham project have been given; such as the difficulty of start-up at arm’s length without a staff presence or TimeBank office in the city and a frustration that a PR campaign aimed at recruiting mentors was mostly unsuccessful.

The Glasgow experience exemplifies this importance of knowing geographical difference and the specific asylum-seeker and refugee situation. The scheme works well being based in the Volunteer Centre because potential mentor volunteers are easily referred to the scheme, and the Co-ordinator is based in a ‘hub’ of developing practice as regards volunteering and networks. Glasgow has been successful even with a part-time staff member and more vulnerable asylum seeker clients, due to the previous experience of the Co-ordinator.

The Glasgow scheme also shows how important and effective the office infrastructure is in London. For example, in Glasgow the co-ordinator has had to spend extra money to hire external training venues and does not have a reliable IT structure making it hard to keep up with administration.

The consultants feel that it is difficult to successfully co-ordinate a project like this one outside London without a strong local partnership being formed early on, as exemplified by the Birmingham example. It is unlikely that mentors and mentees would feel they belong to a locally focussed scheme when they have to call an office in London to gain support and information.

The modes of communication in London and Glasgow are very different and reflect the very different type of project. This could be a key learning point for TimeBank in thinking about the most suitable way to communicate with local projects. Email is the London offices main mode of contact. However, this may not work to create good working relationships at a local level.

## **Section 3 - Investigation and evaluation of the marketing and media coverage of the scheme**

### **3.1 What happened?**

An important aim of the scheme was to raise public awareness of the positive contribution that refugees make to the UK.

The project staff worked with colleagues in the TimeBank Media and Communications Team to develop press and PR strategies. Articles and copy for press was co-written, focussing on a range of angles and initial key messages of the scheme, namely:

- That refugees have a great deal to offer the UK community.
- Time Together aims to build community cohesion and integration.
- The personal plight of specific refugees; why they had to leave their home and what they intend to do in the UK (human interest angle).
- A call for people to get involved as mentors/mentees.

Specific media ‘pushes’ were made at the launches of each city scheme as well as during Refugee Week 2002. These regional pushes resulted in a total of 12 articles in London press and community magazines, 8 pieces in Birmingham media including local web sites, the Student Union Magazine, the Birmingham Post and BBC West Midlands. Most articles were small pieces announcing the scheme and describing its rationale. Scottish coverage was less successful with no press coverage achieved for the launch, however general coverage was achieved on Scottish TV News Bulletin. Existing TimeBank/ BBC partnership arrangements with journalists secured high profile coverage on Radio Scotland, Radio London and BBC News at Ten.

Staff specifically cite a Radio London show with John Gaunt as a major media achievement for the project. The show was co-hosted by a mentee. The show started with callers and the UK host in a hostile position. At the end of the show, callers were phoning to express their admiration for the refugee host and commenting on how much they appreciated hearing such a personal story. The listener numbers for this show were in the region of 192,000. However, the consultants were not able to locate a recording of this show to independently analyse it. TimeBank analysed the advertising value as being in the region of £46,000 because the refugee co-host was on air for at least an hour. In addition to these media results, the team managed to get major national coverage in the Sunday Observer Magazine as well as six other features in magazines such as Third sector, Company Life and Volunteering Magazine.

The Project Board has taken a positive role within this area by ensuring that a watchful eye has been kept on new policy ideas and related news from government, as well as being able to keep the project in the eye of government by reporting through formal and informal networks.

The TimeBank website which is an effective, clear, and excellent resource and means of marketing, has accounted for a great deal of publicity and positive PR for the scheme. The staff member from the media team who was interviewed reported that journalists typing ‘refugees’ into the Google search engine would often get linked to the website and call the Media desk at TimeBank for help with refugee opinions on related issues. This is likely to continue to grow, especially with the use of further case studies and work done on relationships.

Staff have collated a number of interesting ‘case histories’ of refugees on the scheme. These have been used within the coverage achieved, as well as posted on the web site.

Staff have publicised the scheme in a range of diverse and imaginative ways, targeting job centres, Housing Aid Centres, Volunteer Bureaux, refugee community agencies, colleges, stalls held during Refugee Week and specialist settings such as the Royal College of Nurses. Two examples of leaflets designed to market the scheme were distributed via TimeBank’s database of contacts, with 10,000 being distributed throughout the pilot year. The Time Together guide also works very well as a promotional tool, as well as a workbook for the mentors and mentees to chart their respective progress on the scheme.

In terms of building a pool of ‘public ambassadors/speakers’ for the scheme, staff have identified a number of people they can call upon, both from the mentors and mentee groupings. Pairs are very successfully utilised within the training when they speak about their relationships and the benefits they have both achieved as a result of the scheme.

### **3.2 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Given that the scheme aims to create ambassadors and raise public awareness, the evaluation attempted to gather a ‘snapshot’ of personal experiences and mentor/mentee’s sense of their own effectiveness in raising public awareness.

**89%** of mentor survey respondents felt they had been effective in raising awareness of refugee issues via discussions they had had with family and friends.

**“I have raised awareness of his situation to my friends and people don’t believe me when I tell his story. People don’t understand that people go through this.”**

Mentor

**“I talk a lot about refugee issues, and challenge people more because I have my experience and a case to talk about.”**

Mentor

A further **61%** of mentor survey respondents felt that they had been effective in raising awareness of refugee issues via discussions they had had in their workplace.

**“I think the most important is talking to friends and colleagues and changing opinions on a local level.”**

Mentor

**“I have talked to a lot of people about what I am doing and it’s almost like I wait for people to come back to me as I have lots to say now. I’d like to overturn the Daily Mail.”**

Mentor

Of the mentee survey respondents, **77%** felt that they had been effective in raising awareness of refugee issues via discussions they had had in their voluntary work or workplace.

In answer to the survey question asking for suggestions on how to further raise awareness of refugee issues, both mentors and mentees were especially keen to see wider media, TV and radio coverage;

**“We have to broadcast our contribution to the UK’s economy, culture etc using the media.”**

Mentee

**“Get refugees to have their say.”**

Mentor

**“I’m a journalist so I have told other journalists and editors about it and hope that they will write articles about it. I hope to do a piece myself once I’ve begun mentoring.”**

Mentor

**“Help refugees get better access to the media.”**

Mentor

**“Exploring the refugees problems on the TV and radio, as people should know about them. Some newspapers should say what the advantages of refugees in this country is, not only the down side’.**

Mentee

Offering mentees the opportunity to gain new skills in media training, public speaking and self presentation may be an excellent way of integrating ‘users’ in the process of raising awareness. Mentors suggested that TimeBank should produce a film about the scheme that could be shown on TV during Refugee Week for example. Again the consultants would wholeheartedly agree with this suggestion, and think that the experiences arising from the relationships would make excellent television.

**“Refugee Week TV was terrible. A documentary on this scheme would be good to raise the profile. Someone’s got to put the other side of the story.”**

Mentor

Given that the issue of refugees and asylum seekers is still viewed as a controversial one within the UK, the Media team have achieved a great deal of positive and inspiring coverage in a relatively short period of time. The existing contacts within the BBC have been hugely important in gaining the national coverage, and David Blunkett’s visit to the TimeBank offices helped gain television coverage, at least within London.

Over the next year, TimeBank should build on their vast network of contacts as well as the expertise of its IT and media staff, in order to gear up the promotional side of the project. The project and media staff have utilised their expertise of what makes a good story, and hooked their angle onto existing national issues to ensure that the Time Together project is included. Further work would be beneficial in this area as well as utilising their recently purchased ‘Cutting Edge’ software which can analyse media work for its impact in getting key messages across.

**“I would strengthen the media strategy. Every time there is a negative press report or newspaper article, TimeBank should aim to rebut it immediately by providing an alternative – and positive – point of view.”**

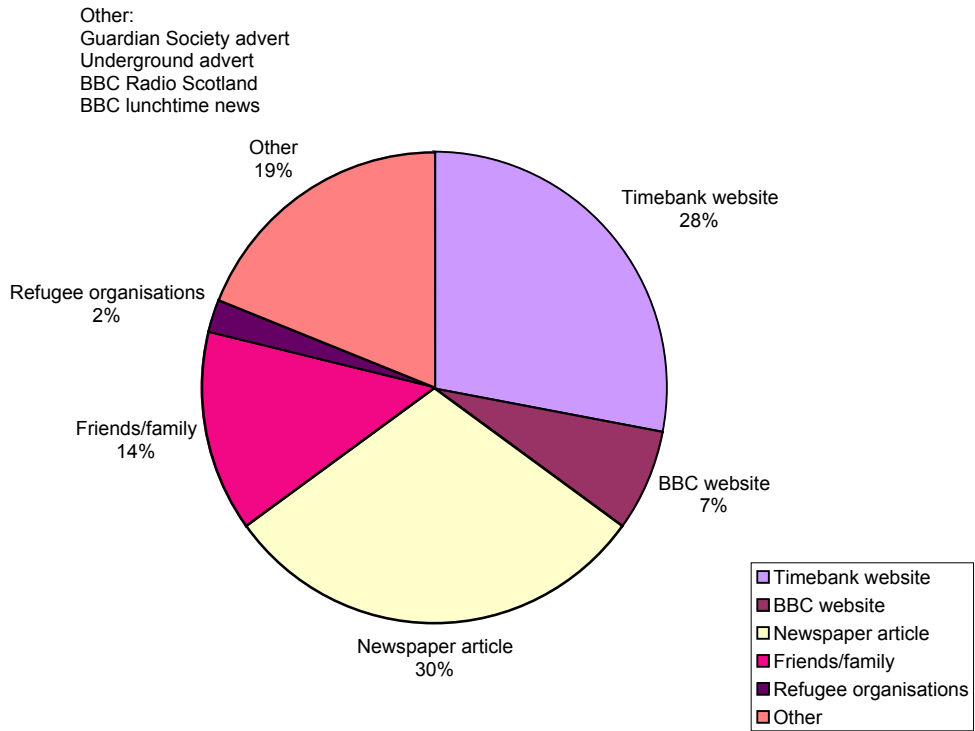
Mentor

Press coverage and web presence has certainly worked to recruit mentors. In fact, of the mentor survey respondents, the top ways that people found out about Time Together was firstly via newspaper articles (**30%**) and secondly via the TimeBank website (**28%**).

