The Digital Leaky Bucket

The Digital Leaky Bucket (DLB) is a computer version of a tool that Coady graduates have been using with communities for more than 15 years. The leaky bucket is a popular education tool that helps people at the grassroots better understand their local economy. It enables them to identify and quantify the main flows of money coming into and out of their community. In turn, this process may reveal economic opportunities, which can help community members improve their household and community well-being. To learn more about this tool you may find it helpful to read "*Community Economic Literacy and the Leaky Bucket*" on the Coady website at: www.coady.stfx.ca/tinroom/assets/file/OP9.pdf

The DLB has been used by households, communities and even enterprises. Generally there are three main uses for the Digital Leaky Bucket tool.

1. To enable individuals, groups and communities to discover:
   a. how much money enters their household or local economy on an annual basis.
   b. how much money their household or community spends on certain items or activities - some of which could be redirected to more productive use.
2. To monitor and evaluate changes in household or community economies over time.
3. To undertake basic business planning for an enterprise. Various versions of the digital leaky bucket can be produced to represent different scenarios of both income and expenditure for the business.

Exiting 'fullscreen' mode:

By default, when the Coady DLB opens, it opens in fullscreen mode and occupies the entire visual space on your computer monitor. However, you can also use the DLB in a standard window (with close/minimize/maximize buttons, etc.) by clicking on your keyboard's Escape button (button may say 'escape' or 'esc') when you are currently in the DLB app. This will switch the DLB out into a regular system window.

Creating a new bucket:

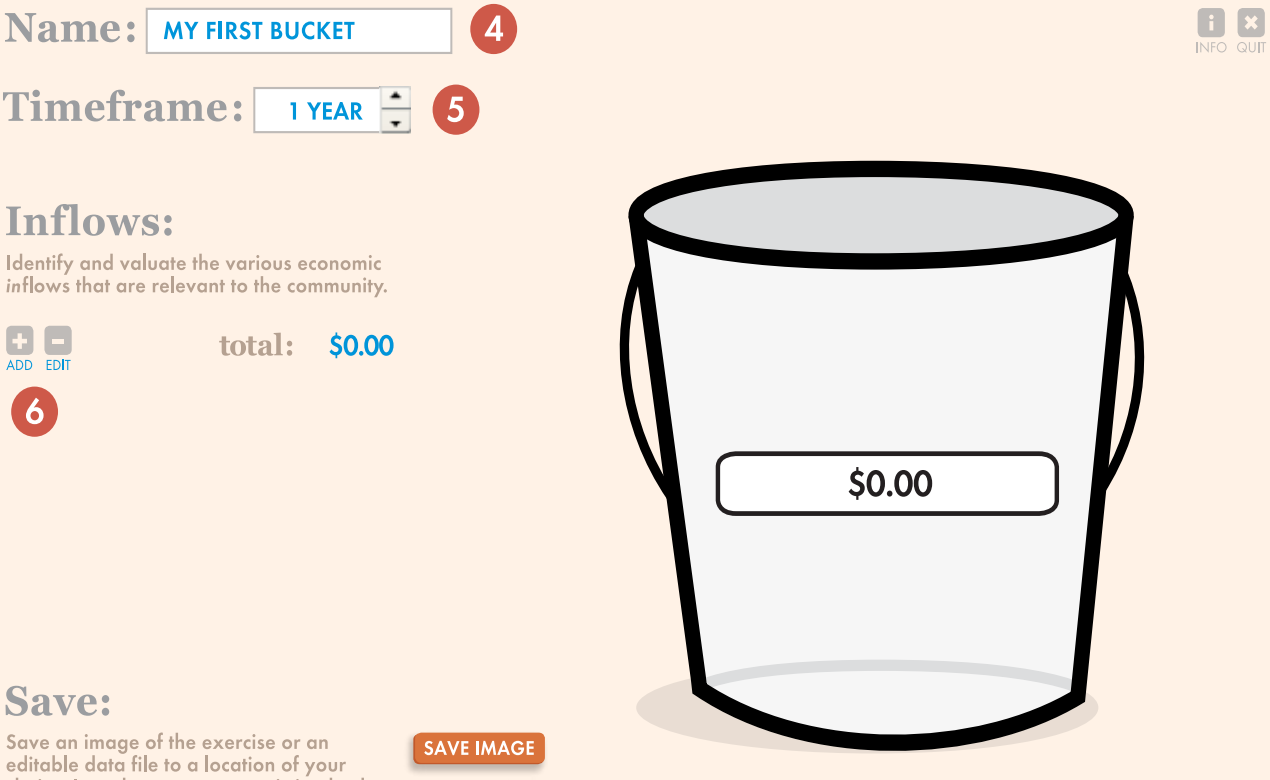
The first step 1 will be to select the currency that this bucket will use.
Once you choose a currency, click the BEGIN NEW button 2 to start the DLB.

