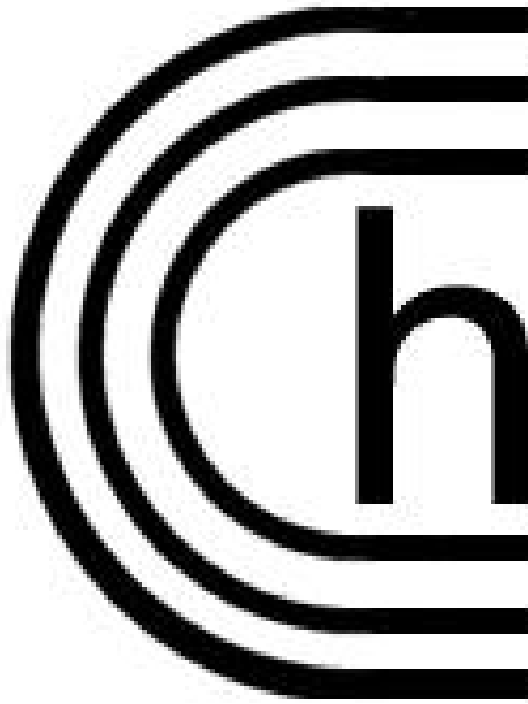


**Complementary (or Community)
Currency Clearing House (CCCH)**



Mai 2001, Austria, Vorarlberg



Clearinghouse - The key to further development.

The Complementary Currency Clearing House is an Internet-based clearing system that would enable complementary currencies of different types from anywhere in the world to be exchanged among themselves. It would be an important next step to empower the complementary currency movement.

Specifically, it would provide a substantial boost to the complementary currency process by enabling people to earn credits in their own local currency on the Net, and use it in their own community. It also would help avoiding the growing competition among different complementary currency systems at the grass root level (for example North London has now 4 different systems including one Time Dollar system and 3 types of LETS, and people who belong to two different systems are not in a position to trade with each other. This creates tensions among the different systems. Currently the typical ad-hoc solution is for the same person to become member of different systems. However, this solution is not scaleable, it multiplies operating costs for each system and is in many cases inconvenient for the users as well as the number of systems proliferate.

This next evolutionary step in complementary currencies would be to create a clearing house software that would be operating on the Net, which would enable people to start their own local clearing system at whatever scale desired. It would also provide a forum for operation among different types of complementary currency systems.



Within the last 18 years worldwide more than 2600 complementary currency systems came into being, like the „**Green Dollars**“ in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, „**LETS**“ in Great Britain, „**Talente**“ in Germany and „**Time Dollars**“ in US. These complementary currency systems have exchanges among their members as their main aim.

The fact that the number of people involved grows and the systems exist now for a longer period of time enhances the wish to use the mostly regional currencies also outside the local system. The aim of the CCCH is the creation of an international Internet clearing- and information exchange.

This enables new synergies among the local systems and makes it possible for their members to perform transactions, when necessary, also outside the local system boundary. It should be emphasized, however, that the primary aim of the complementary currency systems would be to encourage local exchanges, and therefore there would be an upper limit (currently proposed at a maximum of 10%) of the transactions of any one system that would be outstanding on the CCCH.

The Clearing Houses also assist in the development of new systems and the linking with commercial bartering systems. This will considerably increase the diversity of goods and services available by complementary currency payment, and thereby contribute to mainstream the relevance of complementary currencies .

Regional - International

The benefit of a clearing house is regional as well as international. Not only in developing new systems, but also for exchanges among systems within one city or region the clearing house can be of great importance. Until now there were only insufficient ways without safety standards to book exchanges of goods or services whenever it was



done among several existing local complementary currency systems within one city. On the other hand members in one area usually do not know what is offered in a system only 2 kilometres away. An Internet newspaper “CCCH-news” provided by the CCCH would enable any user to post information about offer and demand in complementary currency systems, with a focus on goods and services relevant for a broader group than the purely local public (e.g. holiday rentals, software services, etc.)

Structure

At the moment we are developing a prototype of an electronic, Internet-based clearing house. This should be the prototype for further developments of a CCCH. The idea behind that is a network of several equal CCCH in different states/regions worldwide. The first CCCH will be developed as freeware and be made available as an open-source software, so that it will be at the disposal of all users .A CCCH consists of several different tools which can be updated at any time. The heart is the accounting unit. It will perform the exchange of different currencies into the internal CCCH currency (one hour) and book the incoming transactions, to ensure that the communication among complementary currency systems and their members involved occurs smoothly.



Tools

CCCH news

The Internet newspaper informs about all the offers of international interest (for example services like accommodation, translation,) and can be visited by every member.

Freeware – Exchange software

Available at the CCCH site would also be softwares (whenever possible, freewares) useful to run a local complementary currency system. On the long run this will enable a faultless automatically link between local complementary currency systems and the CCCH. A first step will be the providing of the Talente and the Time Dollar Programme. Other softwares will follow.