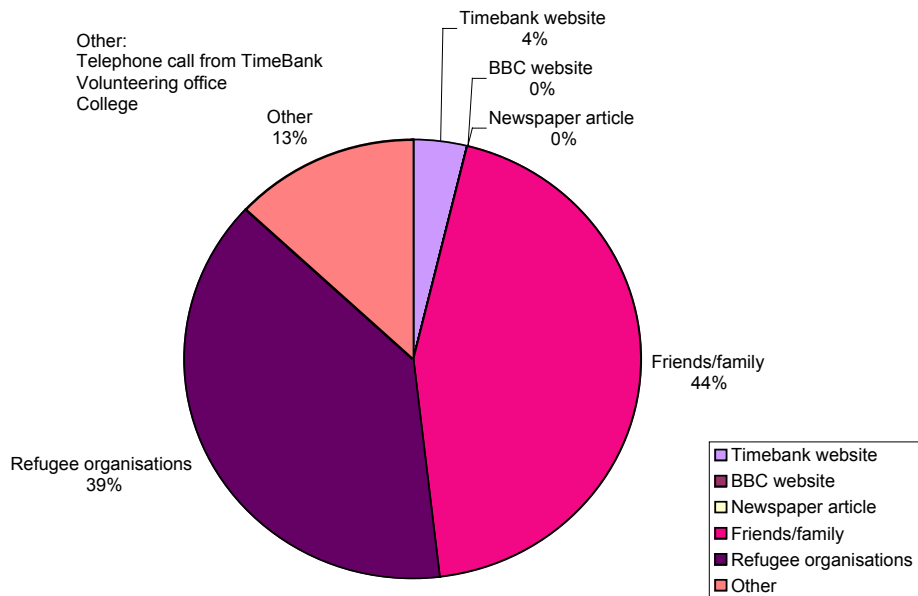
However, this is not the way that mentees naturally enter the scheme. Indeed, **44%** of mentee survey respondents found out about Time Together through friends and family (word of mouth). The media team commented that on the whole, they did not think that refugees would read a local or national paper, as previously assumed by the staff. None of the mentee survey respondents heard about Time Together through the press.

### Section 3 – Marketing and media coverage

#### How mentors found out about Time Together



#### How mentees found out about Time Together



The focus of press coverage during the pilot year was correct, promoting the scheme launch as well as recruitment and general publicity. As commented by the media team, the proposal for the second year is to build on the angle of 'relationships'. The consultants would wholeheartedly agree with this following respondents views in the surveys and focus groups. What TimeBank have now is a large number of interesting and inspiring 'real-life' stories that they can utilise to spread the word about the benefits of the scheme. More time spent collating these relationship stories would be highly beneficial.

The angle of what mentors get out of the mentoring experience would be useful to explore further, as this would increase the understanding of UK citizens motivation to volunteer. Capturing the detail of the experiences and insights from mentors would be inspiring, and gathering information about the impact of involvement in the scheme on mentors' wider personal relationships would be innovative.

At the roots of the scheme is a simple notion, that working on a 1:1 relationship results in new learning, personal and professional development and a sense of achievement and empowerment for both mentors and mentees.

**“I have recommended TimeBank repeatedly and am proud of what I have done with TimeBank and for my mentee. Such intimate and individual work with refugees can only balance out the difficulties they face and bring people closer and society more tolerant and understanding.”**

Mentor

**“You can't integrate someone in your team, group, society unless you are unable to trust the person. Trust is the most important element of integration. Trusting and giving opportunities of being trusted to refugees are the right channel for this integration”.**

Mentee

Attempting to capture these experiences and achieving media coverage about the relationships would be innovative. For instance, in the 'How We Met' human-interest sections of weekend supplements in newspapers. The media team commented that they wanted to try to get pairs onto shows such as Radio 4's Woman's Hour to take up this relationship angle. The consultants agree that this would be an excellent target. All of this would also impact on the arena of equal opportunities and increasing TimeBanks contribution to developing awareness of diversity. Emphasising the fact that the mentees want to be involved in such a scheme mainly to be able to increase the level of contribution they can make to the UK would work as an excellent message to counterbalance the stereotyped notion of refugees as 'scroungers'.

**“My mentee has something to offer this country. I would like our society to accept people. He is a good person.”**

Mentor

**“What’s the problem with our society that has a problem with someone who wants to train and do a job and be useful here?”**

Mentor

Advertising in a diverse press media might attract a wider diversity of mentors. Targeting second generation black ethnic minority communities, or lesbian, gay, bisexual communities may be ways forward, for example. As already noted, staff and mentee’s feel that the mentor role seems to attract liberally minded UK people who feel strongly about refugee issues in the UK.

**“It needs to focus on recruiting a broad range of mentors rather than just an exclusively narrow pro-refugee “do-gooder” type. If it is going to change attitudes of people in the UK it is going to need to reach out and appeal to those who need their attitudes changed and get people involved who wouldn’t ordinarily get involved in such schemes. I therefore think that getting general interest articles into general magazines is a good idea.”**

Mentor

**“If the main idea is to integrate the refugees with the native UK citizens, it is better to educate those ordinary people who are not ready to integrate with us. People who come to be mentors already have a positive attitude to refugees so it may not make any difference.”**

Mentee

Press and media that focussed on differing audiences could help to promote the integration message to people who may not naturally be drawn to such a scheme and therefore could work as a direct anti-racist strategy. Mentor and mentee ambassadors may have a new role here. They could go into local public spaces to talk about their relationships; in schools and colleges, for example.

## **Section 4 - Investigation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the scheme and its 'value for money'.**

### **4.1 What happened**

Clearly what one terms as measures of effectiveness for such a scheme depends on what one values as critical outcomes and outputs.

Did the scheme meet its overall quantitative target outputs of 150 recruited, trained and actively engaged mentor and mentee partnerships in year one? Evidence gathered suggests that targets were nearly met, reaching a total of **144** over the year. Was the spread of 50 pairs per city correct across London, Glasgow and Birmingham? Outputs in terms of quantity in Glasgow and Birmingham have not been as high as initially expected. However, London has exceeded its target of 50 pairs by **over 50%** having matched **80** in under a year.

Has the process of relationship building between the mentors and mentees supported mentees integration? From the focus groups and mentee/mentor survey responses we can say a clear resounding yes. Similarly, the research methodologies have shown that the scheme represents a two-way relationship that has great benefits for the mentor as well as the mentee. Case studies and the mentee/mentor contact sheets point to evidence of refugees securing paid jobs after being unemployed in the UK for some years. In addition, increased levels of interviews attended and successful CV development are reported. Clearly these are important signs of increased levels of integration (see **Section 5 on Mentoring as an Integration Tool** for detailed findings).

Has the scheme adapted and shifted to meet the needs of both mentors and mentees? Yes, the scheme has adapted to the needs of both client groupings, as evidenced in many ways; the changes in training delivered, development of matching processes and procedures and the existence of asylum seekers as well as refugees on the scheme. Evidence from the mentor focus groups demonstrates that mentors are willing and able to engage in a range of mentoring behaviours and styles; simple befriending and listening, socialising and going on trips to city sights, formal goal centred 'workbook-like' sessions with their mentors on business development, language development, CV writing and interviewing skills. In this way, the 'empowerment focussed' style of mentor training adequately prepares people to use their own skills and deal with a range of needs in the mentees. Similarly, in London and Glasgow, it is clear that the type of mentor attracted by the scheme has an adequate level of experience and education to be able to turn their hand to supporting differing types of relationships.

A specific note needs to be made here about the somewhat contradictory nature of findings regarding the status and 'type' of refugee who is on the scheme, and stakeholder opinions about this. From talking to Matthew Thomson, the originator of the scheme at TimeBank, it appears that the issue of asylum seekers on the scheme had been initially discussed with the Home

Office on the recommendation of the Project Board. An informal agreement had been made to allow a minor proportion of asylum seekers onto the scheme who at the time of their matching may not have been given full refugee status, but who were deemed as motivated and fitting the schemes goals and methods. Indeed, survey and focus group responses prove that there are asylum seekers involved in the London and Glasgow scheme.

There are some differing opinions from stakeholders as to the usefulness of the scheme for the full range of the current client group. There is also little political support for such opportunities to be provided to people without a positive decision on leave to remain in the UK from the Home Office.

**“The trouble with my mentee is that he has not been granted leave to remain so its hard to advise him on jobs and training because he doesn’t know what he’s doing. He got a letter a few weeks ago saying that he was liable to detention but apparently that was a mistake. This makes it hard to sort out much practical help. We can prepare for if he can stay but that’s it really just a case of finding things out for him and supporting him.”**

Mentor

**“Asylum seeker mentoring is trickier, more chaotic, but mentoring is good in this case, to give help and support. Basic skills, work, and friendship and befriending. If people have been here 3 to 4 years a lot of them have to go to the Home Office every week and need support with this. I ask about his court hearings and be on his side.”**

Mentor

**“My mentee has been here 3 years and he thinks he is in that group where they have lost his papers, very difficult situation for him.”**

Mentor

**“The project should be as accessible as possible to as many refugees and asylum seekers.”**

Mentee

In considering the overall findings from the evaluation, the consultants feel that the scheme can deal with both refugees and asylum seekers, and should be openly available to both client groupings. However within this, the clear distinction to be made is not about whether a person has been given leave to remain or not, but rather whether any refugee or asylum seeker is in a position to really make use of the scheme for him/herself, i.e. their suitability for Time Together.