Opening an existing bucket from file:

You can also re-open an existing DLB file that has been previously saved from the DLB app. To do this, first click the OPEN EXISTING button 3. You will be prompted to open a corresponding data file that has been previously saved from the DLB app and transition to the main screen where you can continue to work on the DLB file.

Getting going:

Once you have clicked BEGIN NEW, you will transition to the initial data-entry screen. First, enter a NAME for this DLB 4 (it could be a person/household, group, community or enterprise) and a TIMEFRAME 5 (usually one year). Once this is complete, you are ready to enter some bucket flow data.



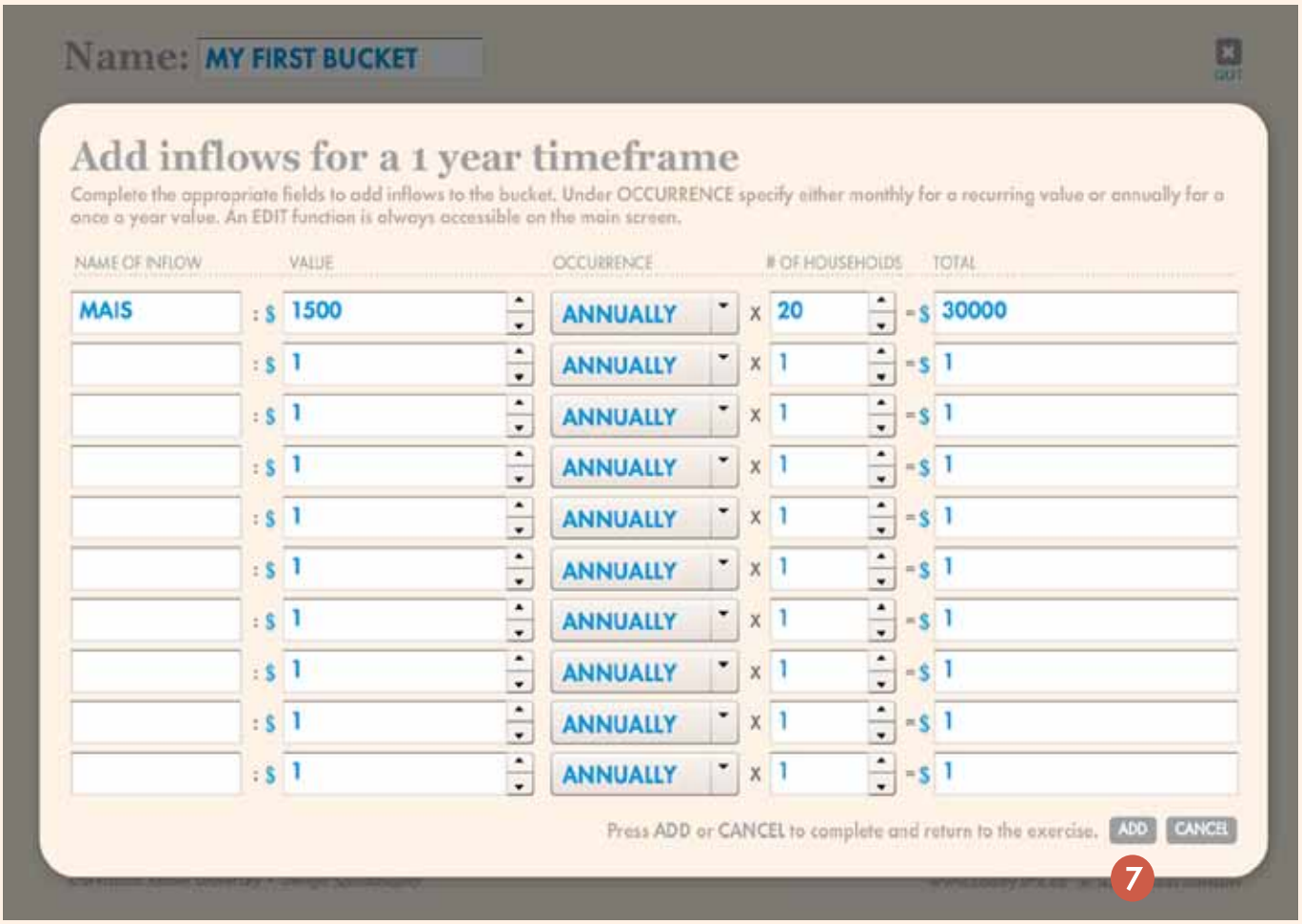
Adding Inflows

Your first data-entry task will be to add an Inflow. These model the inward flow of capital into the bucket and each bucket should have at least one Inflow. To add Inflows, click the ADD button 6 to open the Inflows overlay screen.

Let's examine an Inflow:

Each Inflow consists of five parameters, the first four of which will be added.

1. NAME: a useful descriptive name for this flow.
2. VALUE: the value, per household, of this flow; (the amount per month or year that an average household would earn for this activity)
3. TIMEFRAME: For simplicity, flows are calculated by either a monthly or yearly multiple. You will have to convert the value entered per household to either a monthly or yearly amount and select the corresponding option via the "OCCURRENCE" dropdown.
4. NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS: The number of households that this flow should be calculated for.
5. TOTAL: The fifth parameter is the total amount for this flow, which is automatically calculated for you once the first four parameters are filled in.



Inflows:

