

BASIC INCOME IN THE WORLD

Arguments, Experiments, History

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First published 2021
by Epocha
in Prague

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Cover Art © Žaneta Kortusová, 2021

English Edition © Nakladatelství Epocha, Praha 2021

ISBN 978-80-278-0063-6 (print)

ISBN 978-80-278-1156-4 (ePub)

ISBN 978-80-278-1157-1 (mobil)

ISBN 978-80-278-1158-8 (pdf)

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Introduction

This book offers an introduction to an idea and practice of unconditional basic income, which is becoming a topic increasingly discussed not only among researchers but also among citizens and the politicians who represent them. The topic is also increasingly making its way into the mass media. Since people sometimes confuse unconditional basic income (also called universal basic income) with other financial concepts, it is first important to clarify how it is defined. Unconditional basic income is a financial sum that is provided to all citizens (or otherwise legally defined residents) by the state (or a city, a county etc.) at regular intervals (usually monthly) without any conditions being attached, i.e. regardless of whether the citizen has other income from wages or other sources, regardless of age, sex and gender, marital status or other characteristics. For basic income to make a substantial contribution to people's lives, it must also reach a certain minimum financial level. From our point of view, the provision of a basic income enables citizens' basic needs to be met. By doing this, it also enables their creative potential to be unlocked for their other activities which could then significantly raise their standard of living.

Our motivation for writing this book is our conviction of the importance of a basic income, which is based both on our theoretical analyses (in philosophy and the social sciences) and on insights from practice, specifically from experiments with basic income and, more generally, from people's historical experiences with their finances in many countries around

the world. The practical and theoretical efforts of the people we follow in our book are based on people's needs and their activities of social critique of the problems that prevent them from meeting their needs.¹

As for the second motivation, current reflections on basic income in Europe and also in this book have been taking place under specific practical conditions, in particular as part of a citizens' initiative for unconditional basic income in all the countries of the European Union since 2020. This is the second initiative of its kind. The first initiative in 2013-2014 was one of the largest pan-European events in history to be organized by citizens. The „European Citizens' Initiative for an Unconditional Basic Income“ sought to inform citizens and have discussions with them at the European level, as well as in the European Parliament and the European Commission. Ordinary citizens, philosophers and social scientists, members of civil society, social movements and political parties organized seminars and lectures for the general and professional public, debated in the media, and collected signatures from January 2013 to January 2014. The proposal to introduce a basic income provoked a large wave of various responses from citizens, journalists and politicians thanks to the intensity of the one-year-long initiative and also due to the potential large number of citizens since the European Union and other neighbouring countries where the initiative also took place, involved more than five hundred million people.

The second European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) for basic income has now been under way in European Union countries since September 2020, and discussions are also taking place in

¹ See, for example: Bidadanure, J. U. The Political Theory of Universal Basic Income. *Annual Review of Political Science*, No. 22, 2019, pp. 481-501; Hrubec, M. Authoritarian versus Critical Theory. *International Critical Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 2012, pp. 431-444. We also recommend *Basic Income Studies*.

Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey. Now we have co-organized an initiative entitled „Start Unconditional Basic Incomes (UBI) throughout the EU“ with colleagues from all the countries of the EU.² Originally, it was planned as a year-long initiative, which was later extended because of the pandemic.³ The initiative includes information and discussion activities with citizens, politicians, scientists and journalists physically and online in seminars, conferences, newspapers, radio, TV and social media. Citizens also have the opportunity to sign a petition, as the introduction of a basic income depends on their support. Then basic income can be approved, or another initiative will take place later. Finally, basic income could be implemented in a coordinated manner across all EU member states, or in all EU countries according to individual decisions and rules in individual countries, or at least in some EU countries.

We have been working on basic income in theory and practice for more than fifteen years, and we are also planning to organize various activities in the future at different levels: local, national, macro-regional and global.

In the first part of this book, we have chosen to introduce a concept of basic income using an interview, as it is more readable and thus more accessible. From a theoretical point of view, the intersubjective method is an adequate basis for analysis. The interview represents our experience as theorists and as publicists and practical organizers of basic income initiatives.

² We would like to thank Klaus Sambor from Vienna, who is an initiator of important basic income activities in Europe, and all our colleagues in the initiative in the Czech Republic and in other countries for their cooperation and those, who participated in our public events, for all their suggestions. We also thank to our academic colleagues in Prague and other cities all over the world.

³ The initiative started in September 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission approved already the second extension of the initiative, namely until June 2022.

The second part of the book focuses on the main arguments for unconditional basic income. It is the most analytical part, which offers the key arguments in terms of the different aspects of basic income and also the different social groups it could help. Here we also focus on basic income in terms of its financing.

The third part is devoted to experiments with basic income around the world. We do not write in full about all the experiments that have ever taken place but we try to present the main and representative examples. Some experiments meet the criteria for basic income more, others less. Although the various experiments and pilots have produced positive findings as well as unresolved cases and methodological issues, they are all united by the basic sufficient orientation towards eradicating poverty and providing people with a higher standard of living than is usual within today's global capitalism. In this third part of the book, we look first at Europe, where a number of remarkable experiments have recently taken place. We concentrate on those in the Netherlands, Finland, Ireland, Germany, and Scotland. Most of these are experiments that have already taken place, but in some cases they are also those that are currently being discussed or prepared for implementation. We also analyse experiments in Africa, particularly in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, and Uganda. We then focus on the Americas. We analyse how a version of basic income has been applied in Alaska since the 1980s, how it is being phased in Brazil, and what steps have been taken in Canada and the USA. Then, we look at basic income experiments in Asia, particularly in India, Iran, and Macau. Finally, we study efforts to introduce it through the United Nations at the global level. These efforts involve the unprecedentedly highest number of the population on the planet in the history of basic income experimentation, nearly three billion of the poorest people.

In the fourth part of the book, we examine history. We look at the pioneers of basic income throughout history, particularly

persons such as Thomas More, Ioannes Lodovicus Vives, Thomas Paine, Bertrand Russell, and Martin Luther King. They deserve attention in terms of explaining the gradual crystallization of the idea of a basic income and the context in which it was considered, both theoretically and practically.

Readers can read our book systematically in order to get a deeper and more complex understanding of the issue but it is also possible to select just some preferred parts of the book. That is why the book is structured into smaller sections. We hope that this book will contribute to clarifying the important idea of unconditional basic income and the efforts to implement the experiments in many countries around the world. Its implementation in practice will surely still entail the need to overcome various pitfalls, as has been the case in the history of mankind during various major civilizational changes.

The authors: Marek Hrubec, Martin Brabec, Markéta Minářová

**(1) Interview:
Fundamental social change**

Jan Rovenský: Let's start by giving readers an idea of what unconditional basic income is with an interview, as this method of communication is more effective in getting points across. After all, engaging in dialogue to explain issues has shown itself to be a dependable approach since the time of Plato. Let's explain the issue by disentangling basic income from other types of income.

Martin Brabec: Unconditional basic income is a financial amount that is paid at regular intervals, usually monthly, to every individual adult citizen without a means test. The defining feature making basic income such a socially innovative instrument is its unconditional nature, i.e. with no strings attached. It is paid out to recipients regardless of whether or not they do paid work, own any property, are rich or poor, live alone or with family, have children, etc. These are all key parameters used by our current conditional social system to determine if an individual is to be granted a social transfer.

Martin Brabec: There are several angles from which we can view the word „basic“. What are they? It is a word underlying the fact that this sort of income is an amount that citizens can rely on to form a material, secure basis for their lives.

Marek Hrubec: First of all, „basic“ could be said to refer to a financial base that everyone would receive no matter what. However, it would come up short if it were so small as to be insignificant. Therefore, basic income should be conceived as a response to people's bare necessities. Ideally, a basic income should enable everyone's basic needs to be met. It is a path-breaking improvement which is a part of fundamental social change in human history. And it is not just a utopian idea. It is an important and well-reasoned concept, aspects of which have already been proven to work in practice by various countries' experiments and practices.

Jan Rovenský: What does basic income have to do with the realisation of rights?

Marek Hrubec: Citizens and residents in many countries have various rights, but these are often only formally declared. Since basic income, by definition, is granted to all citizens universally, regardless of their age, employment or lack thereof, marital status, etc., it would be a way of effecting everyone's right to life and to live in dignity. Because it is a universal right, it is also called universal basic income, or shortly basic income.

As for other rights, basic income would provide a means for citizens to participate in society. In this sense, basic income is also important for participatory democracy.

Jan Rovenský: Another important factor is which institution is to pay out basic income.

Martin Brabec: In the situation today, it is important to note that, while basic income could be paid out by an individual state, this could, of course, also be entrusted to a supranational institution such as the European Union or the United Nations, or, conversely, to a more local unit of government, such as a city or region. It is on these sub-national units that basic income has primarily focused in the various experiments that have been conducted.

Marek Hrubec: When we consider this argument, how can we explain the fact that some people are still wary of introducing basic income? There aren't many of them, but they do exist. A hundred years ago, some people were also afraid, for example, of the introduction of public street lighting. It was too much of a novelty for them, something they thought would be difficult to put into action.