Evidence from the surveys, focus groups and from Glasgow suggests that the scheme works well, on the whole, for a full range of clients needs, as has been previously stated. To make this explicit the client assessment process would need to be developed to ensure that the staff are aware of the needs

and motivations of mentees, and to ensure a good match between appropriate mentors and specific mentees.

Has the scheme been equally effective in all three locations? It has in London and Glasgow but not in Birmingham. The lessons learnt regarding adaptability of the scheme are discussed in **Section 6**. However, the issue of client needs and effectiveness should be touched on here. In both London and Glasgow, Time Together is supporting integration. However, the two models differ due to the make-up of the refugee communities and the settings of the Time Together projects. The success of the project in London has relied to a certain extent on the type of refugee who is accepted onto the scheme. The 'entrance requirements' for mentees seems to limit the scheme to motivated mentees with a reasonable level of spoken English. For these mentees, there is an obvious and impressive drive for change and personal development. In Glasgow, the Co-ordinator estimates that two-thirds of the mentees are asylum seekers who seem to have slightly differing needs to the majority of mentees in the London scheme (basic English and to meet people).

The Glasgow Co-ordinator explained that many mentees drop-in to see her on an ad-hoc basis to get support on issues such as welfare and housing. This process supports the success of the scheme by keeping mentors and mentees in touch with one another and by keeping regular contact with mentees who tend to be less organised and focussed than mentees in London. However, it is more time consuming. The consultants believe that TimeBank's central London offices as well as the size of London, help to ensure that mentees are less likely to just 'drop-in'. This issue has an impact on the effectiveness of reaching targets in differing cities as well as the differing support capacity of Co-ordinators.

The London Co-ordinator did feel that the level of support needed by each pairing was dependent firstly on the success of the match and secondly on the suitability of the mentee for the scheme. She also felt that pair support was generally front-loaded and petered off in the latter months of the mentoring relationship. Improving the assessment systems to identify the suitability of the mentee as well as fine-tuning the matching process have all helped the scheme to cut down on support time needed from the London staff as the scheme has progressed through the year. Evidence of this is in the levels of drop-out/retention from the scheme which have been relatively minimal e.g. in London **10** mentors withdrew out of a total of **90** trained. A total of **17** mentees withdrew, did not start or were not suitable for the scheme after the assessment process. In addition to this a total of **5** mentors have begun a second mentoring relationship, having finished their first one after 9-12 months.

Has the scheme adequately developed and tested its internal systems of monitoring and evaluation throughout the year to improve on effectiveness and has it changed and developed as a response to this feedback and new learning? Yes, undoubtedly the staff have created an impressive range of best practice methods to constantly monitor and evaluate the scheme.

Additionally, they have utilised feedback to consistently develop the scheme along best practice guidelines. See **Section 2 on Running the Scheme**.

**“The impression I get is that they have been very responsive to people’s feedback on the scheme and changed a lot as it has progressed, a constant process of improving it.”**

Mentor

Has the scheme represented good economic value? This is a challenging issue to answer, because it begs the question of the economic value of the outcomes, especially in relation to the ‘softer outcomes’ such as levels of increased integration and the costing one might attach to an hourly rate for such mentoring expertise, should it have to be paid for in economic terms.

In terms of TimeBanks costs to recruit, train and support both mentor and mentee the project staff estimate it to be about **£530 per pair** (this figure excludes the start-up costs).

In terms of the volunteer time given to the project, one might want to make an estimate of what economic value this is to the community if it had to be financed. Evidence from previous research carried out by 3Consultancy might suggest an hourly rate of between £10 and £20. The Home Office rates volunteer time as £13.85/hour for mentors. This could be argued to be low given the professional experience of some of the mentors. However, taking the 5 hours commitment per month from each mentor as an average (many do more hours based on evidence from the surveys) one could estimate the value of the mentoring support over a 9 month period to be somewhere in the region of **£100,000 for 150 mentors**. This almost exactly equates to the initial grant from the ERF for the pilot year and so clearly marks the scheme out as excellent value for money.

What also needs to be highlighted is the cost effectiveness of utilising the existing TimeBank IT infrastructure to recruit mentors. This has been an excellent use of an excellent resource, seen in the high numbers of people who use the Time Together on-line registration procedure. Mentor recruitment has far exceeded the first year target by over **200 people**. These people are now awaiting training and matching with refugee mentees.

#### **4.2 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

The scheme undoubtedly represents a cost effective method of supporting refugee integration. It is an excellent example of effectively ‘learning through doing’ and represents a model of best practice in supporting increased levels of integration for refugees and asylum seekers (to a lesser extent) in the UK. The focussed nature of the mentoring model and the way it is branded by TimeBank supports the effective recruitment of volunteer mentors who care about their mentees and work hard to support their increased integration.

The internal procedures, training plans and matching processes, as well as the various methods of evaluation and monitoring could quite easily be turned

into a mentoring tool kit for other service delivery organisations and partnerships to roll out on a local level.

The funding constraints as well as Home Office stipulations regarding the client group have been a difficult issue. In some ways, it has been sidestepped by the London and Glasgow offices as they have both got examples of asylum seekers involved in the scheme. Staff in TimeBank have tried to square this issue with the Home Office but have not had any formally written acceptance of this change. A member of the Project Board who was interviewed felt that these funding constraints, whilst understandable, are in some way short-sighted because mentoring with asylum seekers who have been in the country for a number of years is an excellent means of crime prevention and skill development, preparing them for potential citizenship. Viewing people not in terms of whether they may or may not stay but rather as people who could be involved in British culture at the time of waiting for refugee status to be verified would be an important development, and one which TimeBank could help lobby for, based on the success of the scheme in supporting asylum seekers' integration.

Officially opening the scheme to a wider client group would also help in raising the public awareness of the plight of this client group and support prejudice reduction. Project Board members and the consultants feel that the scheme should have a more 'holistic' view of immigrants.

Evidence from the surveys and anecdotal case studies affirm the model as being excellent for developing 'independency' amongst the mentees. The empowerment-based model of mentoring ('I will help you to do something but you will do it'), balanced with the short-term focussed nature of the relationship, enables a scheme which refugees can effectively move into and through. There could be levels of mentoring devised to meet differing needs of mentees and differing stages of integration, from basic befriending to complex career-focussed work. The matching and assessment processes would have to be geared to really highlight these needs.

In terms of the effectiveness of the scheme in raising public awareness, it is clear from the surveys that mentors have felt that their experiences arm them with demonstrable evidence which can counterbalance the common 'Daily Mail' attitudes of some people. The consultants would recommend running the scheme for a further 3 years in a small localised area such as an area of Glasgow with attitudinal research carried out before and after to measure any differences the scheme makes to local attitudes and cohesion.

Finally the issue of mentors as 'equal clients' of the scheme has not been fully addressed in this evaluation. Evidence from the surveys and focus groups suggest that mentors get a great deal of rewards from the scheme, but exactly what difference this makes to them has not been fully explored or promoted by TimeBank. It would be a very useful piece of in-depth research to do as it would enable greater ability to target the mentor marketing techniques as well as develop the profile of what makes a good mentor.

## **Section 5 - Investigation and evaluation of mentoring as a successful tool in refugee integration**

### **5.1 What happened?**

To carry out this part of the evaluation, the consultants sought first of all to define the notions of integration and mentoring as used by Time Together. This was achieved by investigating how Time Together identified current definitions of integration and mentoring followed by an attempt to identify key elements of integration to measure whether the scheme achieved its aims.

### **5.2 Where did the original definitions come from?**

As described in the introduction to this report, the Time Together scheme was set up in response to a government directive about the potential value of a mentoring programme which matched UK citizens with refugees. From the outset, it was proposed as a two-way process:

**“Such models recognise that integration is a two-way process, in which both refugee and host community have a role, and can contribute towards stronger more cohesive communities.”**

Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain, February 2002

The government were keen to explore mentoring schemes based on positive experiences in other countries, such as Canada. However, mentoring had not been tested as a means of promoting integration in the UK. The Time Together pilot has provided that testing ground and this evaluation can in part determine the extent to which mentoring is an effective tool in refugee integration.

Although valuable and successful peer mentoring schemes exist in the UK, where refugees provide support to each other, the Time Together scheme emphasised what could be gained for both mentor and mentee and was set up in the belief that integration could be an effective result of this two-way contact.

Time Together took its cue on the meaning of integration from government definitions. Importantly for this campaign, the government identifies the complexity of integration:

**“Our aim is not to produce a package into which successful asylum-seekers are pushed in at one end and out of which integrated refugees appear at the other. Communities are different. Refugees are different. Our aim is to help all refugees develop their potential and to contribute to the cultural and economic life of the country as equal members of society.”**

Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain, February 2002

### **5.3 What were we evaluating?**

The consultants first identified the origin of the definitions of integration and mentoring which influenced early thinking in the development of Time Together. They then focussed on the scheme in more detail, looking at the original aims of the mentoring scheme, development of 1:1 relationships and ideas of how integration would result from such a method. What is distinctive about this scheme is that Time Together was set up with a wide understanding of integration which was not solely about jobs, skills and CV's. This scheme broadens the benchmarks of integration to include an understanding of UK values, communities, popular culture and the media. Within the Time Together guide, the following is given as a definition of integration:

**“Being accepted in a society without fear of exclusion and contributing positively to that society.”**

Time Together Guide

From this understanding of integration, Time Together draw their understanding of mentoring within the context of this scheme:

**“Helping and supporting people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be.”**

Time Together mentor training & mentee induction packs

In order to evaluate whether the scheme has had an impact on refugee notions of integration, the consultants attempted to identify some key elements of what might make someone feel integrated as a refugee. These ideas were taken directly from mentors and mentees by attending a mentee and mentor training event where both groups worked together to define what integration meant to them. These possible benchmarks then formed the basis of the questions asked in the focus groups and surveys. The benchmarks were as follows:

- Level of spoken English.
- Understanding of UK values and customs.
- Knowledge about UK systems e.g. health/education/benefits/social services/Home Office immigration.
- Level of confidence and self-esteem.
- Knowledge of people outside mentees' own cultural background.
- Access to advice about problems encountered in day to day life here.
- Access to advice about what s/he wanted to do and achieve here.
- Knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit.
- Knowledge about how to get a job.
- Knowledge about how to get a qualification/training.
- Knowledge of where to meet new friends/local people.

