

# The Economish Game



ACTIVITY | GAME | DISCUSSION TOOL

## With help from the IF man, the BUT squad and the HOW ABOUTs, *Economish* makes sense of economics... ish

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### Overview

This game enables discussions about the knowledge- and value foundation of which the current dominant unsustainable economic paradigm is built, and what knowledge and value foundation a sustainable paradigm must be built upon.

The game is inspired by Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics, and uses fun characters to personify neoclassical economists, heterodox economists and radical change makers.

### Why do it?

- The game is a fun way to tackle some tricky subjects that are otherwise heavy and perhaps better understood through active discussion.

- The game forces the players to take different standpoints that they might not personally subscribe to. As such, it aims to create understandings of different world views, and create a common ground for discussion.



Anyone interested in sustainability who would like to learn more about the impacts of

macroeconomics on global sustainability



Access to a printer, scissors, white boards or sheets of paper



Anywhere from a 15 minute warm up to a 3 hour workshop! But we suggest 50–80 minutes.



Actively engage players in the game.



Minimum 2 - Ideally a group upwards of 10 people (classroom size)

## Timetable



|              |                                |                  |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Part 1       | Ice Breaker!                   | 5–10 min         |
| Part 2       | Introduce the characters       | 5–10 min         |
| Part 3       | The IF-man vs. BUT-squad round | 10–20 min        |
|              | [Optional break]               | 10 min           |
| Part 4       | HOW ABOUTS round               | 10–20 min        |
| Part 5       | Reflection round               | 10 min           |
| <b>Total</b> |                                | <b>50–80 min</b> |

## Preparation

The facilitator should have engaged with Doughnut Economics and understand the principles of a Safe and Just Space. Ideally the facilitator also has an understanding of the foundational elements of mainstream economics and ecological economics, so that they can help guide the participants through discussion.

Consider the following while staging the game:

- You will need access to a printer to print this guide and all game cards (preferably printed on both sides of the paper in A5, or on A4 and then folded)

- hopefully in color. You should make sure to print them ahead, cut out the cards and organize them before beginning the session.

- The atmosphere should be casual and fun so you might want music to play in the background, comfortable furniture to sit on or the like.
- If you have the means, snacks are always a good idea when workshoping.
- As the facilitator you will need to encourage the participants to engage with the game. While they might start out reluctantly, they will get into it after a little warming up. We suggest partnering people up, and keeping the groups small. This will create a safe space for people who are less inclined to perform in a big group.

### **Rules**

- It's important to set the stage for your group of players. You will introduce the rules / instructions for the game.
- This is a framework for discussing economic sustainability - there are no rights or wrongs. You are meant to challenge each other and discuss, but keep a positive attitude and have fun
- Role playing is silly, so you might as well just lean into it
- Once the characters are assigned and players have embodied their roles, players should try and start their statements / arguments and comments with IF, BUT, or HOW ABOUT

### **Game Pieces**

- **Character Cards** - The character cards describe three archetypal groups of people, the If Man, The But Squad, and the How Abouts. The character cards are meant as a guidance for the concept cards.
- **Concept Cards** - The concept cards are two-sided. On the first side is an image. The image is meant to be a conversation starter. Each image is accompanied by a theme, and a short description. On the opposite side of the card are some suggestions for how the different characters might react to the image side of the card.

## Welcome and Introductions

If you are an educator using this guide as a lesson, start by welcoming everyone and giving an overview of the lesson and how it fits in the context of the class' learning journey.

If you are a facilitator using this guide as a workshop, start by welcoming everyone, introducing yourself and giving an overview of the activity. Then, depending on how well people know each other, invite the participants to introduce themselves in whichever way you feel is appropriate. There are many wonderful ways to do this that help people feel safe, included and welcome. See [seedsforchange.org/resources](https://seedsforchange.org/resources) for examples.

### Part 1: Ice Breaker!

 **5 – 10** **1** Warm-up exercise to make everyone comfortable and relaxed.

#### NOTE:

**This can be anything from dancing or telling jokes to telling personal secrets. If you need inspiration you can search online for something like “workshop warm up activities”.**

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### Part 2: Introduce the characters

 **5 – 10** **1** Introduce the IF man  
**2** Introduce the BUT squad  
**3** Introduce the HOW ABOUTs

- 4 Divide the players into smaller groups. Within each, half a group should be assigned the role of IF man and the other half BUT squad.

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## Part 3: The IF-man vs. BUT-squad round

 **10 –  
20**

- 1 Each group in which members are assigned to both the role of IF man and BUT squad should be given a deck of concept cards.
- 2 The groups should start with one of the Concept Cards and use it to start a discussion about the concept presented on the card. It's important the players remain in character and try their best to embody the characters they've been assigned. The characters should begin their discussion using "IF..." and "BUT...".  
Once the players have gone through the designated amount of cards it will be time to take a break.

### **NOTE:**

**Depending on how much time you have to play the game, players should spend 5-10 minutes reacting to each card. As the facilitator you should decide if you'd like to get through all 5 Concept Cards, or rather focus your attention going in-depth with just a few cards.**

**As a facilitator you should encourage the players to take notes as they go, on either paper or white boards. They should take time to reflect between each Concept Card and write down the main points of conflict, the main reaction they had from the image and so on. The notes will be useful in the reflection later.**

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 **10**

**Optional Break**

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## Part 4: The HOW ABOUTS round

-  **10 – 20** **1** Everyone in a group now has to take on the role of the HOW ABOUTS, and as progressive change makers, they have to discuss the same concepts cards as in Part 3, but this time they should imagine how we might make changes. The characters should begin their suggestions using “HOW ABOUT...”.
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## Part 5: Reflection round

-  **10** **1** Everyone one writes down what they have learned and discovered, and new questions that have arised through the game. The facilitator should facilitate a discussion among the group to share these reflections.
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## Where to take it next

Hopefully the players of the game are now interested in learning more about the unsustainable knowledge and value foundation of the current dominant macroeconomic paradigme, and want to learn about heterodox economic schools and how we can transition society so human activity is within the safe and just operating space.

## Acknowledgements

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