Martin Brabec: Some employers are concerned that the introduction of basic income might make it harder for them to recruit workers for heavy and low-paid work. Then there are high-income employees who are worried that higher progressive taxation – a tax on the wealthy – will be needed to fund basic income. There is also the fact that some people cannot imagine a social order in which work and the income it generates do not play a central role.

Jan Rovenský: This raises certain risks when it comes to introducing automation and robotics, which some citizens believe may be linked to basic income.

Martin Brabec: It is important to realise that in today's developed Western societies full employment is now forever beyond our reach; automation will inevitably result in less work. Anyone viewing paid work as a central plank of society and individual human lives is therefore out of touch with the current economic and social reality. On the contrary, we should be embracing the fact that people are liberated from paid work, that machines can do the work for them so that they have more free time to get on with something else.

This is accompanied by other individual and societal benefits. If it is easy for people to turn down a certain type of job, especially one that is unpleasant, difficult, and poorly paid, not to mention intrinsically unsatisfying, employers offering this type of work will have no choice but to raise wages or replace the workforce with technology and automation. Thus, the introduction of basic income will have the effect of both saving and humanising human labour. Once this type of work can be done by machines, there is no need for people to do it, and for low pay at that.

Marek Hrubec: A relevant question is also: How is basic income linked to freedom and the bargaining position of employees?

Martin Brabec: There is a pithy slogan that we proponents of basic income often use: Really want freedom? Roll out basic income. The point being that basic income will increase workers' bargaining power, i.e. they will be able to refuse a particular job rather than accept it simply out of fear that the alternative is falling prey to abject poverty. As a result, whenever we choose to work, we will be making a more voluntary decision, so the introduction of basic income will generate real – not just formal – freedom from this point of view.

The introduction of basic income will also enable people to take up work that pays little (without a basic income, they would not be able to support themselves), yet is rewarding and personally fulfilling. Here we can see that basic income does not rigidify the labour market (as some critics claim) because it not only gives workers a stronger hand in negotiations and thus greater protection from employers, but also allows for greater labour market flexibility (I can take a job that would otherwise be closed to me in the absence of basic income), so basic income is both activating and liberating.

Markéta Minářová: Which social groups could benefit most from basic income in the light of these developments?

Martin Brabec: I would note that if basic income were to be financed, among other things, by progressive taxation, this would clearly benefit low-income groups the most, because they would be net beneficiaries. Above-average income groups would either receive back, as basic income, what they had paid in higher taxation, or they would be net payers. But this is not something that should be greeted with outrage, because even today certain groups pay for public goods out of their taxes. For example, public transport, roads, and schools are a force for common good; those on high incomes fund these through

their taxes, while others on lower incomes use them for free or at a lower cost.

It is also important to realise that paid work is not the only type of work. There are actually three types of work: first, paid work; second, domestic work; and third, voluntary work. One of basic income's socially positive characteristics is that it is a way of acknowledging the social value of different types of voluntary and domestic work.

Jan Rovenský: From what age should people be given basic income and at what amount should it be set?

Marek Hrubec: There is no end of reasonable proposals. Various experiments have been conducted in many countries. In Alaska, for example, unconditional basic income has been operating successfully since the 1980 s. I can say, tentatively, that in most countries around the world where they are trying to introduce basic income, they are considering basic income payments for adult citizens. Some proposals, however, also include children.

The amount of basic income should ultimately be determined democratically by the public, by a referendum, participative budgeting, consultative participation, or according to the preferences of political parties that have included basic income in their election manifesto. Basic income could be introduced in all or just some of the countries in the European Union, for example.

Jan Rovenský: Critics argue that the cost of introducing such income would run into billions and place a disproportionate strain on budgets.

Marek Hrubec: These critics, mostly politicians and journalists, often have a lot more money than ordinary citizens and tend to court high-income groups of voters. There is no shortage of finance in the European Union, or in the Western world more

generally, but the problem is that this wealth is distributed very unevenly. Most citizens would welcome bold progressive taxation of the 1% or – even better – 10% of the population and corporations with the most wealth and income. In this way, at least some of the money they make should be redistributed among people in the form of basic income. The abolition of tax havens in Europe is being considered, which would also yield additional resources. Lately, there has been a lot of talk in several countries in the European Union and elsewhere around the world about taxing internet corporations, Google and Amazon, for example. Another resource is automation and robotics, which will replace the work of many people. But that's by no means all – there are even more resources that can be tapped to finance basic income.

Jan Rovenský: Another argument is why should basic income be given to those who are already rich or to those who show no desire to work?

Marek Hrubec: Everyone would be entitled to basic income. It is universal. There would be no need for the poor to prove that they are poor in order to exercise these rights. People should not be bludgeoned into begging for their constitutional rights; these rights should be secured for everyone for real.

Even today, there are many people who would don't actually need to work full-time. Instead, they could work part-time and not lead such a consumerist lifestyle, perhaps by not buying a new mobile phone or car so frequently, or by taking fewer holidays abroad. The thing is, most people do want a higher standard of living, and that is why they work more than they have to. Most people don't want to live on a level where they only meet their basic needs. The point about unconditional basic income is that it would provide them with basic social stability in their lives, and they could then choose to engage

in paid work in order to generate additional income, or decide not to augment that income, but to take on unpaid work that is needed and meaningful to them, such as caring for children, the elderly, the sick, or other loved ones.

Jan Rovenský: Wouldn't the introduction of basic income fuel inflation because, when all is said and done, the market would react by increasing prices, so over time we would ultimately find ourselves in the same situation as now?

Marek Hrubec: In Alaska, where basic income works well, this hasn't happened, prices haven't risen dramatically. Nor has this been the case with basic-income experiments in other countries, whether in Europe (such as Finland and the Netherlands), Africa, or Asia. On the contrary, universal basic income has a positive economic and social effect. People are not tied down by artificially created jobs generating products that are then artificially foisted on people by advertising. Instead, basic income gives people more opportunity to engage in genuinely necessary and creative activities. They have more freedom to set up all sorts of start-ups and to devote their time to activities geared towards the community, the arts, the family, or the environment. Innovation is nothing to fear. Had we not introduced new social experiments throughout history, we would still be living with slavery.

Martin Brabec: Basic income is starting to be taken very seriously not only by academics, but also in the arena of civil society and politics. The pandemic, for example, has been a contributory factor, with governments in various countries making emergency payments to citizens. How does basic income fit in among other state measures? What role does basic income play in the system as a whole?

Marek Hrubec: The very fact that basic income is a sum of money given unconditionally universally to all citizens means

that, generally speaking, it is on a par with universal suffrage or universal comprehensive health insurance. Looked at this way, it is a key social concept that, if introduced, will profoundly remodel society and even, potentially, effect civilisational change. Basic income is one of those „gateway concepts“ that have a multi-pronged impact on equity and justice in society, and unlock new stages of future development.

Martin Brabec: Contemporary society, as opposed to, say, slave or feudal societies, places more of a premium on equality. Unconditional basic income creates a more level playing field among people by giving everyone the same basis in the form of a financial allowance. What are the implications for ownership?

Marek Hrubec: Basic income lays the foundations for citizens to take a more equal approach to ownership. First, citizens will be less dependent on other people's property, because they will have a tangible basis to pursue their own livelihood, which means they will not have to accept disadvantageous employment contracts with business owners just to get by. Second, basic income gives citizens the basic resources and time they need to create start-ups, such as cooperatives, and thus the ability to create ownership. Third, basic income frees up citizens' time to engage in the economic life of society and enables them to play a hand in decision-making on public (municipal and other) property that may be of benefit to them.

In other words, basic income significantly improves citizens' ownership situation, but does not address it fully. Therefore, it is important to address the yawning inequalities in ownership that currently exist among people in most countries by taking further action, and make this another pillar supporting the overall system of a just society. Basic income is therefore part of a system of fundamental social principles that can serve as the backbone of a fairer society.

Martin Brabec: What are these fundamental social principles? Perhaps now we can have a more conceptual discussion for readers who want to delve more deeply.

Marek Hrubec: Okay. Universal basic income is one of the principles of social equality. Specifically, I define it as the principle of equal basic social recognition which primarily encompasses the recognition of citizens' basic needs. Unlike the principle of difference, which applies to specific (here, the most vulnerable) individuals and groups, this principle of equality seeks to provide basic social security across the board for all persons. Although there are situations where it cannot meet the varying specific needs of different groups of misrecognized people, it can establish key basic conditions via universal basic income.

The second principle of social equality concerns the systemic institutional security of social and economic recognition not only by means of redistribution, which is what basic income does, but also, in its trickier form, by ensuring a share of ownership – in the form of cooperative or municipal ownership, for instance – that paves the way for people to pursue democratic self-realisation economically as well. Since redistribution, usually also tackled by other kinds of social principles, is difficult to mediate and the end result is that people still become dependent on redistribution, there is a requirement here to ensure that everyone has an equal entitlement to these external sources of ownership in order to meet their needs. This includes also public ownership in the form of a public health network, public transport, postal services, electricity, gas, water and the like. Look at France, for example – people place an emphasis on such ownership of critical infrastructure there.