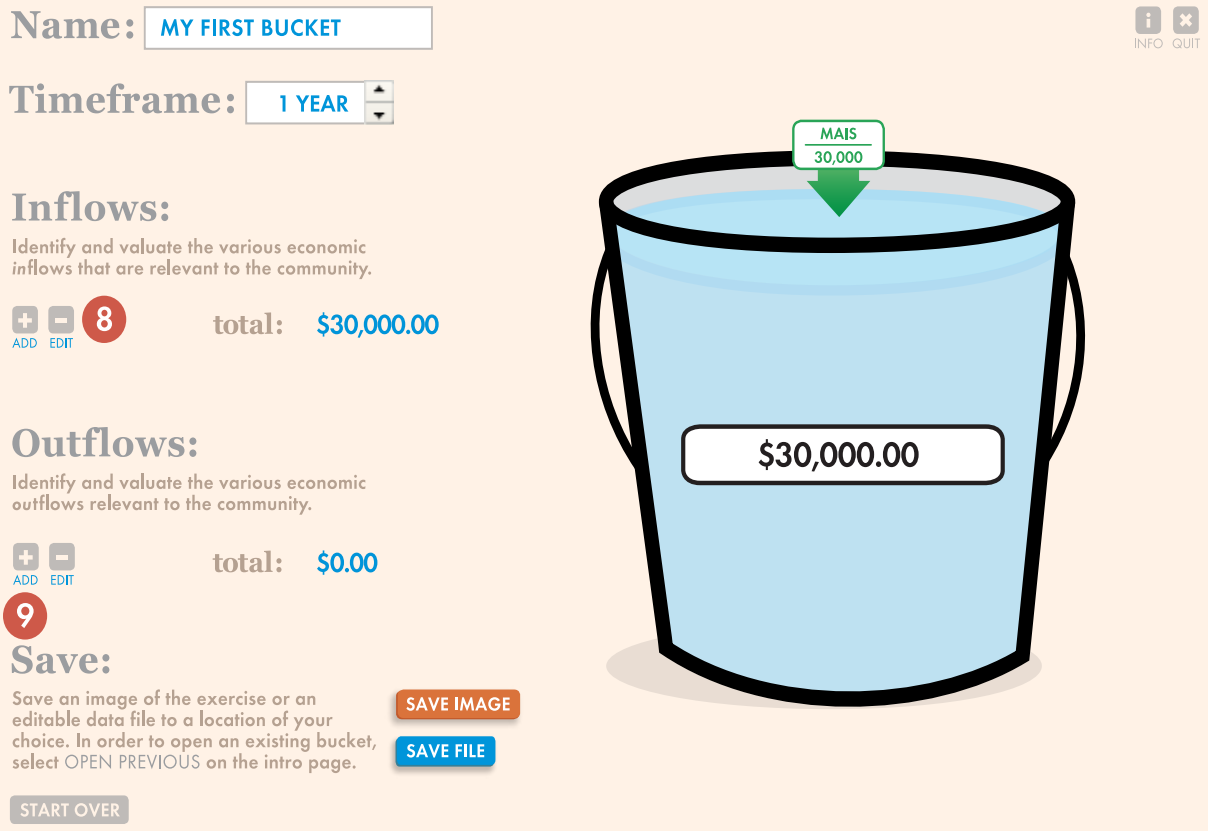
Once you have added your Inflows, you can click ADD 7 to insert them into the bucket. This will close the Inflows overlay and return you to the main screen. Notice that the bucket now reflects the total Inflow amount. To close the overlay without adding any Inflows, click

The bucket will show a green Inflow arrow and an amount label at the top of the bucket for each Inflow you have defined. To edit any/all of the current Inflows, click the EDIT button 8 in the Inflows section.

At this stage, the bucket will be full because you currently have no Outflows.
Let's take a look at how to add Outflows now.