The surveys were designed to enable each mentee to self assess to what extent they experienced these issues as barriers to their integration, before they started with Time Together. Mentees were then asked to answer the same questions from the position of having worked with a mentor through Time Together. In this way, the consultants aimed to measure if there had been a shift in the mentees own sense of their integration. Similarly, mentors were asked to identify what they felt were particular barriers to their mentees when they first met them, and then following a period of working together in their 1:1 pairing. This was aimed at trying to see if their mentor saw changes in their mentees personal sense of integration.

The Time Together campaign hoped that the mentoring experience would have a snowball effect by creating mentors and mentees as ‘ambassadors’ who would talk about the scheme to other people. It was envisaged that this would support integration on a wider level. Mentees and mentors were asked to rank the effectiveness of various personal ways they may have raised public awareness of the scheme, and this was followed up during the focus groups.

In addition, the surveys were designed to enable mentors and mentees to rank other tools of integration that they had found useful, such as volunteering, peer support, education and training.

### **5.4 Mentor and mentee surveys**

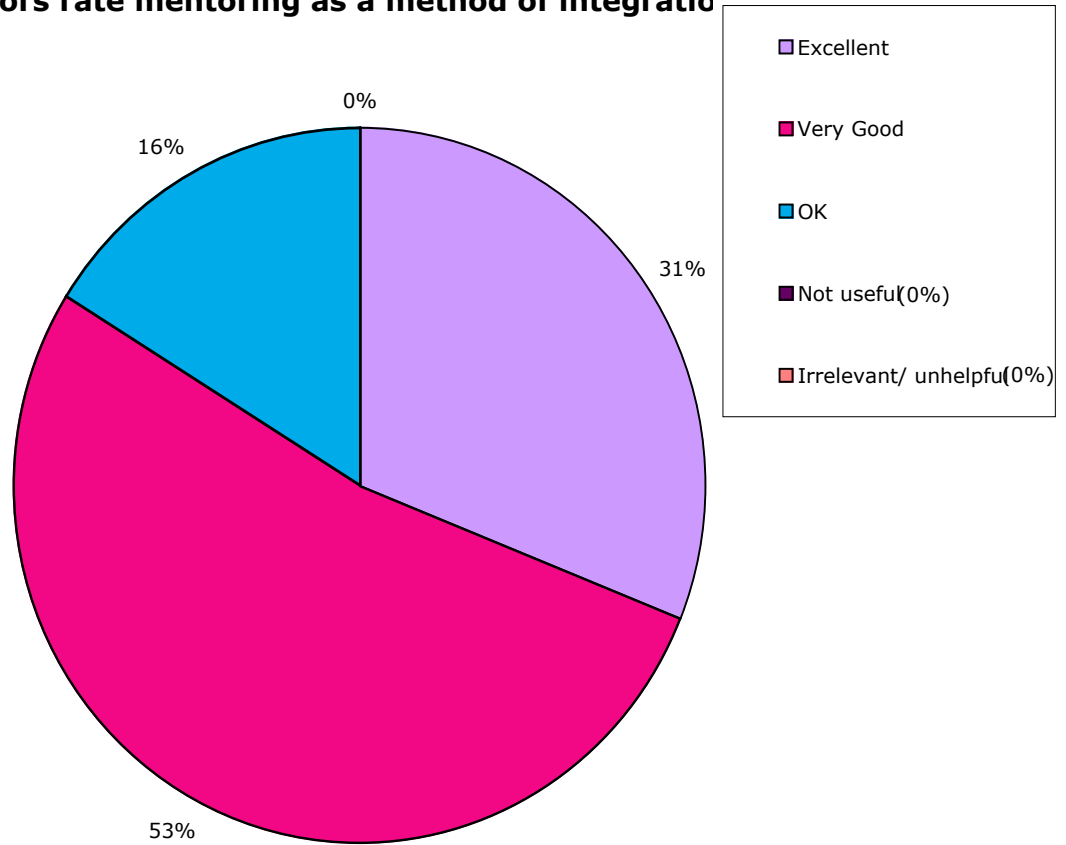
**Mentors** – 45 surveys received from 142 emailed = 32% response rate

**Mentees** – 30 surveys received from 142 posted = 21% response rate

### **5.5 Key findings, lessons learned and recommendations regarding mentoring as a tool for integration**

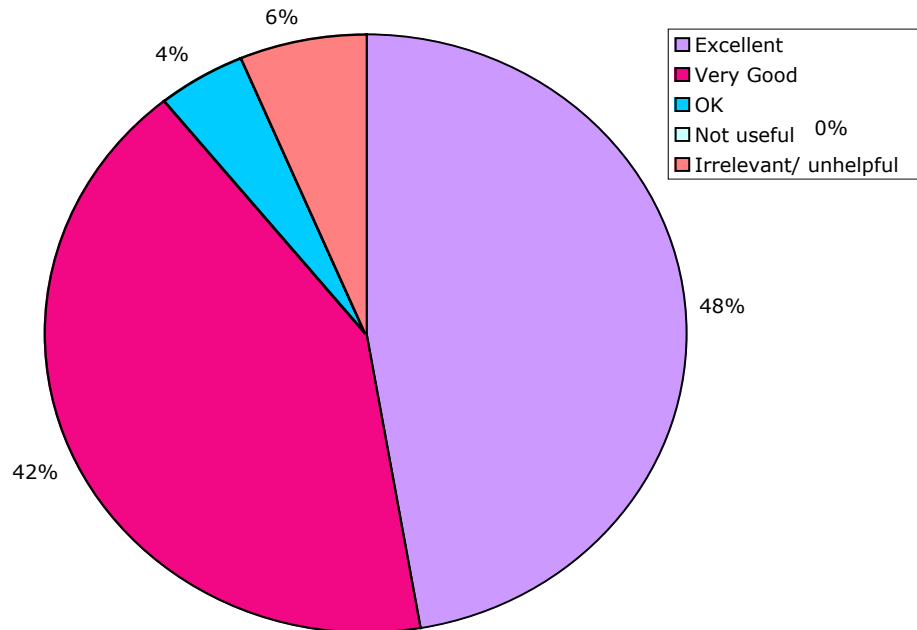
The consultants collated the statistics from the mentor and mentee surveys in order to measure the effectiveness of mentoring as a tool for refugee integration. The statistics were converted into either mean values or percentages, which are reproduced below and throughout the report. Mentors and mentees were asked to rate mentoring as a tool for refugee integration and this is represented in percentage terms in the pie charts below. The changes in levels of integration as perceived by mentors and mentees have been presented, in mean values, as bar charts below.

**How mentors rate mentoring as a method of integration**



**“I think the mentoring is very effective. Working on a 1:1 basis with people really works to help people, and working with a UK citizen on a 1:1 works as I feel we are all quite reserved here in this country but that we open up when we are on a 1:1 basis with people.”**  
Mentor

**How mentees rate mentoring as a tool for refugee integration**

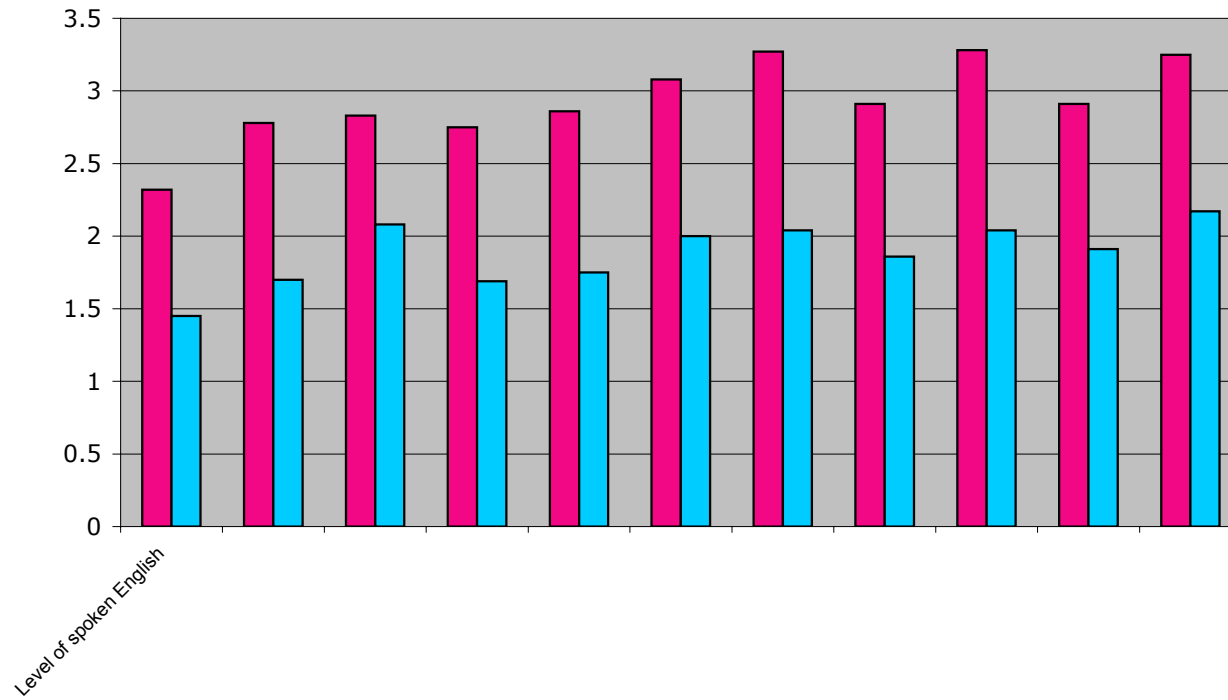


**“This is the best method of integrating UK citizens and refugees. To feel confident, meet people and integrate. People from different countries, culture and tradition can understand each other very well if they want to. If you want to get something, you have to do something about it, not just sit and wait for help. So far, I have learnt to have self-confidence, know your objective before you step out and persist until the aim is achieved.”**  
Mentee