Martin Brabec: Many modern societies make much of the welfare state, which provides citizens with a degree of social security should they come up against adversity in life. That

security is what basic income also seeks to provide. What relationship should there be between *unconditional* basic income and *conditional* social benefits granted by the classic welfare state?

Marek Hrubec: Whereas unconditional basic income satisfies the requirements of the principle of equality, conditional social benefits aim to meet needs associated with the principles of social difference or distinctiveness, i.e. specific economic and social recognition.

The first principle of social difference here is the principle of *the elimination of the lack of recognition of basic social needs*. The aim is to recognise the needs of those who are misrecognised socially now, people who suffer from structural injustices such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness, temporary or permanent incapacity, etc. This principle concerns the targeted elimination (via various social benefits) of the adverse situation in which socially disadvantaged individuals find themselves by ensuring their security and fulfilling their *basic* social and economic needs, which are linked to their physical and mental integrity, i.e. by ensuring that they are protected from harmful interference (rape, torture, etc.) in the basic living of their lives and by making sure that they have food, water, shelter, clothing, and health care, including adequate education, which is necessary for individuals to live in society.

Secondly, there is another principle that could be described as *social solidarity*. The principle of social difference here is taken to mean the recognition of persons in situations that resemble a specific form of social recognition (recognition of the sick, the unemployed, etc.) but, in this case, it is the recognition of persons in situations that do not concern the *basic* needs of those persons but other needs. This principle, which contributes to the elimination of social inequalities, is the concept of solidarity with the socially disadvantaged. The legitimacy

of the unequal status of people, i.e. the well-being of some and the hardship of others, is challenged by social conflicts caused by the tensions and dysfunctionality of society. It brings the legitimacy of social solidarity.

Martin Brabec: Building on the previous question, I would like to ask whether or not basic income supplements ideally conditional benefits and whether social benefits can be abolished once basic income is introduced?

Marek Hrubec: Basic income moves the welfare state forwards. Basic income is certainly complementary to conditional social benefits in the sense that special benefits for the sight-impaired, for example, should continue to be paid, as the sight-impaired have specific additional needs that other people do not have. Without these special social benefits, the sight-impaired would be at a disadvantage compared to the sighted. The same goes for other groups who have specific basic needs that other people do not have, or in cases of solidarity, etc.

In those situations where a social benefit is paid for the same purpose as an unconditional benefit, individuals will not have to meet any conditions and will still effectively receive the benefit via unconditional basic income.

It should be also mentioned that in most Western countries, where a combination of market and oligopoly conditions prevail without adequate regulation, it is not possible to target addressed welfare state benefits comprehensively and precisely enough to specific social groups. This is why the interest in introducing unconditional basic income started earlier in these countries. Conversely, countries, where development and poverty eradication is a priority through comprehensive projects and regulation of the market and corporations, have been able to succeed with targeted programs of poverty eradication and country development. But also in these countries, objective

and subjective conditions for the introduction of unconditional basic income will emerge later, especially with the development of automation and robotics.

Martin Brabec: On the one hand, it is good that basic income gives everyone the same but how about recognising merit? If someone works more than someone else, what are they entitled to in return?

Marek Hrubec: Yes, another principle of social difference is the recognition that there are not only differences that are structural, that people accept more or less passively, but also differences that people can actively influence through their actions. What we are talking about here is recognition of merit that, in today's society, mainly takes the form of a reward for work or for the result of work, i.e. an appreciation of someone's performance. While this recognition cannot assess people's unequal starting positions and their ideologically rooted differences in the financial and social valuation of work, it can, at least to some extent, show appreciation, for example, of the fact that someone has worked more than someone else, or of the type of work they have done. The fact that one person tries harder than another should be rewarded now.

It should be added, however, that while people in the labour market today are persuaded that they are being rewarded for their performance, in reality they are largely rewarded according to their socio-economic status. In other words, workers in the lowest positions are paid several times – often many times – less than employees in the highest positions (senior managers) and no amount of work will make up for this inequality. Therefore, they are not rewarded primarily according to their performance. In this sense, the reinforcement of highly unequal pay based on social status has re-feudalised society in recent decades.

Martin Brabec: We have been discussing basic income and social benefits from the state, but how should citizens contribute to the determination of those benefits and basic income – how should their *decision-making* be reflected? Is it enough for them to vote in local or parliamentary elections?

Marek Hrubec: Let's start by looking at the democratic drives held as part of the year-long pan-European initiative, for example. Basic income and the ways in which it can be put into practice are being propagated and discussed with the general public, researchers, journalists, and politicians. Only after this democratic engagement will citizens be in a position to make an informed and balanced decision on whether they think and feel a need for basic income and, if so, which exact version and what financial amount they want. Otherwise the idea of basic income could be misused by manipulative politicians in various ways.

Besides the principles of political recognition that apply to democratic elections and discussions, it is certainly also important to encourage the public to participate in economic democracy, and specifically concerning both the principles of social equality and difference we have mentioned. I alluded to participatory democracy when I mentioned the second principle of social equality, which is the *systematic institutional security* of social and economic recognition. Here, participatory budgeting and the democratisation of decision-making in the workplace are important. Again, unconditional basic income arms citizens with the basic material conditions needed for them to become engaged. Therefore, basic income is an element important for a just society.

Marek Hrubec: Nevertheless, the issues and principles of basic income were contextualized at various specific times. They are connected to various historical developments even if they also share some common features. Could you specify the historical beginnings of an idea of basic income?

Markéta Minářová: Thomas More saw the major social problems of his epoch as long ago as five centuries, and tried to overcome them by an idea which he saw as a new innovation of the coming era. He formulated the idea of basic income in his famous work called *Utopia*. However, his colleague Ioannes Lodovicus Vives, who is nowadays often neglected and stands in the shadow of his much better known contemporary, developed them even further. Their concepts represented the first coherent idea of basic income with a view to the greater welfare of „ordinary“ people. It was their concepts that foreshadowed the resulting thesis of a particular social programme.

Martin Brabec: The power of example is useful when people are expected to be engaged. Could you identify several other relevant persons in history who contributed significantly to developing the idea of basic income in theory and practice?

Markéta Minářová: Perhaps the most frequent references to basic income come from the ideas of the American revolutionary Thomas Paine, who theorised a world where every individual is born with legitimate rights to a certain kind of property; it was not meant to be charity or a gift, but a just right. In a sense, this thesis was taken up by Napoleon Bonaparte, who, however, took the theory of a certain kind of gift more from a pragmatic point of view. He gradually modified these ideas over his ‘career’, not looking too much at the poor and sick at the beginning of his political and military career but within a few years he realised that the poor were the majority and it was the support of this majority that he particularly needed. The idea of unconditional income evolved over the centuries, and over time there were many critics of More and Vives’ ideas. One such critic and defender of a basic income was Bertrand Russell, who criticised in particular how the required resources

would be achieved, arguing in particular for the choice between leisure and a high income. He discussed it at length in his famous work *Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*. However, he took a different approach to the issue, namely an economic approach. A major proponent of the idea of unconditional basic income was Martin Luther King, who even suggested increasing the unconditional income in line with inflation and prices.

Jan Rovenský: Basic income has not been specified only historically but also territorially. Experiments with basic income have been applied in various places. Could you remind us which countries have experimented with basic income?

Marek Hrubec: Social and political philosophers and other researchers have analysed basic income all over the world. Similarly, experiments with it have been conducted in many places in Europe, Africa, the Americas and Asia. They have both common and particular territorial characteristics. We have already mentioned Alaska. Basic income has been considered for the longest in Europe, with the most intense discussions in the German-speaking countries in recent decades. In recent years, people are aware mainly of experiments at the local level in the Netherlands. But mention should also be made of Kenya and India, for example. The pandemic has also sparked a great deal of interest in basic income at the United Nations, where a proposal was published to introduce the world's largest programme for the almost three billion people who have suffered the most. Let us hope that, in the future, basic income can be implemented on as large a scale and in as social a version as possible.

Jan Rovenský: Thank you for the interview to all of you.

**(2) The main arguments:
To each according
to her or his basic needs**

Basic definition

Basic income is not just one financial measure among many but a social, economic and civic financial amount which has a far-reaching multiplier effect in many areas of life. Basic income is a profound civilizational change on par with the introduction of universal suffrage or universal health care.

However, basic income, officially called *universal basic income*, *unconditional basic income*, or sometimes also a *basic income guarantee* or *citizen income*, is often mistaken for conditional social benefits. Therefore, its definition needs to be clarified at the outset. Unconditional basic income is a financial amount which every individual citizen receives from the state administration without means-test at regular intervals. It applies universally, that is, to all citizens (or otherwise legally defined persons, e.g. including residents) of a given state (or a lower or higher administration unit) without conditions, usually monthly, regardless of age, sex and gender, marital status or other characteristics. At the same time, the citizen can also receive income from a job, conditional social benefits, etc. A certain minimum financial level of basic income is necessary in order to make a substantial contribution to people's lives. From our perspective, basic income is a fundamental kind of recognition of the person which provides a material basis to allow everyone to meet their basic needs. By doing that, it makes also possible to unlock persons' creative potential for their other activities which could raise in an important way their standard of living.

