



UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE LYON 2  
UNIVERSITÉ DE LYON



International Conference  
on  
Community and  
Complementary Currencies

Colloque international  
sur les  
Monnaies sociales et  
complémentaires

Coloquio internacional  
sobre  
Monedas sociales  
y complementarias

## CC - Conf

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Lyons  
France

### CALL FOR PAPERS

## Thirty years of community and complementary currencies – what next?

This Conference is organised by the University of Lyon's LEFI and Triangle research centres. It is trilingual (Spanish/English/French) and multidisciplinary. It calls for all types of proposals that relate to the field of community and complementary currencies, with a particular focus on the question, "Thirty years of community and complementary currencies – what next?"

### Context

Local trading schemes based on the implementation of a specific currency have developed around the world since the 1980s. We can only make uncertain estimates as to their scope and we are not fully aware of their diversity, but it seems that 4000 to 5000 schemes of this type exist today in over 50 countries. They relate to an increasing number of models: LETS, time banks, Argentinean-like *trueque* systems, Ithaca-like Hour currencies, German-like regio systems, Brazilian-like community banks and currencies, multiple-project currencies like the SOL currency in France, 'Transition Towns' local currencies, RES (Belgium) or Wir (Switzerland) systems, etc. There is no historical equivalent of such a growing tide of currency schemes since the beginnings of industrialisation at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These schemes are described as 'complementary currencies', 'community currencies', 'local currencies', 'open money', etc. Those terms do neither refer exactly to the same objectives nor to the same

realities. To date, these schemes have generally not been settled either by pure political objectives or by the profit rationale inherent to for-profit organizations.

This tide has boosted interest amongst certain humanities and social sciences researchers since the 1990s, but an assessment of what has been done to date provides a mixed picture. We should most assuredly acknowledge the emergence of this new field of research (new because of its extent and nature), but it must be regretted the insubstantial influence that these works have generally had within humanities and social sciences, and the lack of academic visibility which continues to leave the field on the periphery of research.

The aim of this conference is not only to demonstrate why scholars' works on these currencies are of scientific value, which reflects the practical value of the experiences themselves, but to affirm that they should obtain a significant role with regard to various disciplines that are concerned with this type of trading schemes, such as economics, geography, sociology, political science, anthropology, history, law, etc. One purely academic problem certainly arises from the fact that they relate to fields of research at the crossroads of a number of disciplines: development studies, local development, market exchange, Third sector or social economy, sustainable development, monetary uses, monetary spaces, sovereignty, new spaces of transaction and sociability, social movements claiming for economic transformations, social cohesion, community dynamics, women's economic initiatives, etc.

As a consequence, this conference will be multidisciplinary; papers from different disciplines are welcome, as well as papers which are interdisciplinary.

### Topics of interest

The conference especially aims at putting to light reviews of a three decades dynamics; these reviews may take the form of monographs as well as comparative analyses from both an international and historical standpoint. The conference will also encourage the development of theoretical approaches for these systems.

In order to structure the reflection, we put forward a series of five sets of questions that should lead to paper proposals:

1. Reviews of past and present experiences and sketches of future prospects

Possible questions related to the past, present and future of CCs may include:

- What assessment can be drawn up of the dynamics of the main currency schemes (some being implemented by civil society organizations, others being linked to public policies, others being organized by banks or with their partnerships, eventually others being organized by for-profit firms)?
- What main currency schemes exist today, beyond the multiplicity of past and current experiences? What relevant terms should be employed to describe them?
- What is the current extent of the main currency schemes? Given their heterogeneity, what conditions should be fulfilled to assess this extent and their activity under a global viewpoint?
- What lessons should be drawn from the crises and difficulties encountered by various schemes since the 1980s?
- What lessons from past experiences should shed light on the present – the experiences of Robert Owen in England during the 1820s, those scattered in

America and Europe during the 1920s and especially the 1930s, and eventually the small set of later experiences, especially the European ones of the 1950s?

- In prospective terms, and given the experience of the last thirty years, what prospects of the dynamics of these currencies in the years to come can be sketched?

## 2. Current issues

Regarding the current issues these currency schemes have to contend with:

- What are the consequences of the global crisis, as they impact local levels, on the dynamics of these currencies? Is there a place for alternative currencies outside of local crisis situations?
- What are the conditions under which these currencies develop in a robust and sustainable way? To be more precise, what are the conditions for the success of a currency scheme project, expressed in terms of size or critical mass, extent and nature of socio-economic actors, geographical area covered (relevant zone), etc?
- What barriers to the legitimacy of these schemes can be identified: regarding for example common representations, monetary sovereignty and the law? Is the legal recognition of community currencies in Brazil the way forward? Are there other successful cases of legal recognition?
- From a monographic or comparative perspective, what sorts of solutions have been implemented for the creation of these currencies and their daily management? How legal problems can be managed (regarding money, labour, social protection, taxation, etc.)?
- In the specific context of the euro zone, what are the possible solutions for CCs in the context of the implementation of the European system of payments? Is there a stage in the development of a given CC from which a banking licence would be required?

