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# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY CURRENCY RESEARCH

EDITORIAL 2004

*IJCCR* has now reached its eighth volume. Over the past eight years since its foundation, there is little doubt that community currencies have firmly established themselves on the policy agenda throughout not only the western economies but also well beyond as is so clearly shown in the first article of volume 8 by Bernard Lietaer that reviews the tremendous growth of complementary currency systems in Japan. In this country, he shows the long history of experimentation with complementary currencies and how the economic restructuring processes that so far have been most acutely felt in Japan have provided a stimulus for innovative new experiments in this field of action. This article thus reinforces how complementary currencies are alive and well in the world.

This continuing growth of interest in community currencies worldwide and their rapid emergence in nearly every corner of the globe stands in stark contrast to the number of submissions to this journal. Over the past few years, the number of submission has shown a decline and as such, it is perhaps time to reflect just a little on the continuing function of this journal. When it was set up, the journal was intended to be an interface for practitioner/academic discussion. After eight years of functioning, it is perhaps timely to reflect on the problems and prospects of the journal continuing to pursue this objective.

There is absolutely no doubt that the discussion forum attached to this journal continues to be extremely successful. Measured in terms of the rapid growth in the volume of messages posted on this discussion group, as well as more qualitatively in terms of the lively debates that occur from time-to-time, there is little doubt that the *IJCCR* discussion group is now probably the principal forum for practitioner/academic debates in the field of community currencies. It is a success whatever measure is employed.

More disappointing, however, is the 'parent' journal itself. Over the past few years, even if the quality of articles is not diminishing, this is certainly the case, to repeat, so far as the quantity of submissions is concerned. Of course, if the number of articles promised to the editors ever materialize then it will be a mistake to assume that there is a problem. For the moment, however, let us just assume that only a few of these will materialize and that there is thus evidence of a drop-off in submissions.

Why might this be occurring? So far as most academics who might write articles for this journal are concerned, career progression lies in publishing articles in more 'prestigious' journals than *IJCCR*. As such, if they wish to speak to the academic audiences to whom they must speak to 'advance' their careers, an outlet such as *IJCCR* with its practitioner focus is not the best outlet to be publishing in. If articles from academics are drying up, therefore, it might be simply due to the increasing pressures being put on the academic community to publish in the 'correct' places to improve their prestige and standing in the academic community. The fact that this results in academics simply confining themselves to talking to each other, rather than outwards to others, is of course deleterious to the greater good. As much as we may all feel that this is entirely wrong, it seems, however, that little can be currently done to reverse this very negative trend. It is up to individual academics to consider

whether they wish to ‘buck’ this tendency and if they do, IJCCR is ready and waiting to receive their papers that speak to the wider practitioner audience.

If academics do not necessarily wish to publish articles in a journal such as IJCCR because they have ‘bigger fish to fry’ in order to enhance their career progression, then when it comes to practitioners, a whole set of other issues prevail that probably work against the submission of articles. For practitioners, the idea of writing articles on their ideas is perhaps a relatively ‘alien’ concept and one imposed from the groves of academe. For them, and as displayed by the volume of messages on the discussion forum, it appears that there is a distinct preference for an on-going engagement and exchange of views using this medium rather than the standard academic format. As such, it seems that one cannot expect many practitioners to want to engage in such a style and form of writing when more immediate feedback is available from the discussion group.

Where, therefore, does this leave us at IJCCR? It is perhaps the case that as editors, we should go with the grain of the preferences of participants and be willing to accept the shift away from the journal and towards the discussion forum as the principal mechanism being utilized for the exchange of ideas. Yet there surely remains a place for the more considered purveying of ideas that article submission entails. We believe so. Perhaps what is required, at least so far as practitioners are concerned, is something a little less daunting than the demand for a 6,000 word article.

One minor modification to the format of the journal that I wish to informally introduce this year, therefore, is to make explicit the fact that practitioners can submit much shorter articles if they so wish. Articles from 1,000 words upwards that deal with issues of interest to the wider IJCCR audience will be welcomed by the editors.

Having presented this opportunity, let us now wait a year or so and see what happens to the volume of contributions. We will then revisit the issue of the future of the journal again in a year or so. It may well be the case that more innovative ways of presenting new evidence on community currencies are required. Like community currencies themselves, however, and as the article by Bernard Lietaer shows that commences volume 8, change is often an incremental process.

The editors of IJCCR thus await papers from both academics who wish to cast off the shackles of writing solely for other academics and practitioners seeking to write shorter articles reporting ideas and evidence of interest to IJCCR readers.

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