Its introduction can increase the equality and freedom of citizens. Freedom rests not only on rights and opportunities but also on the means to achieve it.⁴ People with basic income could take advantage of occasions they would not otherwise be

⁴ Raventos, D., *Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom*. London: Pluto Press 2007.

able to take advantage of. If basic income were introduced in a sufficient amount, all citizens could indeed have their basic constitutional rights met, the right to life and also the right to a life in dignity, which, unfortunately, not all people have yet, for example, the homeless, who continue to die from exposure to cold temperatures in winter and the many more others who live in very undignified, impoverished conditions.

This is not a new idea. The idea of basic income was described in a sketch five hundred years ago by Thomas More (1478–1535) in his famous book *Utopia*⁵ and developed by Johannes Ludovicus Vives (1492–1540). It was one of the ideas waiting to be grasped from the history of philosophy. Just as the idea of democracy, for example, waited thousands of years, after the initial attempts in antiquity, for people to begin to realize it — at least in part — basic income, too, has been promoted throughout history by famous persons such as Thomas Paine (1737–1809), who wrote on guaranteed minimum income, or Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) and his focus on a state bonus.

The idea of basic income has been highlighted in the last decade by more and more academic, civic and political activities in Europe and other parts of the world. Basic income is becoming so popular in the media that some politicians even steal it and latch onto it, despite putting into practice only ordinary *conditional* social benefits which run counter to the definitional *unconditionality* of basic income. This is good news for the popularity of the idea of basic income but bad news for its manipulation because people then mistakenly get the impression it is just another social benefit and not a profound civilizational transformation.

It is important that citizens, experts, activists and politicians alike should know that, in our case in different countries or

⁵ More, T. *Utopia* (Planet PDF, 2016; the original in Latin in 1516), retrieved 14 December 2021).

throughout the European Union, citizens should ultimately decide democratically on a particular concept of basic income, its amount and the various sources of its funding. And precisely in order for people to make informed choices, first, it is necessary to explain the details of basic income.⁶ This is also the purpose of this text.

In this chapter, we want to explain basic income in relation to the idea „to each according to her or his basic needs“. We stress several key aspects of basic income. We deal with, first, employment and unemployment as liberation; second, recognition of care; third, transfer of power in employment; fourth, poverty elimination and the welfare state; fifth, transnational dimension: the environment and migration; sixth, financing a basic income; seventh, a gradual introduction of basic income. We show that the development of basic income related to these aspects leads towards a relevant fundamental social change.

Employment and unemployment as liberation

Unemployment is no longer just a temporary accident but a permanent systemic problem that affects a large number of people. In recent years in Europe, for example, it has become a particularly burning problem in Greece and Spain. Can all citizens ever still get a full-time job? Should we not consider how better to redistribute the results and profits of mechanized and automated work among people? This could be done through

⁶ In the following text, we develop and update our interpretation which we articulated in: Brabec, M., Hrubec, M., *Nepodmíněný základní příjem a práce*. Fórum sociální práce, No. 1, 2014, pp. 49-53. See also our book: Van Parijs, P., Hrubec, M., Brabec, M., et al. *Všeobecný základní příjem. Právo na lenost nebo na přežití* [Universal Basic Income. The Right to Laziness or to Survival?] (In Czech) Prague: Filosofia 2007.

unconditional basic income, which would allow people to do activities for which they are now paid little or nothing at all.⁷

Today sociological analyses increasingly point out the need to admit that modern, advanced societies will not achieve full employment ever again.⁸ The effort to create enough work in modern, developed societies is seen as unrealistic, and we should not continue to cling to it. The arguments are as follows. First, there is no economic solution to rising unemployment in sight. People who are not (fully) employed have a much lower income than those who are fully employed. Second, nevertheless, it is a cultural norm today to blame the victims. Although it is generally known that not everyone can be employed at the same time, most people still believe that everyone has the opportunity to find a job. Thus, those who do not find a job experience this state as a consequence of their own failure. Third, but, if it is not necessary for people to do unpleasant work, then they should not be forced to do so. The fact is that someone not working should not be seen as individually or socially undesirable, but it requires some institutional and cultural changes. Today we have a strong lack of real cultural repertoire and institutional infrastructure for free time. Above all, the consumer orientation of Western culture makes free time heavily dependent on income. There are only a few ways in which low-income people can spend their free time in a cultivated way.

Most politicians are still trying to tackle unemployment by trying to create new jobs or by reducing the number of hours worked per week and redistributing work among more people. However, these measures can only partially address unemployment because they are not based on an understanding of its causes. At present, unemployment cannot be considered only

⁷ Silva, J. P. da. *Trabalho, cidadania e reconhecimento*. Sao Paulo: Annablume 2008.

⁸ Wright, E., *Envisioning Real Utopias*. London: Verso 2010.

an economic problem but also a cultural and social problem. At the beginning of the industrial era, people wanted machines to work for them. Therefore, they introduced mechanization and automation. The result was a success; technology has largely replaced human labour. That is why, today, we are facing high unemployment. People could be satisfied if the profits from the work of these machines were evenly distributed among them. However, the reality is different, as profits are concentrated in the hands of a narrow group within the upper class. Because job losses are not yet viewed from a cultural and social point of view, many people are not aware of the possibility of increasing freedom, and they perceive the current unemployment situation only negatively, without the possibilities of a redistribution of profits.

Recognition of care

The introduction of unconditional basic income would make it possible to appreciate the fact that machines work for us, and therefore our mechanical work is no longer needed as much. More precisely, thanks to basic income, we would be able to engage in other activities that we would rather do and in which we could find our own self-realization. We could focus on valuable work in civil society, on creative cultural and intellectual work, on spending time with our children, seniors and other loved ones and the needy, etc.

Many carers today are not paid for their work, and their work is often not even recognized as work on the labour market.⁹ As most of this care is provided by women now, basic income will help them in particular. In general, it can be seen as recognition of the work of carers. The introduction of basic

⁹ Uhde, Z. Caring Revolutionary Transformation: Combined Effects of a Universal Basic Income and a Public Model of Care. *Basic Income Studies* Vol. 13, No. 2, 2018, pp. 20170019.

income has the advantage that the work of carers, which often contains valuable emotional ties to loved ones, would be valued in this way and would not have to be largely drawn at all into the alienated labour market.¹⁰ Such recognition of the work of carers is based on an understanding of solidarity between people, that is, recognition of the fact that we are all dependent on the care of others at certain stages of life (childhood, old age and illness—some people, even for life). This is also part of the broader argument that the payment of unconditional basic income is based on mutual recognition of citizens as human beings to whom fundamental rights belong. Basic income would help improving mutual relationships among people.

Basic income is a way of socially valuing care activities (both in families and in wider communities) which are de-commodified and which the markets may provide insufficiently. Basic income can thus be considered as an indirect mechanism for achieving the ‘wage for domestic work’ which has often been a proposal among defenders of women’s rights. It is social recognition that nursing work is socially valuable and productive and therefore deserves financial reward.

Basic income should in no case be paid only to those who are involuntarily unemployed – that would discriminate against others. It would prioritize only a certain idea of life, namely that which focuses on insufficient capital (a job in this case). However, those who, for whatever reason, do not have a share in this capital (and are therefore unemployed) and, thus, leave part of it to other people, should not be deprived of their fair share in it. Both groups — both those who contribute more than their equal share to this capital and those who contribute less than their equal share — should be able to have their share of scarce resources and carry out their idea of their own life.

¹⁰ Standing, G., *Basic Income: And How We Can Make It Happen*. London: Pelican 2017.

It would contribute to recognition of various groups of people who make different kinds of valuable activities.

Transfer of power in employment

It should also be seen that, at present, the idea of introducing basic income also raises concerns for both employees and employers. Some employers fear that it will be more difficult for them to hire employees for worse or lower paid work. After the introduction of basic income, workers will have more freedom not to accept such work or to leave a job that does not suit them. However, some employees also fear that a guaranteed income could lead to employers reducing wages.

Nevertheless, most interviewed employees are already aware of the benefits of basic income. Its introduction would have a positive significance in changing the balance of power in today's capitalist societies. Under the current economic framework, the introduction of basic income would allow for a greater transfer of power to employees. In order to motivate workers, employers would have to increase wages and improve working conditions, especially for unskilled work, where wages are the lowest and working conditions the worst. This would be the required humanization of work. Some unions are already aware of this effect.

Basic income would also have profound consequences for the egalitarian-democratic transformation of society.¹¹ An employment contract could become almost voluntary as everyone would have a great, real opportunity to withdraw from it. Power relations between employees and employers could become more equal as workers could more easily set up a dispute fund in the

¹¹ Lowrey, A., *Give People Money: How a Universal Basic Income Would End Poverty, Revolutionize Work, and Remake the World*. Broadway Books 2019.

event of a conflict. In addition to individual bargaining power (i.e., the freedom of individual workers to leave work), a basic income would also increase the collective power of organized work and thus contribute to a broader social agenda: the strengthening of people's social forces. Strengthening employees with the introduction of basic income would result in a positive shift in the balance of power between social classes.

