

Back in 1985-87 when noone in England had heard of LETS, or any other community currency system, I was giving workshops on LETS around England. People's understanding of money is really ingrained into the psyhche and it was really tough trying to get people to understand what it was all about, Michael's game, LETSplay, was too complicated and abstract for mere mortals to understand, so I dreamt up the following.

Summary

The basic goals are:

- to illustrate how money works,
- and by comparisom how LETS (or other community currencies) work.
- To get participants at a worksop out of their seats and interacting with each other.

It does this by in turn simulating: Barter; Money and Bank loans; Syphoning of money from a community; and LETS.

Stage 1 illustrates Barter, the most primitive of exchange systems.

- Hand out the cards, and pencils
- Ask the participants to write down on the card, skills they have, or stuff they'd be prepared to barter.
- In this stage, as in all of the rest, I found it worked best to pull one or two people out of the audience and use them as an example before getting everyone to do it.
- Be prepared to use this stage to deal with people's self-negating beliefs that they have nothing to offer to the community.
- Get the participants to wander around the room, introducing themselves, and looking at each other's cards for things they might be interested in Bartering.
- After a few minutes get the people to sit down, and ask what transactions

occured.

- Typically there will be a few transactions, but few will be able to find matches where each has something the other needs.

Stage 2 illustrates Money and Bank loans

- Stick up a sheet of paper on a wall and label it "Classifieds"
 - Pick one of the participants from the audience,
 - Pretend to be a bank, and loan him several coins.
 - Ask him what he's looking for - things or services, write it on the board.
 - If someone in the audience can meet that need, then:
 - the first participant should "buy" the good/service from the second,
 - the request should be deleted from the board
 - repeat the process by this person writing down what they need.
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- At this point its usefull to draw the audience's attention to the fact that while there is only one unit of money circulating, several transactions have occurred. Its also usefull to explain how governements use control of this "money-supply" to control how fast goods and services circulate.
 - Make several more loans, and allow the audience to interact among themselves.
 - Encourage the audience to use the "Classifieds" board to post hard to find things they want.

Stage 3 illustrates chain-stores and other ways money is drained

- Pull one of the audience aside,
- Ask him or her to pretend to be a shop
- The characteristics of a shop is that it always has whatever someone asks it for
- The shopkeeper should be meeting people's needs, while accumulating a collection of money.
- Very quickly as the money supply dries up the flow of other transactions will dry up as well.
- Stop the game, get the audience to sit down, and ask the audience if they've noticed what has happened, if not then point it out.
- Find participant one - from the previous stage - ask them to repay the loan. Presuming they can't, reposeess their chair (Excuse for gratuitous theatre!)

Stage 4 illustrates community currencies.

- Stick some more paper on the wall.
- Label the sheet "accounts" draw four columns, and label them "From", "To", "Amount", "Good/Service"

- Find a volunteer, ask them for something they are looking for, and find a match in the audience.
- Write up a trade on the board - they go in the From column, the match goes in the To column, negotiate an amount (this works fine if the currency is "dollars" but needs a little explaining if it is "hours").
- Draw attention to what this means, that the first person owes a debt to the **community** not to the other person, and that the other person is in credit.
- Ask the first person what they have to offer, and the second what they are looking for, let them record both these trades themselves.
- Throw it open to the audience to all participate.
- That's it, now stop the game and move on to discussion.

What you need

- Enough 4 * 3 cards for each participant.
- Enough pencils for each participant.
- Some large sheets of paper, or a whiteboard
- Markers for the paper (or whiteboard), make sure they are dry-erase markers in case you use a whiteboard.
- A chair to stand on, and a loud voice to shout over the rabble.
- A supply of pennies or other small coins, maybe as many as there are participants.