



Figure 1: Guidelines to Design for Generalized Reciprocity

Why designers should focus on reciprocity?

Reciprocity is the exchange of things or services between people or parties that can take different forms, e.g. gift giving, barter. Designers often focus on user needs, but overlook the exchanges and dynamics between users and stakeholders and the values that derive out of these relations. To invoke community participation for societal issues, understanding community exchanges and underlying values could provide key insights that might be missed by focusing solely on individual needs.

What is Generalized Reciprocity?

Generalized reciprocity is a type of reciprocity that refers to exchanges in which the giver does not expect a (tangible) return from the receiver, e.g. helping a neighbor with chores. This type of reciprocity can help enhance collective actions and enforce social norms, which are essential for social impact. This thesis proposes four guidelines for designers to Design for Generalized Reciprocity (figure 1). Additionally, these guidelines are accompanied with exercises to help designers sensitize community exchanges, interactions and conversations.

2Ping - the local currency of Amsterdam South-East

2Ping is a local currency app for residents of Amsterdam South-East, allowing them to earn 2Ping by volunteering and to spend it at local businesses. The aim of 2Ping was to foster social good, not to replace the Euro. However, the focus and perception of 2Ping shifted to the economic benefits of 2Ping, which led to low motivation since the rewards were limited. Users questioned the value of earning a local currency which was restricted to a specific area, when the fiat currency Euro could provide more flexibility and let users spend according to their wants and needs.

The first aim of this Master's thesis is to redesign 2Ping, and reframe their purpose and strategy by focusing on reciprocity and the dynamics of exchanges between stakeholders. This project also addresses a gap in designing for reciprocity, leading to a second aim: offering guidance to social designers and pioneers of social change on how to Design for Reciprocity.

Design for Reciprocity

Redesigning the Local Currency of Amsterdam South-East

2Ping Purpose, Strategy and Redesign

This project reframed 2Ping from a local currency app to a platform addressing societal issues in Amsterdam South-East. The redesign focuses on three themes: Healthy Food, Sustainable Energy, and a Clean, Safe South-East (figure 2). Volunteers can contribute through these themes or by helping residents with smaller tasks (Taken). 2Ping's role shifted to rewarding social impact, rather than emphasizing the currency itself.



Figure 2: Impressions of the redesign of 2Ping

Design for Generalized Reciprocity booklet

Parallel to the redesign of 2Ping, this project proposes a Design for Generalized Reciprocity booklet which consists of four guidelines, and additional templates and exercises for designers (figure 3). Although Design for Generalized Reciprocity and Social Design are both concerned with improving human conditions and social relations, Design for Generalized Reciprocity is a particular aspect of Social Design that emphasizes on a process-oriented approach by looking at mutual exchanges, collaborations and shared interests between users and different stakeholders.



Figure 3: Impressions of the Design for Generalized Reciprocity booklet

Shervin Tjon
 Design for Reciprocity - Redesigning the Local Currency of Amsterdam South-East
 14 October 2024
 Strategic Product Design

Committee Dr. Abhigyan Singh
 Ir. Sander Mulder

Company Lokaal Geld U.A.