The possibility for people to form joint cooperatives could increase, where, and this should be emphasized, outside the market, they could produce goods and create services, as they would already be covered by the basic necessities of living. Basic income can be considered a subsidy to the social and cooperative economy. The problem of ensuring the basic standard of living of members can be faced by companies which are owned by their members; especially in the early stages of their establishment when their members learn how to develop organizational plans and develop production capacity. Basic income would make it much easier for members to overcome this phase. Basic income can thus be considered as a mechanism which transfers part of the social surplus from the capitalist market to the social economy sector or, in other words, from the accumulation of capital into what could be called social and cooperative accumulation, that is, the accumulation of society's capacity to empower the self-organization of its economic activity, which is focused on meeting the needs of its members and supporting cooperative activities.

Basic income would break the double separation. Even if employees would still remain separate from the means of production in some cases, they would no longer be separated from the means of subsistence (it would be provided through basic income). Thus, the decision to work for a wage becomes more voluntary. By increasing employees' ability to refuse inadequate employment, basic income generates a much more equal distribution of real freedom.

The introduction of basic income will create greater equality on the labour market. The wage structure here will begin to more systematically reflect the relative inconvenience of different types of work rather than simply responding to the relative shortage of a certain type of labour force. This, in turn, will further create incentives for employers to seek technical and organizational innovations which will replace unpleasant work. The introduction of new technologies would also save work, and it would offer a possibility of real change in ownership of the means of production.

Poverty elimination and the welfare state

The concept of unconditional basic income should not replace the provision of specific financial benefits, services and goods by the welfare state. They would complement each other.¹² Basic income would have different benefits for different people as people are able to apply this income in different ways. For example, people with disabilities need more resources than others to ensure the same quality of life. If people who take care of the disabled people today for free go to work, they would need compensation and the means to pay for it. The introduction of basic income should therefore be accompanied by the simultaneous guarantee of social security (including free medical care and free public education from pre-school to university) and by the possibility for people to also benefit from other social programmes.

Basic income significantly eliminates poverty without bearing the negatives associated with conditional types of various social benefits, which also seek to reduce poverty. These are mainly so-called poverty traps, where it is not effective for a poor person on social benefits to start working because the salary she or he

¹² Wright, E., *Envisioning Real Utopias*. London: Verso 2010.

gets for work is only slightly higher than the amount of social benefits, and, in addition, her or his costs would increase because of expenditures such as meals at work or travel to work. The basic income also does not stigmatize recipients (as opposed to conditional benefits) because everyone receives it.¹³ There is no such clear line between net recipients and contributors because many people would move back and forth over time across that line. As a result, it is less likely (if basic income has been in place for some time) for stable majority coalitions to form which would refuse redistribution.

Low-income single parents, mostly mothers, can appreciate benefits of the welfare state but they can feel stigmatized because conditional benefits do not eliminate patriarchal relations and gendered hierarchies. Basic income is helpful here. Moreover, some women can appreciate basic income because it offers the means to refuse abusive relationship and live an independent life.¹⁴

It is relevant to add that the various elements of the welfare administration should fulfil their function not only at the national level but also at the sub-national, international and supranational levels. Therefore, the redefinition of international institutions should lead to greater support for the European social model in the case of the countries of the European Union, for example.

Transnational dimensions

Of course, local, national, regional or macro-regional experiments and efforts to introduce a basic income do not solve all

¹³ Torry, M. *Money for Everyone: Why We Need a Citizen's Income*. Bristol, UK, and Chicago: Policy Press 2013.

¹⁴ Standing, G. Gender inequality in times of COVID-19 – give women cash. In: *Basic Income – On Data and Policy*. Paris: UNESCO 2021, pp. 20-21.

the problems of transnational and global capitalism. Nevertheless, a basic income is one of the essential institutions that anticipate future arrangements for social and economic justice. The methods of financing basic income – analysed below – not only allow it to be paid but also address economic and social injustices more generally beyond the boundaries of nation-states. Addressing transnational and global challenges will require linking local, national, regional, and macro-regional basic income programmes.

The green movement has long pointed out that environmental pollution is largely caused by the productivity of industrial society, which is demanding ever-increasing growth in production and consumption. Pollution should also be taxed more. However, environmental policies raise concerns related to equality. It is the reason why carbon tax and dividends are considered as one of resources of financing basic income.¹⁵ Then, the introduction of unconditional basic income can make possible that people focus on quality,¹⁶ on a less unecological consumerist way of life, which would lead to a sustainable society with better relationships not only between people but also between people and the environment. This would overcome people's cold alienation from other people and from the environment. Basic income would also allow people to have time, become more involved in the green activities of civil society and to pay attention to the environment. Because environmental degradation is a regional and global issue, it would be important to establish this green

¹⁵ Fremstad, A. Put carbon dividend at the core of post-COVID reboot. In: *Basic Income – On Data and Policy*. Paris: UNESCO 2021, pp. 24-25, including a three-part podcast: Part 1: Carbon price-and-dividend; Part 2: Carbon dividend as UBI; Part 3: Knowledge and policy.

¹⁶ Garcia-Murillo, M.A. and MacInnes, I. P. Consumption Patterns under a Universal Basic Income. *Basic Income Studies*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2021, pp. 257-298.

kind of basic income in more countries in various parts of the world which could cooperate and not exist as isolated islands.

Another transnational aspect of the introduction of basic income which needs to be clarified is migration. Introducing basic income in only one country, as one version of realizing basic income allows, could put pressure on migration, as people from other countries would also want to receive basic income. However, it would probably not be granted to them as citizens of other countries.¹⁷ Therefore, it is more appropriate to consider larger countries and macro-regional units where basic income would be introduced and integrated, ideally in a global way in the United Nations.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is also necessary to analyse local and national conditions in different localities and countries in order to address specific needs by targeted social programs there.

Financing a basic income

Enforcing overall changes to the state budget or the budget of a larger unit, the European Union, for example, so that basic income can be well financed, of course, requires proper preparation. A progressive tax, e.g., allows groups of people with high incomes (1% or 10% highest ones) to be taxed as a percentage more than those with lower incomes. However, neoliberal governments in various countries have abolished this kind of taxation and introduced a flat tax that benefits wealthy citizens, widening the income gap between the wealthy and the poor. On the contrary, a progressive tax is an instrument of solidarity and social justice in a civilized society. The

¹⁷ Howard, M. W. Basic Income and Migration Policy: A Moral Dilemma? *Basic Income Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2006.

¹⁸ Pogge, T. W. Eradicating Systemic Poverty: Brief for a global resources dividend. *Journal of Human Development*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2001, pp. 59-77.

introduction of a strong progressive tax in countries where it has not yet been applied, and its reintroduction in countries where it has been destroyed, would make it possible to obtain part or even all the financial resources needed to sustainably finance unconditional basic income.¹⁹

An important source of finance for basic income should also be the stronger tax of (mainly transnational) corporations, and the elimination of tax havens or additional taxation on greedy companies based in tax havens who want to supply goods to our market.

Another fundamental change could be the introduction of material responsibility for politicians. Today it is common for a government minister, for example, to make a decision which costs hundreds of millions or even billions, paid for by taxpayers. Sometimes though, it ‘turns out’ to be a legal mistake, and the politician does not have to pay anything. At the same time, a worker, such as a cashier in a supermarket, must pay for a mistake when goods are marked improperly.

Another measure needed is the rigorous prosecution of corruption, including so-called political transactions or the ‘sponsorship’ of political parties and politicians. Today, this legalized corruption is tolerated in many countries all over the world, and many politicians and businessmen consider this pathology to be a common part of their activities.

However, there are many other sources of basic income financing, such as an environmental tax, a Tobin tax on financial transactions (the taxation of financial speculation), or the profits of state-owned companies.

An important measure would also be to change the order of importance of expenditures in the state budget. Even while maintaining current revenues to the state budget, it would be

¹⁹ Raventos, D., *Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom*. London: Pluto Press 2007.

possible to make rational changes which would find savings, reduce unnecessary expenditure (military expenditure in times of little threat, for example) and, conversely, increase resources for unconditional basic income and similar programs such as universal basic services.²⁰

Providing basic income to all citizens would also help reduce the financial costs of bureaucratically identifying the amount of social benefits owed to selected individuals as well as eliminate the unpleasant and degrading procedures that inevitably accompany bureaucratic investigation as to whether needy people really have needs.

Gradual introduction of basic income

Basic income can be introduced in its full version immediately. Nevertheless, there are also proposals of a gradual introduction of basic income. Citizens could slowly get used to it, learn its strengths and accept it as a matter of course.

It may be at the beginning that citizens along with their governments may opt for some smaller source of basic income funding, as in Alaska. How much funding is raised each year is then divided by the number of citizens (or otherwise defined legal residents) each year, and the amount of money is sent to each citizen's bank account. Citizens can opt for the smaller sources at first, and then gradually add more as their basic income scheme proves itself. However, if they start with amounts which are too small, the main idea of a basic income to meet people's basic needs would not be achieved and citizens would get a false impression that the project has failed.