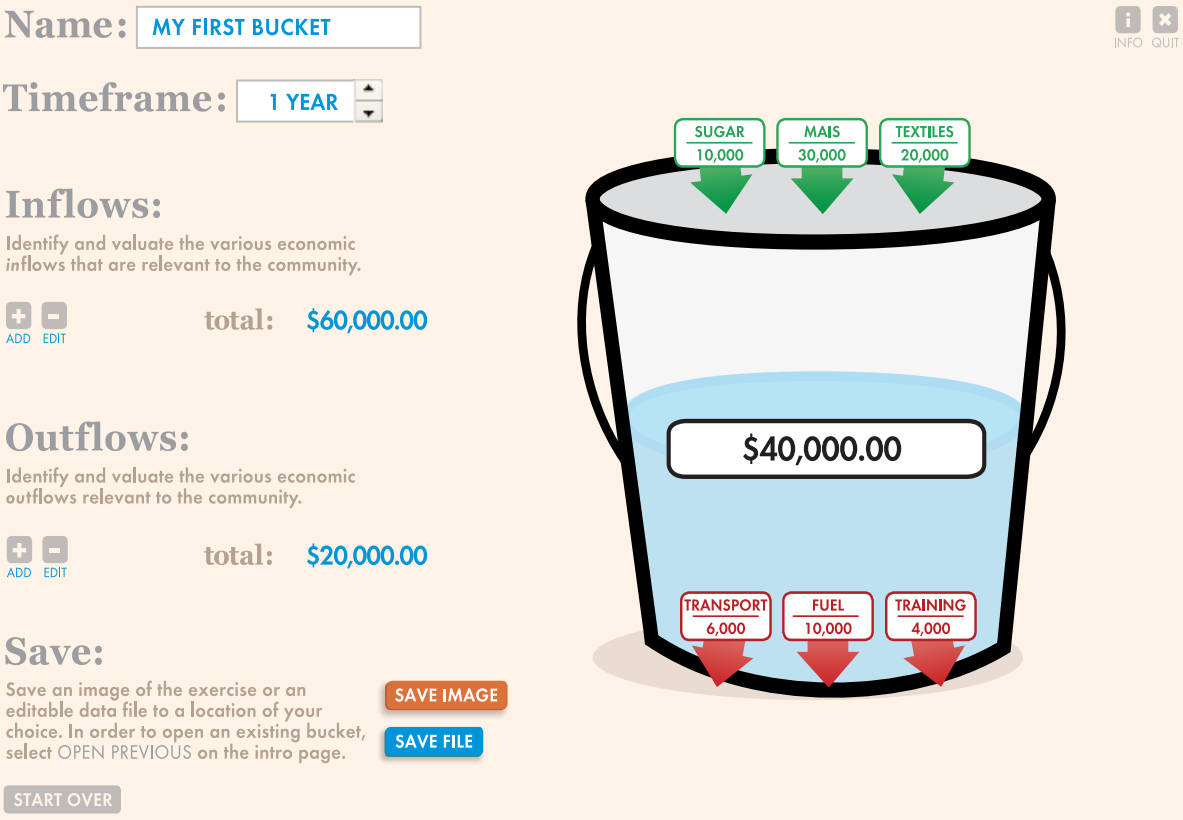
Ading Outflows:

To open the Outflows overlay, click the ADD button 9 under the Outflows section. This will open the Outflows overlay. The process here is identical to the Inflows process outlined above, except this screen allows you to model the out-flowing of capital from the bucket.



Once you have added the Outflows you require, click the Add button to insert the Outflows into the bucket, or you can also click the Cancel button to close the Outflows overlay without adding anything. Once you click Add or Cancel, the Outflows overlay will close and return you to the main screen where the bucket will now reflect both the Inflows and Outflows.
To edit existing Outflows, simply follow the same procedure outlined above for editing Inflows.

As you add/edit inflows and outflows, the bucket volume is will change to reflect the balance between the flows. For example, below is a sample bucket with 3 inflows and 3 outflows which demonstrates the visual feedback that the DLB app can provide, showing the balance of inflows and outflows in the bucket total.



Saving the Bucket:

Saving your work

To save your digital leaky bucket, simply click the 'Save' button on the main screen. This will display a dialog box that will prompt you to provide a filename and a location (My Documents, Desktop, etc.) to save the bucket data file to.

Saving an image of the current bucket

You can also save an image of the current bucket. This is a useful feature for including bucket visual information in documents, emailing a snapshot of a DLB to a colleague, printing buckets for group discussion, etc. To save the DLB image, click the 'Print Screen' button

Opening a DLB file from another user

It's possible to open existing buckets that have been shared with you by another DLB user. You will need their saved DLB file, as outlined above. To open it, first launch the DLB app and, as outlined in the Getting Started section above, then click the 'Open Existing' button on the initial screen. This will open a system dialog that will allow you to locate and open the DLB file you wish to view. NOTE: you cannot double-click a DLB data file to trigger the app itself to open – you must be in the app and then use the 'Open Existing' button to open the file. Correspondingly, you can follow the instructions above for saving a DLB file and share this file with colleagues, etc. Provided they have a copy of the DLB app, they can then open the file using these instructions. Of course, if they don't currently have the DLB app, they can simply download it for free from the Coady Institute's website:

www.coady.stfx.ca/knowledge/digital_tools/dlb/downloads

DLB License: