

Report:

# MoneyLab General Assembly #1

*Date and time: 15 November 2019, 5:30-7:00 p.m.*

*Location: Tolhuistuin Amsterdam*

*Number of participants: ca. 40 people*

## Introduction: Goals and Format

A General Assembly was organized as the closing act of the two-day conference *MoneyLab #7: Outside of Finance*. In her introductory remarks to all participants and visitors present, Patricia de Vries explained the goals and format.

The goal of the General Assembly was to let the members of the so far more or less anonymous crowd get to know each other. Because only when these people know each other and are aware of what everyone wants and needs from MoneyLab, it is possible to see possible future collaborations and to discuss the future of MoneyLab together.

The GA was made up of three parts. First, all those present were presented with post-it's on which they could write people and projects affiliated with MoneyLab or questions or proposals regarding MoneyLab. Participants were then asked to stick these post-it's to one of six posters in the front of the space: three pre-themed posters and three empty ones. The three pre-given themes were: 1.) Experiments with alternative democratic, distributed value & exchange systems, 2.) Intersectional & theoretical engagements with finance and money systems, and 3.) Artistic & activist engagements with emerging fintech.

The second part of the GA consisted of three simultaneous round table discussions themed according to the three posters mentioned above. Participants were free to pick a table. Each table was moderated by someone from INC. The objective was to find shared needs and expectations regarding MoneyLab amongst the participants. Based on these shared needs and expectations, they were asked to come up with future plans and proposals as concrete and practical as possible.

During the third part of the GA, the tables reported back to each other with a brief summary. This plenary part was closed with a brief presentation by the respective organizers of the next three iterations of MoneyLab.

## Gathering Input

For about twenty minutes, the crowd wrote down their input on post-it's and stuck them on the themed posters. The three pre-themed posters quickly filled up, while the open posters remained practically empty. On all three posters, the suggested themes for discussion varied wildly. On the level of proposals, however, a clear general trend can be observed: while some proposals for compendiums or libraries were made, the vast majority of the input concerned the wish for the development of pragmatic digital tools and networking models for feminist economies, commons, and alt-fintech. (For the exact input, please consult the attachment.)

Before turning to the table discussions, moderators Inte and Patricia asked a few writers of post-it's to step forward and explain their input. This immediately showed the wide variety of content. Jokanne Aarop Hausen works on a new Danish platform for design-critique and invited contributions for a compendium on the relation between design and economics. Lara Luna Bartley proposed a collaborative research into the notion of the scam and asked for the contribution of case-studies. Tomasso Campagna simply asked for input for his thesis on critical anonymous digital infrastructures.

## Table Discussions

### ***Table 1: Experiments with alternative democratic, distributed value & exchange systems***

*Moderator: Inte*

*General topics: experimenting, prototyping, and platform-building*

This group started its discussion on the premise that MoneyLab's core value is that it does not only create discursive critiques, but also experiments with alternatives. It was therefore discussed how MoneyLab can be a better facilitator for experiment, and how those experiments could lead to prototypes. It was proposed that MoneyLab should develop a digital demo platform for iterative, live experimenting and prototyping. This platform could function both as a place of experiment during events and as a network-building platform for virtual exchange. Prototypes developed here could be used in the future as leverage in situations where ML might be an actor facing fintech or policy.

### ***Table 2: Intersectional & theoretical engagements with finance and money systems***

*Moderator: Geert*

*General topic of discussion: The organization and future of MoneyLab*

This group did not so much discuss individual projects of its members, but rather the future of MoneyLab as a whole. For although MoneyLab has achieved a lot through its existence as a series of events, it can be questioned on several levels:

- Does ML as a series of events have enough influence? If not, what would be other criteria?
- What latent potential is present in what has already been built by ML?
- What does each of the participants need from ML, and how could ML be transformed to facilitate what we need collectively and individually?
- What brand is ML, or could it be? How far can it be stretched?
- Can ML face different scenarios, like fintech or policy, as a legitimate actor? Should it be able to?

It was proposed that MoneyLab should be a distributed think tank in the tradition of organized networks. But noting that the current mailing list has not achieved much, it seems that this requires investment of time and energy. Therefore, the concrete proposal of this table is to put the question of the future of ML on the table during ML#9 in Helsinki. It should be possible to collaborative write a preliminary document before that time, and to organize a more specialized iteration of this discussion there.

### **Table 3: Artistic & activist engagements with emerging fintech**

*Moderator: Patricia*

*General topic of discussion: Speculative fiction and DAO organization building*

Most people in this group remained silent, some others seemed to regard it to be a therapy session, and no one seemed too keen on extra unpaid labor like application-writing. Still, one interesting and workable proposal was made. Lara Luna Bartley, Ruth Catlaw, and Ailie Rutherford proposed make a work of speculative fiction on the relation between care labor, governance, and the blockchain/DAO. Concretely, Lara, Ruth, and Ailie can come to ML#8 in Ljubljana for an experimental collaboration during the conference. This could be a series of writing and programing sessions, a workshop, a community artwork, a reading, etc. The idea needs more thought, but there is potential.