

## Comparison Chart

	Barter	Time Banks	Local Currencies	LETs Systems
Description	One-to-one exchange.	value everyone's contributions equally	Printed paper currency used in place of national currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>goods and services can be traded without the need for printed currency</li> <li>overcome the drawbacks of the simple bartering system due to the goods or services being of a different value</li> <li>It's like swapping favors at a community-wide level</li> </ul>
Examples	I mow your lawn, you wash my car, the deal is done.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arroyo Time Bank, Echo Park Time Bank</li> <li>I spend an hour mowing your lawn. I get an hour of childcare done by someone in the system.</li> </ul>	Totnes pound, BerkShare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many LETS systems are operating worldwide.</li> <li>I mow your lawn and gain LETs credits. I use those credits to have carpentry work done by someone in the system.</li> </ul>
What is exchanged	No physical credits.	Hours logged in software	Printed paper currency(3)	Credits logged in software.
What you can get	It's up to the individuals. When exchanging items of differing value, barter becomes cumbersome.	Likely limited to services.	Used in stores as well as for services. In some communities banks accept it. Some businesses say "will accept up to 50% local currency"	Appears that you can use LETS for both goods and services. It's likely the goods would be home produced or local goods, not chain stores.
Based upon	n/a	One man hour = 1 credit. (1)	Backed by national currency. At any time you can redeem for national currency.	Value of a credit is created within the system. You decide how to value your goods/services based on what others are charging within the system.
In tough times	Will continue between individuals.	Accessible: everyone has ability to give hours.	Need cash to enter the system. Thus it excludes those who are cash-poor	Accessible: everyone has ability to give hours.
In times of inflation/deflation	No impact.	Stable. One man hour is still = one man hour	Suffers like national currency. (2)	Stable. Value of credits would deviate from value of national currency.
How local is it?	Local: participants decide.	Local: participants decide. Self-containing: people in geographically remote areas would get few exchanges.	Whatever area has accepted it. In LA this might not be very local, or it could be very local. (4)	Local: participants decide. Self-containing: people in geographically remote areas would get few exchanges.
Established businesses	No.	No.	Easy bookkeeping because of one-to-one valuation. Established businesses (including local outlets of small chains) are more likely to accept it.	More complex bookkeeping because there isn't necessarily a fixed "exchange rate." Probably would only get sole proprietorship businesses.
Saving / hoarding	impossible	Can be self-regulating: Many communities allow others to see your balance; if you're taking more than you're giving, people know.	Some local currencies have demurrage – the currency gets "old" and loses value if not used. (Totnes pound does not have this)	Can be self-regulating: Many communities allow others to see your balance; if you're taking more than you're giving, people know.
Community building	Not much, because it's between individuals	Many communities seem to hold periodic Trade fairs or Trade day events.	Critics have said Totnes pound doesn't penetrate into full demographics.	Many communities seem to hold periodic Trade fairs or Trade day events.
Startup costs	none	Software costs \$\$\$. Need volunteers to set it up and maintain credit tracking. Usually has a newsletter or guidebook. Portland gives hour credits to volunteers	Printing costs for paper currency. Printing costs for vendor directory. Need volunteers to set it up, get merchants on board.	Software is open source. Need volunteers to set it up and maintain credit tracking. Usually has a newsletter or guidebook.
Maintenance	Individual has to keep finding new people to meet different needs	Credit tracking, updating newsletter, new trade day events. Need to keep attracting newcomers because of natural community attrition.	Would need to replace worn paper currency, update vendor directory. Totnes currently has systemic loss to souvenirs.	Credit tracking, updating guidebook, new trade day events. Need to keep attracting newcomers because of natural community attrition.

(1) Ithaca Hours system is a hybrid. They allow more than one Ithaca Hour per man hour for doctors and dentists.

(2) Totnes website says they are considering basing the local currency on something other than national currency, for instance a community power company, but have not yet done so. This would add another layer of complexity.

(3) Ithaca Hours system is a hybrid. They value it like a modified Time Bank but use physical paper currency.

(4) A "local" currency would probably require rules/guidelines in order to keep it local here in the LA basin, since we have no geographic boundaries to contain it.