**“I have improved my language and it has helped me to express my opinion. My mentor helps me to correct my speech and explain my mission and our vision.”**  
Mentee

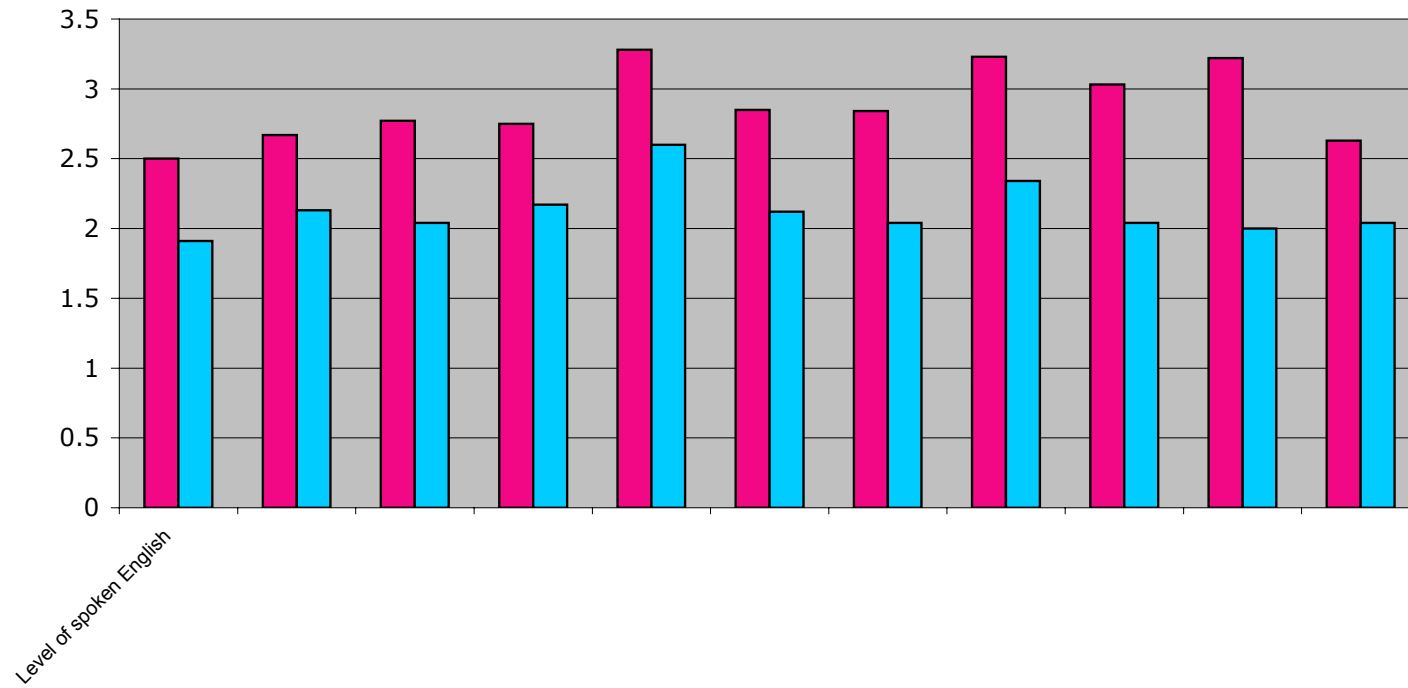
**“This scheme helped me to set up my goals with my mentor and get a job.”**  
Mentee

Changes in levels of mentee's integration



Level of spoken English

**Mentor's perception of changes in levels of mentee's integration**



Is mentoring an effective tool for refugee integration? There is no doubt from the evidence above that Time Together is a very effective tool in refugee integration. The bar charts, although based on mean values, clearly demonstrate that mentees feel that specific barriers to integration in their own lives have diminished somewhat. A number of issues are worth noting here however. In analysing the bar charts above, simply the passing of time and the inevitable effect of other variables must be acknowledged as having an effect on the increased feeling of integration as experienced by the mentees (training, education, work for example). However, the consistency and level of the change in perception is startling. In conjunction with other survey results, as well as qualitative feedback, it can be concluded that mentoring is a particularly powerful and effective tool for refugee integration.

It is interesting to note that mentors and mentees identify different barriers to refugee integration. For example, mentors believe that 'knowledge of people outside the mentee's own culture and background' and 'knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit' are the two greatest barriers. Mentees, on the other hand, believe that 'access to information about what they want to do and achieve here' as well as 'knowledge of how to get an education, qualification and training' are the two greatest barriers. The consultants feel that this could be a reflection of differing expectations of the scheme for mentees and mentors and could be an important justification for TimeBank to consider implementing an initial mentee assessment process, perhaps utilising this model.

### **5.6 Focus groups - Key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

Two focus groups were run on consecutive evenings, one for mentees and one for mentors. The overall aim of the focus groups was to evaluate the success of Time Together for the participants. As a focus group, the idea was to facilitate a discussion, to identify differing experiences as well as to get a picture of what worked and what didn't. Specific questions were asked about people's original motivations to join the scheme, their matching process, any concerns about being involved in the scheme, barriers to integration, whether mentoring had made a difference, and the skills needed in a mentor. The groups were also asked about their ideas of how the scheme could be improved, expanded or developed and the wider impact of the scheme on public awareness, e.g. the idea of mentors and mentees as ambassadors.

### **5.7 Mentees – 9 people**

Participants in the mentee focus group wholeheartedly supported the scheme and the potential of mentoring as tool of refugee integration. The mentees group was a very positive experience for the consultants with each person talking animatedly about the benefits they had found doing the scheme. For example;

**"I knew only the Arabic community and I spoke only Arabic and it held me back because I had to do an English test in order to resume my career...doing this, it was like being offered a future."**  
Mentee

**“When I came to this country it was a totally different world. But having a mentor, it has already changed. I understand more now.”**  
Mentee

Mentees particularly talked about the complexities and problems of actually getting to meet and know UK citizens and building trusting relationships:

**“Refugees come with low esteem because they feel they are visitors to this country and do not have permission or know who to ask. Because of the language barrier because of the negative perception, they are not aware of where to go. With TimeBank I think things will change. I find this organisation a very positive organisation. These people [refugees] because of the language barrier, because of the lack of information are marginalised in their own group. You can’t believe some refugees are living in London, but they don’t know anything. They have been living here for 15 years but their life is the same as it was when they came.”**  
Mentee

**“People [refugees] in this country are not aware of their rights, they are not aware, nobody taught them. Because of the language barrier, they don’t know who to ask.”**  
Mentee

**“Sometimes it was difficult to integrate to society because I didn’t meet many people.”**  
Mentee

Mentees talked about their personal need to be involved in the UK and their goals of contributing to their new society:

**“If refugees can work in their own profession, they can contribute very positively to society.”**  
Mentee

**“There’s also something about education. You can see here we are all teachers, doctors, we want to make progress, we want to go into it.”**  
Mentee

Mentees talked about how the relationships had opened up new avenues for them. The one-to-one nature of mentoring seems to be the key; the mentor, by building a trusting relationship with the mentee, supports them to gain access to a range of other opportunities that help in their integration. For example, several mentees talked about voluntary work they were involved in and how this significantly increased their sense of integration.

**“My mentor helped me to find voluntary work, how to apply because when I applied first, I didn’t get any reply from them. She told me you have to go and ask them and after a while I got a**

**positive result. This improved my confidence because I got to talk to other people and practice my English.”**

Mentee

The surveys corroborate this; **36%** of both the mentor and mentee survey respondents believed that volunteering and voluntary work was an excellent method in supporting refugee integration.

### **5.8 Mentors – 9 people**

Participants in the mentor group echoed the message that the scheme had been a very positive experience, in a range of ways.