One way to introduce basic income would be to expand the circle of people who are currently entitled to so-called

²⁰ Coote, A., Percy, A. *The case for Universal Basic Services*. Cambridge: Polity Press 2020.

participatory income, which is not unconditional as it depends on carrying out a certain activity that is not subject to the market (today's students with scholarships, for example). This would be the so-called third sector, i.e. voluntary self-help cooperatives, civil society organizations, etc. Or today's contingent income, tied to a relatively rigorous income testing procedure, could be controlled less strictly.

Another option would be to pay basic income in the first period after its introduction only for a limited period of time (over a total of ten years of a person's life, for example). Every citizen would be entitled to it after reaching adult age and could always use it for at least half a year, for example, when she or he did not have a job, when children or parents need care, a break from a high pace of work (workaholism) is necessary, or there is a desire to engage in community work or some cultural activity, etc.²¹

Then, once basic income starts to be conceived of in a more demanding way in the context of other social programmes and concepts economically, socially, politically, culturally and in international and global interactions, multiplier effects and long-term trajectories need to be considered, which require different scenarios of demanding calculations.

In this case, it is not sufficient to approach the calculation of costs mechanically by only multiplying the size of the monthly basic income by the number of its recipients. The calculation must include actual costs, which are usually more complex and should reflect the factors of the above funding proposals.

²¹ Van Parijs, P., Vanderborght, Y. *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2017.

Towards a fundamental social change

To conclude, the introduction of unconditional basic income is becoming a major social innovation, similar to the abolition of slavery, the introduction of universal suffrage, or universal health care. During the several centuries of industrial capitalism's existence, an idea of labour importance has emerged which emphasizes work and the belief that independence can only be secured on the basis of an employment contract and wages. This historical idea had relevance in the past, but it partially persists despite the current economic changes in the era of robotics and automation whereby robots are replacing human labour more and more. It is becoming increasingly clear that the economy is not and will not be able to provide full-fledged paid work for all citizens as in the past. The introduction of unconditional basic income is only one of many possible minor regulations but its impact could indeed be a fundamental turning point in civilization, a significant step towards a more just and creative society than the one in which we live.

(3) The experiments in the world: All over the planet

Many experiments with basic income have been carried out in different parts of the world:²² in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe. As the European citizens' initiative for an unconditional basic income, we are involved in, is now under way in the countries of the European Union, it is worth mentioning the recent experimental efforts there, or which are probably about to take place. Where in Finland, the Netherlands, and Germany, for example, they have already carried out experiments, in Scotland and Ireland they have the intention to do so. In other countries, notably Spain, they have intensively discussed basic income and are providing new conditional social benefits.²³

There have been fruitful experiments with basic income in developing countries;²⁴ some of them form the important BRICS group. In Latin America, it is relevant to map the situation in Brazil, which is the first country in the world where the implementation of basic income is already legalized at the level of the whole country. As for other parts of the Americas, of course, in Alaska in the USA, basic income has been working successfully since the 1980s. There have been also other experiments with basic income in the USA and Canada. Encouraging experiments have taken place in African countries, such as Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, and Uganda. We are aware also of efforts and results in Asia, particularly in India,

²² Merrill R., Neves C., Laín B. *Basic Income Experiments. A Critical Examination of Their Goals, Contexts, and Methods*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan 2021.

²³ La renta básica deja de ser una utopía. El País 6 Abr 2020; Gómez, M., La Autoridad Fiscal propone una renta mínima estatal contra la pobreza que beneficiaría a 1,8 millones de hogares. El País 26 June 2020.

²⁴ Banerjee, A., Niehaus, P., Suri, T. *Universal Basic Income in the Developing World*. NBER Working Paper Series. Working Paper 25598. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, February 2019.

Iran, and Macao. And there are also other fruitful experiments and pilots elsewhere in the world.

At the global level, the pandemic has created dangerous conditions, under which the most ambitious proposals to introduce basic income have been published in the United Nations, in order to satisfy the basic needs of the almost three billion poor and near-poor in many parts of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia, etc.

These experiments and pilots all over the world have brought about information, knowledge and inspiration, but also various problems and open questions which await answers in order for basic income to be implemented permanently. We wish to explain all of this in this part of the book.

EUROPE

The Netherlands: urban and district experiments

In the Netherlands, pilot projects for a partial basic income have been taking place in and around the following cities: Tilburg, Groningen, Deventer, Nijmegen, Wageningen, Apeldoorn, Oss and Epe.²⁵ The experiments are based on 2015 legislation, which allowed local authorities to experiment with social policies. However, they are limited to social security applicants and provided only to randomly selected individuals, and not to the whole community.

The underlying idea was to relax the existing, conditional rules for the payment of social benefits.²⁶ These were designed to reflect a mistrust of clients, while the ideas underlying the pilot experiments build on the premise that building trust between the state and citizens is likely to be more effective in integrating and involving citizens in society. The experiments are also designed to improve the motivation and ability of citizens to take responsibility for themselves (personal autonomy).

The pilot projects are based on recent findings of a relatively young science, the so-called behavioural economics. This shows the impact of poverty on people's minds: that (financial) scarcity and poverty reduce people's cognitive abilities. If financial scarcity and regulatory compliance activities consume a large

²⁵ McFarland, K., The Netherlands: Social Assistance Experiments Under Review. Basic Income Earth Network, 9 May 2017 (<https://basicincome.org/news/2017/05/netherlands-social-assistance-experiments-review/>, retrieved: 11 April 2020).

²⁶ Groot, L.; Muffels, R.; Verlaat, T., Welfare States' Social Investment Strategies and the Emergence of Dutch Experiments on a Minimum Income Guarantee. *Social Policy and Society*, Volume 18, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 277-287.

part of an applicant's cognitive capacity, they have little left for other important and cognitively demanding tasks, such as finding a job.

Furthermore, new research in the field of behavioural economics, for example, shows us how important role implicit values, such as reciprocity and trust, play in society in people's intersubjective relationships. These are also the basis for the functioning of the institutions of a welfare state. Reciprocity means that individuals reward helpfulness (positive reciprocity) or take revenge if they are harmed (negative reciprocity). Negative incentives, such as sanctions, need not be the best way to induce cooperative behaviour. Experimental economics has also shown that people tend to be more motivated in their trust and put more effort into their task, in order to reward those who have shown trust in them. Proven trust thus evokes feelings of positive reciprocity, mutual recognition between people and thus permanently higher efforts and increased productivity. At the same time, it also evokes in people feelings of „self-sufficiency“, with significant effects on job search and its long-term sustainability.

In addition, behavioural economics within the theory of psychological motivation shows us that external motivations can displace internal motivation. Internally motivated people are involved in activities because it is pleasant and interesting for them; their activities are also more effective, persistent and at the same time generate a sense of satisfaction. Research also shows that it is not control but internal motivation that greatly strengthens the possibility of choice, decision-making.

These pilot experiments show a shift in welfare state policy to give people more personal autonomy, to create an environment of mutual trust and to enable them to participate in society through the provision of opportunities and free choice. In this context, terms such as „social contribution“ or „inclusive welfare state“ are used for a welfare state that is proactive and

„enabling“. The aim of such a social policy is to build trust and give people free choice, instead of social policy treating people primarily with mistrust, strict supervision and sanctions. Findings from behavioural economics - the theory of psychological motivation and the role of social values in creating an environment of trust within society - suggest that investing in personal autonomy, trust and internal motivation could pay off in terms of people's work performance, health and a subjective feeling of satisfaction.

The organizers of these Dutch social experiments did not use the term „basic income“ (in Dutch: „baseinkomen“) and called the experiment „Weten Wat Werkt“ (Knowing what works). It was probably appropriate not to use the term „basic income“ for these experiments, as not all the criteria for fully unconditional basic income were met. First, these experiments are not universal, as their participants are selected from among existing social support beneficiaries, as in the case of the Finnish experiment, and similarly aim to test the effect of easing social benefit conditions on the participation of the unemployed in the labour market. Also, a certain level of conditionality was still maintained. The participants were asked what resources their households have at their disposal. For participants, the amounts paid also decreased if people found paid work during the experiment, although they decreased less than in the current social system.

Despite these differences, the Dutch experiments can be considered a gradual step towards a full-fledged basic income.

Finland: the path to greater trust in other people and in institutions

On 1 January 2017, Finland launched a sophisticated experiment on the introduction of a basic income.²⁷ Two thousand long-term unemployed people aged from 25 to 58, who were recipients of means-tested funds at the time, were randomly selected. For two years, they were paid € 560 a month, regardless of who they lived with, how much they earned or whether they were actively looking for work. A new government wanted to end the experiment and disrupted its implementation, but in the end it continued in a distorted form until the originally proposed date of 31 December 2018. One of the key questions on which the experiment focused was whether the unconditionality of the amount paid strengthened or, conversely, suppressed the participation of its recipients in the labour market. The question was: Will the beneficiaries become involved in the labour market because they will not lose the amount paid, or will their involvement be reduced because they are no longer forced to look for work?

