

Case study: SamenDoen

Community currencies are policy instruments that activate unused resources in society and empower people to tackle local issues together. They align objectives of multiple stakeholders in order to reach meaningful impacts in society. Whether designed to address one single issue or several at the same time, community currencies act as glue for cooperation.

As a supplement to the euro, community currencies can reach several goals, among which:

- Increase safety, liveability and cleanliness of neighbourhoods
- Steer citizens' behaviour toward socially responsible goals
- Deliver social and informal care with the help of volunteers / stimulate mutual care and assistance
- Strengthen elderly care
- Connect people to non-profit organisations, civil associations, clubs
- Help bring relief in crisis areas
- Revitalise local retailers and businesses

Community currencies are technologically enabled solutions typically combining civic reward programs and loyalty systems of retailers. Every community currency unit holds a real economic value. Transactions are carried out seamlessly via various (electronic) means like web interfaces, mobile apps, mobile texts (sms) and NFC technology.

Case study: SamenDoen, doing together for the better

SamenDoen is a community currency program that runs in the Dutch municipalities of Tholen and Bergen op Zoom. The heart of the program is a fully electronic currency to encourage citizens to become active in their community and simultaneously support the local economy. SamenDoen incentivises people to consume locally, to actively participate in the neighbourhood and to keep the community a clean and a safe place to live. With SamenDoen, citizens, businesses, institutions in the housing and welfare sector and local clubs and associations work together to improve the prosperity of their community.



The program does not require new funding: it realises efficiency savings and allows for a more effective but yet cheaper provision of services through the efforts of volunteers and the involvement of businesses. SamenDoen is therefore a self-financing instrument.

There are three main components in SamenDoen:

1. **The loyalty system.** Consumers earn SamenDoen-points as a reward when purchasing at affiliated retailers. SamenDoen-points can be redeemed at the same affiliated retailers for purchases. This is a way for retailers to attract new customers and engage existing ones to purchase more or more often.

Key characteristics of the loyalty system:

- a. Participating retailers consist of independent retailers in the region.
 - b. People do not only earn SamenDoen-points for themselves, but also for a local association of their choice such as their sports club, scouts or a local charity. In practice, each time consumers earn SamenDoen-points they automatically credit an amount of SamenDoen-points to a local association. This is a way to support the voluntary sector and civil society organisations.
2. **The reward program.** Non-commercial organisations including municipalities, housing associations, care and welfare institutions, schools etc. can reward the SamenDoen-points to individual participants. This is to reward people for performing socially relevant activities that improve the liveability and cohesiveness of the community. Rewarded activities may be very diverse: provide informal care or assistance to the elderly, participate in a community clean-up day, organise a community event.
 3. **The sharing economy initiative.** SamenDoen-points can be transferred at a peer-to-peer level for mutual help and assistance activities. Participants can, for example, pay their peers for small maintenance work, helping with homework, assisting with the tax declaration, giving a ride, etc. This strengthens the links between people, self-reliance and social cohesion.

Find out more of SamenDoen at samendoen.nl