**“Just developing a friendship it’s lovely and I would never have met anybody like this from Somalia if I had not done the mentoring.”**

Mentor

Mentors discussed their experiences on the scheme and the learning they gained from developing their relationships:

**“We do simple things, I helped her join a library and we looked at an atlas and she showed me where she came from, and talked about home and I showed her where I have travelled.”**

Mentor

**“People don’t even know where to go – lots of shut doors. Language is real problem.”**

Mentor

**“I try to find contacts that I have and make introductions. I hope I have been of help, I have told him how to go about the job search, skills needed.”**

Mentor

As in the mentee groups, mentors talked about the lack of self-confidence they perceive in their mentees. They particularly talked about how they work to support mentees learning about systems and culture here:

**“My mentees gas has been off for the past 3 weeks and he has not got the confidence to keep on the phone to get it sorted. I have helped him as it’s only a case of one phone call to British Gas to me, for him its not.”**

Mentor

**“My mentee has got an MA since he’s been here, but basic things still are a problem such as knowing how to address letters to potential employers and how things are here culturally and in our bureaucracy. This is what we talk about and work on.”**

Mentor

Mentors talked about the isolation they identified in some of their mentees experiences of living in the UK:

**“Knowing a British person on a one to one level is simply enough sometimes – she is isolated and is with members of her community only so I hope that I have helped in this way, just talking to a British person.”**

Mentor

Mentors also discussed their own gains from the relationships in very positive ways:

**“I understand more, it’s challenged my own assumptions about refugees, negative stuff is drummed into you all the time in the UK and this scheme has countered that for me completely.”**

Mentor

**“I feel proud of myself that I have done this, in the maelstrom of daily life.”**

Mentor

**“I have a sense of being able to contribute a little bit. If I can help in minute ways then I feel I’ve done something.”**

Mentor

Again, the surveys corroborate this finding; **63%** of mentor survey respondents described their experience of volunteering with Time Together as rewarding in terms of their own personal development.

## **Section 6 - Investigation and evaluation of the adaptability of the scheme – Looking Forward**

### **6.1 What happened?**

Time Together was set up as a pilot project, to test an idea and see if it could work on a larger scale across the country and possibly in some kind of franchise format. The hope from TimeBank, the Project Board and the government's point of view was that the pilot could potentially have a much wider application. As a member of the Project Board put so well it aimed 'to take something that's common sense and put it into common practice'.

The consultants asked every stakeholder, including mentors and mentees about issues of adaptability. All previous sections highlight ways that Time Together could be adapted. However, in this part of the report, the consultants focus on what all the stakeholders said, particularly about the potential to replicate the scheme. The consultants were keen to discover what would be needed if it was to grow, and what gains and challenges might result from that growth.

### **6.2 Findings, lessons learnt and recommendations**

All the feedback the consultants received confirmed that the scheme had been successful and should therefore be replicated across the UK.

**“It seems clear that the Time Together project has had a very successful first year. I think the most important thing now is to extend the project to smaller communities in provincial Britain and preferably Northern Ireland. Large groups of refugees placed in villages or small towns in rural Britain are a huge source of tension locally. Those kinds of environments are among the most difficult for newcomers, refugees or not, to integrate into and an easy place for narrow mindedness to thrive – and therefore perfect for Time Together outreach. How this would be achieved, whether by volunteer or paid staff, I don't know, but I do think some type of regional strategy is the next priority.”**

Mentor

**“Go to Nottinghamshire where people are placed. It should be like a seed project where the work is done in small villages where refugees are hoisted on the locals and it doesn't work; they need help they can't just be dumped there.”**

Mentor

**“You should expand to sensitive spots in the country. E.g. small communities which have received a large number of refugees.”**

Mentor

**“Expand the process of matching to as many people as possible.”**

Mentee

In any replication, there will be a number of variables including geography, length of time in the country, level of education, existing support networks and family in the UK which determine an individual client's needs. These variables will determine how any future Time Together scheme is adapted to suit the local needs. For example, evidence from Glasgow suggests that outside of London there may be a greater basic support need due to smaller refugee/asylum seeker populations, local politics about dispersal and limited refugee support organisations/networks. The consultants feel that if the scheme is adapted effectively based on this learning, it could be successful in a range of settings, possibly including local detention centres or dispersal points which could offer a potential gain in terms of public awareness.

**“They just put them in a hostel where there is no interaction between their environment, the society. It is the system that constrains people. I know a lot of people from my own country who are highly qualified but the system denies them access.”**

Mentee

**“Encourage those who have just arrived, asylum seekers, right from the beginning because people lose time. I have been here three years and if I had had this from the beginning...”**

Mentee

Linked to the idea that different clients have different needs, there is some evidence to suggest that different levels/types of mentoring might work.

**“Time Together could start a job club by working in partnership with employers. Most refugees who join the Time Together scheme hope to get a job. This is where Time Together could help by enlisting the co-operation of employers to help set up a job club.”**

Mentee

**“TimeBank should have a link or networking with professional organisations in order to provide support and advice to the mentees.”**

Mentee

The different type or level of mentoring required could be identified through the assessment process as has previously been discussed. For example, one might want to pair a UK mother specifically with a refugee who is a mother and who needs support around schooling issues. This could obviously have a knock-on effect on the success and suitability of the matching process.

Regarding being able to set a ceiling on capacity (the staffing level and manageable number of mentoring pairs), the consultants talked to a number of stakeholders and there are differing opinions based on a number of critical factors; available organisational infrastructure/ staff support, needs of the client group (including refugee status), the targets set and the individual staff member's skills and experience.

The consultants feel the issue of capacity is a difficult one to be set as an absolute. Capacity and targets need to be set locally, ideally in negotiation with any partners involved. It is a delicate balancing process. For example, from interviewing the London and Glasgow Co-ordinators, comparing capacity is not comparing like with like. The Glasgow Co-ordinator is dealing with up to 35 pairs at the present time whilst the London Co-ordinator is dealing with upwards of 112 mentors as well as all the other tasks described in **Section 2 on Running the Scheme**.

Capacity should be negotiated locally, taking account of all of the variables above. Time Together should be mindful of increasing the current targets per worker at all beyond this, bearing in mind the amount of feedback from mentors and mentees suggesting increased input from TimeBank in a variety of ways. At the moment capacity and targets seem to be funding-driven. The London Co-ordinator felt that one of the only ways to reach the increased targets in year 2 would be to be creative in counting the number of relationships and to include email or one-off coaching as an individual relationship. This is a clear example of a target-driven rather than a client need-driven approach since there has been no research carried out on the feasibility or need for one-off coaching.

The other issue related to capacity is the balance between quantity and quality. If Time Together is expanded in particular local areas to include more and more pairs per staff member, there is a potential loss of in-depth knowledge of stories and progress. Indeed, a Project Board member spoke of his concern that growth without an awareness of local limits might result in Time Together becoming a 'faceless dateline agency', rather than a 'family-type affair'. In other words, the personal touch is potentially lost and the consultants would urge caution in expanding capacity beyond local capabilities. As the Project Board member continued 'the real benefits of the relationships created in the scheme need to be focussed on as this provides the real 'guts' of the scheme'.

Testing out this pilot is to the credit of TimeBank. However, a Project Board member felt that this represents a question mark for TimeBank about the way forward. This is symbolised by the fact that TimeBank calls Time Together both a campaign and a project. Clearly TimeBank's strengths are its website and media connections, its innovative promotion and fresh representations of volunteering and its existing networks within government and the local, regional and national voluntary sector. It has proved it can be a successful service delivery organisation but Time Together is an unusual add-on when compared to other work within TimeBank and does not necessarily sit comfortably within a portfolio of predominantly media-led campaigns.

As has been already suggested, the consultants feel that replicating the scheme will rely on building strong voluntary sector partnerships nationally and locally in which TimeBank can have a strategic and important role. We would suggest this role to include collating best practice and dissemination to partners (in the form of a developmental toolkit), branding and quality

assurance, monitoring and evaluation (gathering the ‘feel-good’ as well as quantitative data) and utilising data in meeting the aim to raise public awareness. In other words, TimeBank should continue its campaigning role focussing on the media. TimeBank could retain the national and developmental perspective of Time Together but allow it to be managed within existing constraints locally. Strategically, TimeBank could continue to promote the key message about mentoring as an effective tool in refugee integration. For example, TimeBank could set a target to do national work with the IND to further promote mentoring, working with the new IND volunteering officer.

Thinking about future partnerships, the Birmingham example demonstrates that Time Together should not be ‘helicoptered’ into a city and funders need to be made aware of the needs of good research and outreach to create a successful and sustainable scheme. In terms of who should be involved in local partnerships, Volunteer Bureaux were suggested as a way to cement TimeBank’s existing role with them. Different local rules with regards to volunteer support might create some problems or tensions but the advantages are that there are networks and instant access to potential mentors and mentees (as demonstrated by the Glasgow scheme). There are a number of other stakeholder organisations where such a scheme could sit including the local authority. Whatever partnership mechanisms are set up at the local level, there should be a number of key elements involved, including a volunteer practitioner, local refugee knowledge and media expertise.

It is interesting to note that nobody suggested locating the project within a refugee community organisation at a local level. The consultants feel that a strong partnership should include a refugee organisation but not necessarily as a lead partner. Some mentee survey respondents reiterate this:

**“Refugee organisations should improve their effort to better integrate refugees within and outside the organisations and bring refugees practically in contact with organisations working for community and use properly their potential and not just secure their chairs in the offices. They shouldn’t leave refugees simply in the ocean to swim on their own.”**

Mentee

Feedback suggests that the model for adaptability described above would ensure the ‘family type affair’ as well as ensuring expansion. If this model is adopted, the numbers of projects will go up but they will have a small local focus.

**“Small seed projects would be good.”**

Mentor

Finally, the consultants asked mentors and mentees about the lessons they had personally learnt that they would want future mentors and mentees to know about. The following quotes are a selection from the surveys which are reproduced here for the benefit of future participants:

**“Everyone has a contribution to make. I think mentors sometimes give themselves a hard time, ‘Am I doing enough? Are we working towards enough goals? Are we meeting in enough different and interesting environments?’ etc. These were my concerns at the outset, but I have relaxed enough to recognize that just practising English with a native speaker in social surroundings every couple of weeks is appreciated.”**

Mentor

**“Take it slowly – you must first win your mentee’s trust and respect. Try to get the mentee to set their own goals. Even if they have had the worst experiences, most refugees will want to talk about their home country so research this and look around you for facts and information and news about that country.”**

Mentor

**“We do not need to start mentoring having all the answers, being available / accessible to the mentee is a very good starting point. Both the mentee and the mentor have time to learn through their relationship. Persistence pays, and never underestimate how much you can learn from another individual.”**

Mentor

**“Don’t worry if you don’t work in the field your mentee wants to follow. They are often just looking for reassurance that they are doing the right thing and the chance to chat through some of the issues.”**

Mentor

**“Register and get involved.”**

Mentee

**“If you want to get something, you have to do something about it, not just sit and wait for help.”**

Mentee

**“It will definitely have a positive outcome on their perception and self-esteem.”**

Mentee

**“DIY – do it yourself. Try to help yourself to the extent you can.”**

Mentee

## Conclusions and Next Steps

TimeBank was approached to pilot Time Together and have made a great success of the first year, learning from doing and developing best practice in mentoring as a tool for refugee integration. The year represents an excellent model of piloting an idea and shows great entrepreneurial spirit within the entire staff team and organisation.

The evaluation identified that this mentoring scheme is, without any doubt, an excellent tool for refugee integration. This is due to the two-way model of mentoring that Time Together has developed over time.

Time Together is a cost-effective method to support integration since it works on a range of different levels, for refugees/asylum seekers and local communities. Not only does it work for the people involved in the pairs but it also impacts on the wider community. Time Together works successfully to challenge negative perceptions of refugees on a personal level and the evaluation proves that as a result of their relationships, mentors and mentees are more informed about each other and motivated by their new learning. The effect of this is that they talk about their experiences and this creates change. The evaluation proves that people naturally become ambassadors and active citizens. The scheme develops people who can speak up and who want to get involved in doing something to counterbalance the negative media focus on refugees and immigration.

The systems developed to pilot the scheme have been excellent as has staff commitment to self-assessment. Perhaps TimeBank has a role in continuing to pilot new ideas within volunteer development since the consultants feel that the pilot systems are transferable to a range of ideas.

The scheme's effectiveness could be developed, as already outlined in the body of the report. However, the consultants would specifically recommend some fine-tuning on the assessment of potential mentee's needs, the matching process and structures for ongoing support of the mentoring relationships. More in-depth research into why particular pairs succeed would support further understanding of how to run a successful scheme.

Regarding a strategy to take the scheme forward, the consultants suggest the next step is for TimeBank to seek additional funding from the Home Office to research the feasibility of further expansion into refugee communities outside London. Building on the learning from this evaluation new strategic research should include identification of local refugee communities, mapping potential local service-delivery partnerships, devising a model for service delivery handover as well as devising and implementing the strategic blue-print for Time Together roll-out locally. TimeBank should learn from the original start up of the scheme to ensure that adequate preparation is put into any replication.

The consultants recommend that TimeBank should retain the branding, web-based recruitment and media focus, as well as national strategic overview of the development of the scheme. Considering the potential of this scheme to effect attitudinal change, the consultants would suggest that TimeBank develop their campaigning role within this scheme to effectively combat biased and inaccurate media reporting utilising Time Together ambassadors and relationship stories.

Part of this research should involve gathering previous lessons learnt from other pilot projects that have been rolled out nationally, such as Millennium Volunteers. A key element of this research would be the sustainability of new local mentoring schemes and where they best sit in terms of partnerships and funding. Aligned to this should be the development of sound corporate, marketing, financial and human resource strategies, based on the key findings and stakeholder feedback in this report.

The consultants believe that Time Together is a visionary scheme which is dynamic and effects change. Credit should be given to Matthew Thomson who led on the initial idea within TimeBank and to Sarah Arnold for carrying it forward so effectively. We hope that this evaluation helps TimeBank to maximise the potential of Time Together.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Mentor and Mentee surveys

#### Time Together Evaluation - Mentor survey

This survey is part of an external evaluation of the Time Together Mentoring Project by an external specialist organisation called '3Consultancy'. Time Together has been running for one year as a pilot / test project. Everyone who has been involved in the development and running of the project will be involved in this process. This evaluation is in addition to the internal evaluations and monitoring which you have been involved in. It is designed to ensure objectivity. We know this may mean you have to repeat some feedback you have already given. We apologise for this but would like to thank you in advance for your full participation. This will help us to make the evaluation as comprehensive as possible.

The overall evaluation seeks to identify whether the scheme has met its original aims. These aims were to:

- Build relationships between UK citizens and refugees so they can share cultural understanding, helping refugees to develop their confidence and communication skills
- Increase public awareness of the contribution that refugees make to the UK and make a real contribution to diversity in the UK by giving the chance for refugee voices to be heard.

#### This survey aims to assess the following:

- **The benefits of the scheme to the mentors, mentees and wider UK society**
- **Whether mentoring is a successful mechanism in refugee integration**
- **What lessons have been learnt from this pilot year that can help to improve the Time Together project in the future.**

To do this we need your help. Your survey is attached.

**This survey is totally confidential to the external evaluators. Please do not write your name and address on the form. We will never know who filled in the form so you can say what you want.**

#### Definitions we are using in this survey:

**Integration:** being accepted in a society without fear of exclusion and contributing positively to that society.

**Mentoring:** helping and supporting people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be.

**If you would like to talk to someone in TimeBank about this evaluation then please contact your mentoring co-ordinator.**

**Mentor Survey**

**General**

1. How did you first find out about Time Together? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- Timebank website
  - BBC website
  - Newspaper article
  - Friends/ family
  - Refugee organisation
  - Other (please give details)
- 

2. Why did you want to get involved in Time Together? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- Experience of refugee issues amongst family/ friends
  - To combat the negative press coverage of refugees
  - To make a difference
  - Other (please give details)
- 

**Application process**

3. Please rate the **application** process for you as a mentor.

Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Administration of application					
Length of time it took from application to matching					
Application information provided					
Other (please give details)					

4. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the application process?

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**Training**

5. Please rate the **training** you had as a mentor.

Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility of training (time of day, venue, expenses etc)					
Relevance of the training to the mentoring relationship					
Length of the training					
Information about refugee issues					
Information about boundaries of mentoring relationship					
Information about goal setting and action planning					
Other (please give details)					

6. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the training process?

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**Time Together matching process**

7. Please rate **the matching process** between you and your mentee.

Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Process of meeting refugee mentees					
Matching criteria used (e.g. professions, hobbies, interests, age)					
Other (please give details)					

8. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the matching process between mentees and mentors?

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**Mentoring Support**

**9.** Please rate the support you receive as a mentor from TimeBank. Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Usefulness of support to you					
Quality of support					
Frequency of support					
Usefulness of email 'egroup' for mentors					
Other (please give details)					

**10.** Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the support structure for mentors?

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**The mentoring relationship**

**11.** How long have you been working with your mentee? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9-12 months

**12.** How many times have you met with your mentee?

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**13.** What was your main concern about being a mentor before you started meeting your mentee? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- I would not get on with my mentee
- Language
- My skill/knowledge base
- Other (please give details)

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**Volunteering with Time Together**

**14.** Please rate the importance of the following statements in terms of how **rewarding** you have found your experience of volunteering with Time Together.

Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=very rewarding, 2=rewarding, 3=OK, 4=not rewarding, 5=irrelevant. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing your understanding of refugee experiences in the UK					
Personal development					
Increasing/ developing your communication skills					
Increasing your understanding of UK culture and customs					
Increasing your confidence/ self-esteem					
Being able to make a difference					
Other (please give details)					

**Your mentee’s level of integration**

**15.** This question is in TWO parts.

**15a.** First of all, think back to **WHEN YOU FIRST MET YOUR MENTEE**. Consider the definition of integration supplied at the front of this survey. Please rate how integrated you feel your mentee was **WHEN YOU FIRST MET THEM**.

**Please use the scale 1-5, as follows:**

- 1=not a barrier to their integration,**
- 2=they sometimes needed support with this,**
- 3=they often needed support with this,**
- 4=they very often needed support with this,**
- 5=this was a big barrier to their integration.**

Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience of your mentee.

	1	2	3	4	5
Level of spoken English					
Understanding of UK values and customs					
Knowledge about UK systems e.g. health/education/benefits/social services/Home Office immigration					
Level of confidence and self-esteem					
Knowledge of people outside mentees own					

cultural background					
Access to advice about problems encountered in day to day life here					
Access to advice about what s/he wanted to do and achieve here					
Knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit					
Knowledge about how to get a job/develop their career					
Knowledge about how to get a qualification/training					
Knowledge of where to meet new friends/local people					
Other (please give details)					

**15b.** Now, think about YOUR MENTEE NOW. Consider the definition of integration supplied at the front of this survey. Please rate how integrated you feel your mentee IS NOW.

Please use the scale 1-5, as follows:

- 1= not a barrier to their integration**
- 2= they sometimes need support with this**
- 3= they often need support with this**
- 4= they very often need support with this**
- 5= this is a big barrier to their integration**

Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience of your mentee.

	1	2	3	4	5
Level of spoken English					
Understanding of UK values and customs					
Knowledge about UK systems e.g. health/education/benefits/social services/Home Office immigration					
Level of confidence and self-esteem					
Knowledge of people outside mentees own cultural background					
Access to advice about problems encountered in day to day life here					
Access to advice about what s/he wanted to do and achieve here					
Knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit					
Knowledge about how to get a job/develop their career					
Knowledge about how to get a qualification/training					
Knowledge of where to meet new friends/local people					

Other (please give details)					
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**Mentoring as a method of refugee integration**

**16.** How would you rate mentoring as a method of refugee integration? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- Excellent
- Very good
- OK
- Not useful
- Irrelevant/unhelpful

**17.** What other things have helped your mentee’s integration?  
Please rate the following in terms of how useful they have been in helping your mentee to integrate.  
Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Peer support from other refugees					
Refugee organisations					
Community organisations/ groups					
College courses/ education					
Volunteering and voluntary work					
Other (please give details)					

**18.** Have you any other comments on refugee integration in general or ideas to improve refugee integration for your mentee?