In the first year of the experiment, the difference in the number of working days (i.e. when a beneficiary earned at least EUR 23 per day either as wages or in self-employment) for the members of the test group was slightly positive compared to the control group. However, the experiment was then disrupted by a significant reform of social policy, which came into force exactly at the beginning of the second year of the experiment. On 1 January 2018, the Finnish government introduced the so-called „activation model“, a general reform of conditional benefit testing systems, tightening the criteria for their payment:

²⁷ Van Parijs, P., Basic income: Finland Final Verdict. Social Europe, 7 May 2020 (<https://www.socialeurope.eu/basic-income-positive-results-from-finland>, retrieved: 7 May 2020).

if beneficiaries of conditional benefits did not work a given number of hours over the quarter or failed to attend a reskilling programme, their benefit was reduced by about 5 percent.

This reform, which has now been repealed, applied throughout the second year of the experiment and affected approximately two-thirds of the members of the control group. It also affected just under half of the members of the experimental group, as these could claim, in addition to their basic income, child allowances ranging from € 150 to € 300 per month depending on the number of dependent children, and were also entitled to housing benefits of € 600 per month or more, according to their place of residence.

In this second year of the experiment, employment increased in both groups. Whether this was due to the „activation model“ cannot be said, as no experiment was performed on this. However, the reform should have a greater effect on the members of the control group than on the basic income beneficiaries, since the tightening of the conditions for obtaining benefits affected more people in the control group. The implementation of the „activation model“ should, given the stronger effect on the control group, eliminate the small advantage in the participation in the labour market that the basic income beneficiaries had during the first year. However, this did not happen, on the contrary, the difference widened and became statistically significant: in the second year of the experiment, the basic income beneficiaries worked on average 6 days more than the participants in the control group. It can therefore be concluded that in the absence of reform, the difference would be even greater.

The experiment did not show a significant impact on employment. One limit was *inter alia* the fact that the experiment did not include people in the sample who were working at the time and who could reduce their working hours or take a break from work thanks to their basic income. The experiment also did not

examine the impact of the introduction of basic income on tax receipts. However, in the given experiment, in addition to the impact of the introduction of basic income on labour supply, we should also be interested in its effect on people's health, skills and motivation due to a smoother lifelong transition between different jobs, education and volunteering.

One notable result concerned recent immigrants in the basic income group, who worked an average of 13 days longer than immigrants in the control group, while the difference for the others was only 3.6 days. It is also interesting to note that the positive effect of basic income on employment was smaller in Helsinki (by 1.8 working days) than in rural areas (by 7.8 days), where housing benefits are lower and people are less likely to get into situations where it is not worthwhile for them to work. In contrast, despite the availability of child benefits, basic income had a higher positive impact on employment for families with children (13.7 days more) and single parents (9.5 days) than in childless households (1.6 more days).

Also very interesting is a survey of subjective perception which was conducted with the members of the experimental and control groups after the end of the experiment, using in-depth interviews. A statistically significant difference in favour of basic income beneficiaries was found in the fact that respondents answered that they felt subjectively better in terms of health and stress, and that they showed greater confidence in other people and institutions.

Ireland: the green heritage of the pandemic era

Unconditional basic income has been seriously discussed in Ireland for at least a decade in academia and the media, especially given the experience of experiments carried out abroad. Moreover, right after the start of the pandemic in 2020, the deterioration in the social situation of many people provided significantly greater support for citizens and politicians to introduce alternative economic and social approaches than in the past, also in Ireland. This has also aroused renewed interest in unconditional basic income, which is one of these alternatives. The other new motive for politicians' considering the introduction of basic income in Ireland has been the initiative of European citizens for unconditional basic income, which began in September 2020. Therefore, it can be said that these motives are external: the foreign experience of experimenting with basic income, the social consequences of a pandemic that came to Ireland from abroad, and the European initiative for basic income, even if the initiative is also an internal or domestic factor at the same time because it is co-organized by citizens in Ireland. In addition, environmental problems and automation, which are depriving many workers of employment, are considered as both external and internal reasons as well.²⁸

In Ireland, the main argument is that every citizen should be entitled to basic income without meeting any conditions, so that the social system can better meet the needs of socially disadvantaged groups. Every citizen should receive a basic income that would provide him with the means of life, while he or she may also receive additional income from employment, being in business and the like.

²⁸ See the website on basic income research in Ireland: Basic Income Ireland. <https://basicincome.ie/research/>

In June 2020, the incoming government in Ireland pledged to carry out a pilot experiment with unconditional basic income over its five-year term (until 2025), which it calls „universal basic income“. The political parties of the electoral coalition of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the Green Party have presented the government’s programme, which they are gradually promoting. On page 75 of the programme there is a section entitled „Measures against Poverty and Social Inclusion“, which states, *inter alia*, that the governing coalition will call on the „the Low Pay Commission to examine Universal Basic Income, informed by a review of previous international pilots, and resulting in a universal basic income pilot in the lifetime of the government.“²⁹

The initiator of this project is the Green Party, which had it in its election manifesto. It promised voters that it would launch a pilot project similar to what had already been implemented in other countries. It pledged to work for a „gradual reform of the tax and welfare system,“ and that basic income „represents a significant realignment of our current economic commitments.“³⁰ At the same time, of course, in the background to the proposal are its efforts for environmental policy, which, according to the Green Party, can be supported by basic income. Basic income will give citizens more space to address the important issues of our time, especially to resolving the environmental crisis. However, it is not yet fully clear what the reform of the tax and social system should look like.

Fianna Fáil stated in its manifesto that it would address the project, while Fine Gael did not mention it in its manifesto, but agrees with the implementation of a pilot project. The

²⁹ Universal basic income: Next government commits to a pilot programme to trial it. thejournal.ie 16 June 2020 (https://www.thejournal.ie/universal-basic-income-5123985-Jun2020/?fbclid=IwAR2DlwD F8jnEXI5S_YIXS_u6HZnlnWIDJooUPbJaho2jhWEKcyV2oqJr-Tc, retrieved: 16 June 2020).

³⁰ Ibid.

government has resolved to launch a pilot project. We will see how the Irish Green Party, which is committed to meeting the interests and values of citizens to the centre and left of the political spectrum, will stand up with its basic income project to its coalition partners, who do not have strong social and green interests and values. However, the pandemic has become a new motif in favour of basic income for these politicians and political parties as well.

It is not only Irish politicians who have become more willing to discuss and implement social programmes during the pandemic to support citizens who have found themselves in a worse social situation due to the consequences of the coronavirus. In some cases, this is an expression of the efforts of politicians to genuinely satisfy the needs and interests of citizens, but in other cases it is merely a pragmatic concession from politicians who fear that they would otherwise lose their voters' electoral preferences. In any case, in this situation, it is possible to promote fairer alternatives to the current arrangements in Ireland and to try to introduce basic income. The current Irish Finance Minister has said that the introduction of a universal basic income pilot programme in Ireland would be one positive legacy of the pandemic.

Germany: the beginnings of a major federal experiment?

Unconditional basic income as a certain financial benefit to improve the quality of life is one of the most discussed sociological topics at present. Therefore, it is not surprising that one of our neighbouring countries is also putting unconditional basic income into practice. We are talking about the Federal Republic of Germany, where a project was launched in August 2020, on whose basis 122 people will be paid a monthly annuity of 1,200 euros (about 31,800 crowns) for three years.

None of the governments of the Federal Republic directly supports the idea of basic income or has it mentioned in any declaration. Thus, unlike in other countries, this project is privately funded and is a study intended to show progress in social security through unconditional basic income.

Researchers from the Mein Grundeinkommen (DIW Institute of Economics), the University of Cologne and the Max Planck Institute have selected 1,500 inhabitants for their experiment, whom they will monitor for three years, but with only over 122 of them receiving an unconditional income. These are being included in the experiment throughout Germany, as a diverse cross-section of the whole of society. The financial subsidy will be received by people with and without work, educated and manual workers, with all age groups are also being represented. However, more people may receive the financial benefit over the duration of the project, as the experiment obtains more money from sponsors.³¹

A similar project was launched in Germany six years ago. At that time, some 668 people were selected, who received 1000

³¹ Highlights. Das haben wir bisher erreicht (<https://www.mein-grundeinkommen.de/verein/highlights>, retrieved: 21 December 2020).

euros each month. The experiment yielded positive results because the selected individuals began to live healthier lives, had time for their hobbies, were in education, and even developed an increased social sense. No idleness or laziness of any sort was observed. At that time, the project was led only by the Mein Grundeinkommen association, and thanks to its success, two important German institutions joined it.³²

Experts are scientifically trying to prove what is „the subject of passionate debate in anarchist circles“ in Europe, namely, that with increasing globalization and digitization comes another way of redistributing funds to ensure sufficient prosperity for all, as well as broadening public debate in order to increase and improve awareness of unconditional basic income. It should be noted that this German experiment differs from those taking place in Africa or, more recently, in Finland, as Finnish basic income was given only to the unemployed and the African projects are mostly designed to generate self-employment, to provide people with basic living needs.

