The power of pictures

Each week we encourage you to seek out and select a different image describing that week's key topics.

Consider how you think “visually” about the week’s issues. In Module Seven, we have been talking about questions of how money is created as debt, and financial alternatives to debt based banking.

You are encouraged to find or create an image of any one or more of these topics, post it to the CANVAS discussion file marked Visual Exercise. (Note that small files are better). Tell us where you found the image. Add a sentence or two explaining what the image means to you in terms of the course.

Feel free to explore and comment on your classmates’ postings. Done well, the exercise should become a bit like crowd sourcing an idea. Try to be analytical or share a feeling evoked by the images!

Most of all, have fun.

How to embed an image

See this FAQ from the Help and FAQ forum for tips on embedding an image into your post.

This year our state was presented with proposed legislation to allow public banks and community banking. This bill was so blocked by large corporate banks and state credit unions, it never even got a hearing in committee. We have lots of work to do to educate the public about the benefits of community banks.
It's pretty shocking that a credit union would block that - when it is itself a cooperative bank, owned by its members. Do I presume that most members never vote, and that the credit union has been taken over by high-flying accountants? That's certainly a common situation here on Vancouver island.

This image suggests to me we can take back local control of our financial system but will need to redevelop trust at the community level. I think trust is the key ingredient to building the capacity to cooperate, to collaborate, and to assist. Without these strategies it will be impossible to wrest back control of finances from the private banks. The handshake indicates to me that we need to be in contact with each other, there is a need to find common ground on local needs, and that we need to be in general agreement on our goal and civil in our actions. Ability to communicate and compromise are fundamental to any system operating for a significant period of time.

There are movements. A community of 350 people in north central Alberta has been rebuilding using cooperatives and banking options afforded by ATB. The CCEDNet recently passed a resolution at our AGM to connect communities to methods of taking control of their financial services from the private sector. The focus is to have a system that is decentralized and responsive to the needs of the citizens.

A similar concern arose in the 1920's in Saskatchewan, bringing together trade unions and farmers against big banks, the railroad companies, and the two political parties that took turns supporting the corporate sector. It led to the formation of the credit union (farmers' bank) and the CCF party that supported the local economy. The movement slipped away in the 1980s and 1990s.
Rebuilding it is a challenge but can be done.

Guy Dauncey  
Jun 11, 2019

Have you written in more detail anywhere about how your community of 350 people in north central Alberta has been rebuilding using cooperatives and banking options afforded by ATB? Most people don't know that the ATB is a public bank, like the Bank of North Dakota.

Caroline Hurley  
Jun 9, 2019

"The commercial circuit of money is unsustainable socially, ecologically and economically. Socially, it creates inequality and perverse forms of expenditure. Ecologically it drives unsustainable growth as it seeks profits. Economically it faces the contradiction that the origin of money in loans with interest means that more must be paid back than is lent. This requires an additional source of money or a continual expansion of loans." - Mary Mellor
The last picture is from a [2016 Christian Monitor story](https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2016/0218/Cultures-collide-in-confiscation-of-4.6-million-in-hell-money) about a Customs seizure of bags of over four & a half million dollars in counterfeit cash from a Vietnamese couple travelling to a funeral. This 'hell money' is traditionally offered in ritual and burned at Asian funerals to buy the dead safe passage in the afterlife.

That the money is fake, first of all, deliberately created by someone for a specific need, makes it like ordinary money. Then the indeterminacy but wrath of the forces compelling these people to rustle up the money, and the disproportionate amounts demanded, along with the desperate steps they take to comply, all mirror how money as it currently flows manipulates people.

What a powerful image and your drawing of out of the metaphor the culture-money dynamic is very striking.
This image is a reflection of how we live in a world where we are constantly feeding the private banks with public funds. The people remain hungry in this cartoon, but I feel like most citizens are not even familiar with the alternative to this system. Comes back to education as per usual.
that is onside with social rather than corporate welfare. The two larger parties in Canada are neoliberal enterprises that answer to the big corporations (witness Trudeau’s activities in the Lavalin "scandal" and the gift of $12 million to the Weston enterprise (Loblaws) for new energy-efficient freezers - no allowance for small "ma and pa" operations or for individual homeowners. I personally have made the decision to go Green Party all the way but I am not sure what their policy is on public banking in its various forms, but I intend to find out.