Feedbacksystem

This system, technically called “Internet Reputation System” should ensure a high quality of the offers. It is a system to enable a buyer of a service/goods to easily fill in a remark/feedback about what s/he bought. All other users have access to these feedbacks before deciding to complete a transaction.

Security

All relevant data are transmitted PGP-coded. The security system will be programmed as additional tool to enable an updating at any time.



Strategy

CCCH should primarily be user-friendly. Furthermore, the additional effort for any existing local complementary currency system to become member of a CCCH should be minimal. All users of a CCCH (individual members of a local complementary currency system that is itself member of the CCCH) would be able to directly check the offers and book their transactions on-line. All further communications necessary to complete the transaction would be handled automatically by the CCCH software.

Example: A member of the „Ithaca hours“ system in the US stays overnight in Vienna at a member of Talentetauschkreis-Wien and wants to pay with Ithaca hours. Via Internet ,the member of the Ithaca hours system logs with a password in the clearing house. The booking takes place in the CCCH and an email confirmation will be sent to the Ithaca hours system and the Talentetauschkreis Wien as well as to the two members involved.



Organisation

Governance Team :

Tasks:

- Decision about all internal strategic issues like membership fees, Rules for the procedure, demurrage charges, criteria for exclusion etc.
- Cooperation with other CCCH
- Marketing, promoting the idea of CCCH

Initial members:

Sue Bell - UK, Edgar Cahn Founder of Time Dollars –USA, Bernard Lietaer – US, Michael Graf – A, Gernot Jochum-Müller –A, Wolfgang Steinhauer –
Other people with appropriate experience and who volunteer to get involved will be included in due time.

Technical Team:

tasks:

- development of CCCH software
- adapting the different complementary currency systems software to the interface with the CCCH
- Assisting and cooperating with the Governance Team

members:

Wolfgang Steinhauer –A, Renato Pichler - CH, Michael Graf – A; Leader: Gernot Jochum-Müller -A

Information exchange:

tasks:

- Contact person for people who want to become members with the CCCH
- Contact person for members concerning transaction costs
- Contact Person concerning the handling of software

members:

Karin Klas – A, Gernot Jochum-Müller



Services Offered by CCCH

- Financial accounting management for non-regional / international bookings
- Exchange of credits from one complementary currency system to another
- Publishing of the Internet newspaper - CCCH news
- Forwarding Information: website-addresses, exchange rates in relation to the hour, account statements, addresses of change systems, control of credit, and so on.

Target Timing and Marketing:

The following time schedule is conditional on the funding to become available at the appropriate time; part of which still needs to be raised.

1. step–August 2001

3-4 local complementary currency systems in Austria start to book transactions via Clearinghouse (in German)

2.step–September 2001

Set up of Governance Team, first meeting and email contact

3. step– January 2002 onward

Making CCCH available to complementary currency systems in both English and German speaking countries

4. step – 2003 onward

Further international expansion of CCCH and development of more decentralised CCCH approaches where appropriate.



Initial Members

Bernard Lietaer: Originally proposed the CCCH strategy in his book *“Das Geld der Zukunft”* (Munich: Riemann Verlag) and *“The Future of Money”* (London: Random House). Was a.o. President of the most cost effective electronic clearing system in the world, while he was at the Belgian Central Bank.

Gernot Jochum-Müller: Coordinator for information exchange and the technical team, consultant and trainer for organisations and individuals , Co-founder and leader of Talente - Tauschkreis Vorarlberg

Wolfgang Steinhauer: programmer of CCCH, experienced with several programming languages, specialy PHP, different SQL-Dialects, different Internet-Technology and the solving of complex problems.

Renato Pichler: programmer for administration of change systems, Head of Office for Vegetarianism in Switzerland, computer scientist, programmer of the renowned software „Talent-program“, it has been constantly updated since 1993

Michael Graf: economical inputs to the programmers of CCCH, studied economics, after working in banks in the asset management department he founded the first LETS-System in Austria. (Talentetauschkreis Tirol), pioneer in strategic thinking within the LETS and barter-system movement in Austria, Trainer for unemployed people

Karin Klas: Information exchange, long experience in office management, management of an international project office, project manager

Sue Bell:

Edgar Kahn: was the inventor of the Time Dollars and Time banking in the US. Professor at Law, Washington DC. And co-founder of national legal services and of the Antioch School of Law. Author of *“No more throw away people”* (Washington, DC: Essential Books)

Contact emails:

Bernard Lietaer, [mailto: blietaer@earthlink.net](mailto:blietaer@earthlink.net)

Gernot Jochum-Müller, [mailto: g.jochum-mueller@utanet.at](mailto:g.jochum-mueller@utanet.at)