## 3. Relevant objectives and impacts

These currency schemes can reflect different objectives that should be identified in order to assess their credibility:

- Generally speaking, what coherent and credible objectives can be assigned to these currency schemes and what can be expected from them in terms of social cohesion, local development, mutual help, promotion of local production, support of local purchasing power and welfare, sustainable development and responsible consumption, etc.?
- Taking these objectives into account, what is the current state of research on their impact?
- In the context of energy and climate crises, at what extent can the creation of local currency schemes contribute to the relocation of economic activity?
- What are the conditions under which these currency schemes would be compatible with de-growth purposes?
- How can these currencies be linked to proposals for a guaranteed minimum income or a universal income?

#### 4. External articulations

These schemes are inevitably connected to a particular environment:

- What is the place of these currencies in relation to the plurality of economic forms (reciprocity, redistribution, market exchange, domestic activity) and to the potential management of common goods and collective resources?
- How are these currencies articulated to the plurality of socio-economic actors: for-profit companies, NGOs and voluntary organizations, local governments, central governments, etc.?
- At what extent do community and complementary currencies refer to third sector dynamics or social economy dynamics? Or, put another way, under what conditions do these schemes refer to the rationale behind and the objectives of third sector or social economy?
- What articulations can be imagined between these specific currency mechanisms? Between them and national currencies? Between them and private currencies issued by for-profit companies?
- In what ways can these currency schemes be linked to monetary sovereignty and to monetary spaces that are considered legitimate, i.e. those of national currencies?

#### 5. Information, training and research

Finally, a balanced progress of these mechanisms requires the development of an intellectual infrastructure for the three following domains:

- Information: how is it possible to move beyond ordinary information provided by the media, as it does not lead to regular or in-depth broadcasts on local currency schemes? Have there been positive experiments that could be used as a model? On the contrary, what mistakes should be noted and thereby avoided in the future? What is the best media type for providing information?
- Training: how has training on the implementation of these schemes been undertaken to date? What issues are involved in providing appropriate training and what tools are the most applicable in achieving this goal, bearing in mind the variety of models, contexts and objectives for these schemes?
- Research: what intellectual infrastructure is required for an extensive and dispassionate research on these schemes? What is the future of the existing databases, those related to the existing corpus of texts devoted to these schemes as well as those providing knowledge of the existing schemes around the world? What dead-ends that block research today are due to a lack of adapted intellectual infrastructure, and what solutions would appear to be necessary?

## A Trilingual Conference

As research in this field is still overly compartmentalised according to linguistic areas, this conference will be trilingual – English, Spanish and French. Simultaneous translation will be organized for the three languages of the conference, and abstracts of the presented papers will be distributed in all three languages. The conference will solicit works from a significant number of scholars in the field who work all over the world, and it can potentially cover most of the types of schemes that exist today.

### Schedule and submission procedure

The conference is organized like every academic conference: an open call for papers and an evaluation of proposals by a scientific committee, consisting of researchers known throughout this emerging field.

Steps are as follows:

- 1 Deadline for proposals submissions: 6 September 2010

Abstract of no more than 500 words should be submitted in French, Spanish or English by 6<sup>th</sup> September to the following address: [cc-conf@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr](mailto:cc-conf@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr)

Abstract should be an attached Word document. It should include: the name(s) of the author(s), the title of the proposal, the number of the relevant topic (if any) and the abstract. At the end of the abstract, mention the address and full title of the author(s); the organization(s) and email address(es); the name of the corresponding author if the proposal is a collective one.

- 2 Decision notification: 30 September 2010

- 3 Deadline for submission of the complete papers + separated abstracts: 4 December 2010

Complete papers of accepted proposals will be due by December, 4<sup>th</sup> 2010. They can be submitted in English, French or Spanish. Papers will be uploaded on the conference website before the conference.

Papers should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 500 words on a separate file. Abstracts will be translated and distributed in the three languages during the conference.

### Publication

Two publications are planned:

- The IJCCR (*International Journal of Community Currency Research*, a specialised multidisciplinary on-line review) will publish a selection of the conference papers: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/env/ijccr/index.html> .
- A publication of an anthology from a selection of the presented papers is also planned.



### Scientific Committee

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### Information

For any information: [cc-conf@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr](mailto:cc-conf@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr)  
 The call for papers is available in French and Spanish as well.