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**Raising awareness of refugee issues**

**19.** Time Together aims to raise public awareness of refugee issues in the UK via matching UK citizens with refugees. Please rate the following in terms of how effective **you** have been in raising public awareness.  
Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=very effective, 2=effective, 3=OK, 4=ineffective, 5=irrelevant. Tick the box that most corresponds to your experience.

	1	2	3	4	5
Discussions I have had with friends and family					
Discussions I have had in my workplace					



**We thank you for your time in completing this confidential survey – please email it back to TimeBank by Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.**

### **Time Together Evaluation - Mentee survey**

This survey is part of an external evaluation of the Time Together Mentoring Project by an external specialist organisation called '3Consultancy'. Time Together has been running for one year as a pilot / test project. Everyone who has been involved in the development and running of the project will be involved in this process. This evaluation is in addition to the internal evaluations and monitoring which you have been involved in. It is designed to ensure objectivity. We know this may mean you have to repeat some feedback you have already given. We apologise for this but would like to thank you in advance for your full participation. This will help us to make the evaluation as comprehensive as possible.

The overall evaluation seeks to identify whether the scheme has met its original aims. These aims were to:

- Build relationships between UK citizens and refugees so they can share cultural understanding, helping refugees to develop their confidence and communication skills
- Increase public awareness of the contribution that refugees make to the UK and make a real contribution to diversity in the UK by giving the chance for refugee voices to be heard.

#### **This survey aims to assess the following:**

- **The benefits of the scheme to the mentors, mentees and wider UK society**
- **Whether mentoring is a successful mechanism in refugee integration**
- **What lessons have been learnt from this pilot year that can help to improve the Time Together project in the future.**

To do this we need your help. Your survey is attached.

**This survey is totally confidential to the external evaluators. Please do not write your name and address on the form. We will never know who filled in the form so you can say what you want.**

#### **Definitions we are using in this survey:**

Integration: being accepted in a society without fear of exclusion and contributing positively to that society.

Mentoring: helping and supporting people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be.

**If you would like to talk to someone in TimeBank about this evaluation then please contact your mentoring co-ordinator.**

**Mentee Survey**

**General questions**

1. How did you first find out about Time Together? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- Timebank website
  - BBC website
  - Newspaper article
  - Friends/ family
  - Refugee organisation
  - Other (please give details)
- 

2. How long had you lived in the UK before you registered with Time Together?

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**Applying to be a mentee**

3. Please rate the **application** process for you as a mentee.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful.**

**Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
The administration of your application					
The time it took (from application to matching)					
Application information provided					
Other (please give details)					

4. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the application process?

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**Mentee induction**

5. Please rate the **induction** you had as a mentee.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility of induction – time of day/ease of getting there/expenses etc					

Relevance of the induction to the mentoring relationship					
	1	2	3	4	5
Length of the induction					
Information about the boundaries of the mentoring relationship					
Information about goal setting and action planning					
Other (please give details)					

6. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the induction process?

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**Time Together matching process**

7. Please rate the **matching process** between you and your mentor.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
Process of meeting potential mentors					
Matching criteria used (e.g. professions, hobbies, interests, age)					
Other (please give details)					

8. Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the matching process between mentors and mentees?

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**Mentoring Support**

9. Please rate the **support you receive from the mentoring co-ordinator**.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of contacting your mentoring co-ordinator					
Frequency of contact					

Quality of support received					
Other (please give details)					

**10.** Have you any other comments or ideas to improve the support you get from the mentoring co-ordinator at TimeBank?

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**The mentoring relationship**

**11.** How long have you been working with your mentor? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9-12 months

**12.** How many times have you met with your mentor?

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**13.** What was your main concern about being a mentee before you met your mentor? Please circle **ONE** of the following:

- I would not get on with my mentor
  - Language barrier
  - Mentoring would not help me to integrate
  - Other (please give details)
- 

**Your level of integration**

**14.** This question is in TWO parts.

**14a.** First of all, think back to BEFORE YOU HAD A MENTOR. Please rate the following statements about integration in terms of how integrated you felt BEFORE YOU HAD A MENTOR.

You can use the definition of integration on the front page of this survey.

Please use the scale 1-5 below and tick the box that most described your experience.

- 1= was not a barrier to my integration**
- 2= I sometimes needed support with this**
- 3= I often needed support with this**
- 4= I very often needed support with this**
- 5= this was a big barrier to my integration**

	1	2	3	4	5
My level of spoken English					

	1	2	3	4	5
My understanding of UK values and customs					
My knowledge about UK systems e.g. health/education/benefits/social services/Home Office immigration					
My level of confidence and self-esteem					
My knowledge of people outside my own cultural background					
Access to advice about problems encountered in day to day life here					
Access to advice about what I wanted to do and achieve here					
My knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit					
My knowledge about how to get a job/develop my career					
My knowledge about how to get education/qualification/training					
My knowledge of where to meet new friends/local people					
Other (please give details)					

**14b.** Now, think about YOURSELF NOW. Please rate the following statements about integration in terms of how integrated you feel NOW. You can use the definition of integration on the front page of this survey.

Please use the scale 1-5 as follows, and tick the box that most describes your experience.

- 1= is not a barrier to my integration**
- 2= I sometimes need support with this**
- 3= I often need support with this**
- 4= I very often need support with this**
- 5= this is a big barrier to my integration**

	1	2	3	4	5
My level of spoken English					
My understanding of UK values and customs					
My knowledge about UK systems e.g. health/education/benefits/social services/Home Office immigration					
My level of confidence and self-esteem					
My knowledge of people outside my own cultural background					

Access to advice about problems encountered in day to day life here					
	1	2	3	4	5
Access to advice about what I wanted to do and achieve here					
My knowledge of UK citizens to ask about local social life, places to go and visit					
My knowledge about how to get a job/develop my career					
My knowledge about how to get education/ qualification/training					
My knowledge of where to meet new friends/local people					
Other (please give details)					

**Mentoring as a method of refugee integration**

**15.** How would you rate mentoring as a method of refugee integration? Please circle **ONE** of the following:  
 Excellent  
 Very good  
 OK  
 Not useful  
 Irrelevant/unhelpful

**16.** What other things have helped you to integrate?  
 Please rate the following in terms of how useful they have been in helping you to integrate.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=excellent, 2=very good, 3=OK, 4=not useful, 5=irrelevant/unhelpful. Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
Peer support from other refugees					
Refugee organisations					
Community organisations/ groups					
College courses/ education					
Volunteering and voluntary work					
Other (please give details)					

**17.** Have you any other comments on refugee integration or ideas to improve refugee integration?

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**Raising awareness of refugee issues**

**18.** Time Together aims to raise people’s awareness of refugee issues in the UK via matching UK citizens with refugees. Please rate the following in terms of how effective **you** have been in raising people’s awareness.

**Please use the scale 1-5, where 1=very effective, 2=effective, 3=OK, 4=ineffective, 5=irrelevant. Tick the box that most describes your experience.**

	1	2	3	4	5
Discussions I have had with friends and family					
Discussions I have had in my job/ voluntary work					
Public speaking					
Circulating TimeBank information leaflets, emails, press articles etc					
Other ( please give details)					

**19.** Have you any other comments or ideas about how you could raise people’s awareness of refugee issues in the UK?

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**20.** How has this scheme helped you to make your voice heard?

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**Developing the Time Together project**

**21.** What lessons have you learned that you would pass onto new refugee mentees?

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**22.** How do you think the Time Together mentoring project could be developed? Please give us as much detail as possible. Consider each stage of the process; advertising & publicity, recruitment and matching of mentors and mentees, training and support structures etc.

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## Appendix 2 – Stakeholders interviewed/meetings attended for External Evaluation

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date/method</b>
Matthew Thomson	Head of Development - Timebank	7 <sup>th</sup> / 20 <sup>th</sup> October Interviews
Andrew Dick	Head of Campaigns - TimeBank	7 <sup>th</sup> / 21 <sup>st</sup> October Interviews
Project Board	Time Together - TimeBank	13 <sup>th</sup> October – observation and attendance of meeting
Mentee's focus group	Time Together - London	13 <sup>th</sup> October
New mentee's Induction session - attendance	Time Together - London	14 <sup>th</sup> October - observation
New mentor's Training Day - attendance	Time Together - London	14 <sup>th</sup> October – observation and participation
New mentee and mentor joint training session - attendance	Time Together - London	14 <sup>th</sup> October – observation and participation
Mentor's focus group	Time Together – London	14 <sup>th</sup> October
Afshan Saleem	Co-ordinator - Time Together Glasgow	20 <sup>th</sup> / 24 <sup>th</sup> October – telephone interviews
Dr. Hailu Hagos	Mentoring Co-ordinator – Time Together London	20 <sup>th</sup> October - Interview
Meriem Omer	Mentoring Co-ordinator – Time Together London	21 <sup>st</sup> October - Interview
Pat McCaren	Media team - TimeBank	21 <sup>st</sup> October - Interview
Andy Gregg	RETAS Representative on Project Board	21 <sup>st</sup> October – Telephone Interview
Patrick Wintour	The Employability Forum Representative on Project Board	22 <sup>nd</sup> October - Interview
Sarah Arnold	Project Manager – Time Together	22 <sup>nd</sup> October – Interview and various short briefing meetings
David Barnes	West Midlands Asylum and Refugee Consortium	21 <sup>st</sup> October – brief discussion - unable to develop this due to unavailability.
Carmel Kerr/Julia Bond	Integration Unit – IND – Home Office	Various calls made – unable to develop this line of evaluation.

**Appendix 3 – Mentor Matching Form**