Our politicians and economists worship at the altar of GDP and economic growth

The ecological truth about GDP …

A chimp’s view of GDP
"Political democracy without monetary democracy is ineffective" ~ Bernard Lietaer

Money was programmed with the same values of the patriarchal systems that contributed to where humanity stands today. So, the money system is one of the biggest drivers of the global challenges we are attempting to problem solve.

Here too we've overshot personal, national and global boundaries that have resulted in: frail financial systems, lack of monetary diversity, an unbalanced distribution of wealth and power.

Money has become in many ways like heroin: addictive, destroying relationships and community, a fuel for boom/bust cycles of extraction economies.

Patriarchy, as the dominant global worldview, has yet to be dismantled. Is it possible for money
(the engine for this system and the values that come with it) to provide the solutions that will keep us within planetary boundaries?

If you think so, then we are going to need a new song.
This image comes from a recent article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review re: a microlending program in New Mexico. Illustration by Michael George Haddad. [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/creating_new_pathways_to_capital](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/creating_new_pathways_to_capital)

Nice image of multiple support for lending and slow capital. The interest rate here is 5 percent, still pretty steep compared to some of the examples uncovered by Pat in the module. The same 5 percent using a JAK bank model might be more effective. I do like the waving of the 5 C's.
Some patient capital models lending to small business do not charge interest in the first year, to allow the business to get up some momentum. That is another smart strategy, but it requires confidence in the business plan and the entrepreneur, and usually is tied to an asset to reduce risk.

Mikeg

Good points Mike about JAK. A few additional observations for course participants....

Hardly anyone knows that the Swiss co-op activists who launched the mutual credit innovation, WIR in 1935 in Zurich, got this idea from the JAK network of farmers in Denmark who shortly before this had begun to pioneer this paperless money after their paper currency was banned by the Danish government. The same government then banned the mutual credit experiments. Thankfully the Swiss co-op activists replanted the seeds in Zurich and proved the potential.

The longer term secured JAK lending was allowed to emerge in Denmark and then in Sweden from the 1960s but the Great Depression vision was a complete co-op money and co-op banking system and all interest free. For each product (development term loan for housing or a machine or working capital/liquidity repayable in the short term), like with Gesellian stamp money, the fee to replace interest was to cover admin costs and a risk element but the Italian co-op movement has shown if you can also pool risk with a mutual guarantee fund, cost of finance can be very low indeed - circa 2%).

Pat
Banking continues to be at the core of inequality and the most detrimental tool of the present economic system. Everyday we continue to hear reports from the banks themselves and specialized entities that they are getting richer, and the vulnerable increasing the informal sector....it seem that the challenge is huge...but this module offers hopeful search for alternatives.... not all it is lost.
This year our state was presented with proposed legislation to allow public banks and community banking. This bill was so blocked by large corporate banks and state credit unions, it never even got a hearing in committee. We have lots of work to do to educate the public about the benefits of community banks.

Public Banks vs. For-Profit Banks


Common good vs private good. Governments are elected by the people and they should work for the people.
Great visual - thanks for posting!

The understanding that our debt system is created by a small group of international bankers who have captured state through to individual economics and are holding us slaves to a system that with alternative financing options from State generated resources through to community driven projects and investments can help redefine our ability to responsibly manage our resources, build up our community and live in balance to our community and individual needs and wants vs being a debt driven hamster economy stuck in servitude to a system that is only interested in generating profits for a small group vs building up the community and individual.
The Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV) has articulated some principles that would guide and shape a more sustainable and ethical financial system and industry. While there are many different approaches that each of the members take, and many extremely innovative and mission-driven financial institutions aren't actually members of GABV, there is a lot to learn from this group. One of the reasons I appreciate this image is that while the end impact results from the creation of actual solutions, the pursuit of these various and diverse solutions needs to be guided by a vision guided by values and principles.