Similarly the opinion debate on unconditional basic income in scientific circles is different, so there is no unanimity across the general German public in this opinion debate. In the most recent survey conducted in the autumn of 2019, 48% of the adult population supported unconditional basic income. In eastern Germany it was 58%, in western Germany 46% of the adult population. Here agreement with the introduction of a basic income is often associated with younger students, with a high level of education, as well as a low income and more politically more left-wing attitudes.³³

³² Germany is set to trial a Universal Basic Income scheme (<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/germany-universal-basic-income-trial-citizens/>, retrieved: 4 January 2021).

³³ Schupp, J. Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen: viel Zustimmung, aber auch große Ablehnung. Wirtschaftsdienst, 2020, vol. 100, pp. 112–116.

We can observe the efforts of Mein Grundeinkommen to introduce unconditional basic income in Germany over the long run. More and more institutions are gradually joining this effort, not to mention sponsors who see great potential in basic income. Although the German government does not directly support this idea of unconditional benefit, universal basic income is finding more and more supporters and it is thus possible to expand the individual projects.

Scotland: basic income as a social component of Scexit

In 2017, the Scottish Government experimentally proposed an annual unconditional basic income for each adult citizen in several areas of Scotland of £ 5,200.³⁴ It has set aside £ 250,000 for this pilot project. The territorial specification of this project was addressed to the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and to the districts of Fife and North Ayrshire. Although this project gained the support of all the main political parties in Scotland (SNP, Labour Party, Green Party, Conservative Party), these have mostly viewed it only as a different way of financing the existing welfare system. It was intended to mean a redefinition of the social security system and changes to the tax system, and not an extension of the existing welfare system.

Scotland is another country where the introduction of unconditional basic income has become promising. Scotland, unlike the rest of the UK, is known for its more developed welfare state, which funds greater social services and tuition fees for university students, for example, while elsewhere in Britain students have to pay these. Interest in unconditional basic income is not only a topical issue in Scotland but has already been discussed in academia and practice.

Another wave of interest in basic income came after the Brexit referendum, since most Scots voted against it, while England voted for Brexit. This further split the socially oriented Scots away from the central British government in England. Another round of discussions came three years later in 2020. The chaos and loss of human health and life caused by the central British Conservative government during the pandemic sparked

³⁴ See for example: Brooks, L. Scotland united in curiosity as councils trial universal basic income. *The Guardian*, 25 December 2017 (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/25/scotland-universal-basic-income-councils-pilot-scheme>, retrieved: 9 December 2020).

a wave of resistance in Scotland and interest in strengthening the welfare state in a difficult economic and social situation. In this situation, discussions about unconditional basic income began between politicians and political parties, in the media and, of course, also in academia. Scottish First Minister Nikola Sturgeon stated her positive attitude in June 2020: „My position on that has gone from having a keen interest in exploring it to what I now describe as active support for it.“³⁵

A Committee for a Feasibility Study on Unconditional Basic Income has elaborated an analysis that seeks to better understand basic income given its potential impact on poverty, unemployment, health and the financial situation of beneficiaries. Above all, according to the study, poverty and bureaucracy would be reduced. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife and North Ayrshire city councils have been examining this study and submitting it to the Scottish Government. The pilot study should be carried out for a period of three years. The amount of income has not yet been decided, but it should at least cover basic living needs. The Feasibility Study envisages two variants. The former would cover current conditional social benefits, while the latter with a higher value would make it possible to eliminate or at least reduce poverty.

Scottish Community Minister Aileen Campbell approached the UK Minister to discuss the matter so that a pilot unconditional basic income could be introduced. She stated: „The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the shortcomings of the UK social security system and strengthened the calls to further explore how a universal basic income could provide support to people and reduce poverty.“³⁶ At the same time, First Minister

³⁵ Citizen's basic income: Pilot scheme 'challenging but desirable'. BBC News 11 June 2020. (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland52997031?fbclid=IwAR1kKoKkrpbL1kzYQewgEgFs3_SYYGfTZDcdxSxv3-xgFOaHzoAECeMtkpQ, retrieved: 9 December 2020). See also the „Basic Income in Scotland“ website: <https://basicincome.scot/>

³⁶ Citizen's basic income: Pilot scheme 'challenging but

Sturgeon pointed out that, unfortunately, for legal reasons, the Scottish Government could not introduce this income itself, although it would like to do so. Evidently, therefore, Scottish basic income advocates and the Scottish Government are facing various negotiations with the central Conservative government, which is not in favour of social experiments. The disagreement between the British and Scottish governments over basic income adds another impetus to Scotland's independence from Great Britain, which, after Brexit, is facing a crisis of legitimacy. We may recall that the majority of Scottish citizens voted against Brexit in the referendum. The irresponsible internal party power struggles in the Conservative Party that resulted in the Brexit vote have the consequences of the Conservatives tearing Scotland away from the European Union against the will of its citizens. With First Minister Sturgeon winning the election and her party winning a majority in the Scottish Parliament in 2021, she said nothing stands in the way of a new referendum and a decision by Scottish citizens to leave the United Kingdom and probably join the European Union on their own.

The Scots' interest in introducing an unconditional basic income is also symbolically confirmed by their organization of the annual World Congress on Basic Income in 2021, even if during the pandemic only as an online congress organized from Scotland. It should be added that the Congress, originally scheduled for September 2020 in Brisbane, Australia, was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic and postponed to 2022.³⁷ This has provided Australia with several years of additional motivation for discussions on basic income and efforts to introduce it.

desirable'. BBC News 11 June 2020. (https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-52997031?fbclid=IwAR1kKoKkrpL1kzYQewgEgFs3_SYYGfTZDcdxSxv3-xgFOaHzoAECEMtkpQ, retrieved: 9 December 2020).

³⁷ BIEN: Basic Income Earth Network <https://basicincome.org/>.

THE AMERICAS

Brazil: extension of the bolsa familia social agenda

If we look at efforts to introduce unconditional basic income around the world, the case of Brazil is undoubtedly worth noting. In the case of Brazil, we can explain that, concerning unconditional basic income, there are primarily not just two, but three basic types of social income. First, there is unconditional basic income itself, which meets all the defining criteria imposed on it. Secondly, there are conditional social benefits, which politicians sometimes only call unconditional basic income, universal basic income, or simply basic income for short, to give voters the impression that they are introducing the popular basic income. In reality, however, these are only conditional social benefits. Thirdly, there is a certain intermediate stage, which however has greater ambitions than the conditional social benefits. This intermediate stage seeks fundamental structural changes over time. It is a conditional social benefit, but it is conceived systemically as a step towards the introduction of this benefit in an unconditional way by gradually extending it over the years to an ever-increasing circle of beneficiaries, until it includes all citizens or residents. This gradual implementation of basic income (Renda Básica) is mentioned at the outset to make it clear that this is a different, more ambitious concept.

In the case of Brazil, economist Eduardo Suplicy, one of the most popular politicians in Brazil, has played a key role in implementing this third concept. He first held various political positions in Sao Paulo, then became a Brazilian senator (1991-2015), and is currently back in Sao Paulo politics, specifically as a vereador (councillor) as well as lecturing on economics at the university there. Suplicy has been addressing

basic income for a long time;³⁸ he proposed its enactment in the early 1990 s. In 2001, he proposed it as part of the social-democratic political party Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), which he co-founded. The Basic Income Act was approved by the Senate in 2002 and by the Chamber of Deputies in 2003. President Lula (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) signed it off in 2004, making Brazil the first country in the world to approve the introduction of a basic income throughout its territory. However, as already mentioned, this is a programme gradually implementing this law. At the same time, the Bolsa familia (Family package) law was introduced, which specifies to whom this type of income is to be allocated. The Bolsa familia became a central element of the Lula government's social programmes, which sought to provide major help to the poor and other low-income groups.

The Bolsa familia is one of the largest social programmes in the world. At the time of its most widespread implementation in 2016, it was received by 55 million people out of the more than 200 million citizens of Brazil.³⁹ It is a social benefit that helps to raise the living standards of the poor and other low-income beneficiaries. It was provided to individuals and entire families with an income per family member of a maximum of 70 Brazilian reals (R\$) a month, which was USD 35 in 2011, or USD 21 in 2017. Although not a large sum, it is significant for poor Brazilian individuals and families. Comparatively speaking, the average monthly income in 2011 there was R\$ 783 (390 USD); in 2017 it was R\$ 937 (282 USD). In 2017, individuals with less than or up to R\$ 85 (USD 25.6) per month were eligible for the Bolsa familia.

³⁸ Suplicy, E., *Renda Básica de Cidadania: a resposta dada pelo vento*. L & PM: Porto Alegre, 2002.

³⁹ Pinzani, A., Rego, L., *Money, Autonomy and Citizenship: The Experience of the Brazilian Bolsa Família*. Cham: Springer 2020.

The basic amount of the Bolsa familia in 2017 was R\$ 85 (USD 25.6). If the beneficiaries have children under the age of 17, they were entitled to amounts ranging between R\$ 85 and R\$ 170 (USD 51.2). The amounts are then even more precisely specified according to the age and number of children, and a further specification was introduced for pregnant women and children under 6 months. Each family is entitled to a maximum of five Bolsa familia social benefits.

However, after years of the government of President Lula and his successor, President Dilma Rousseff, there was a constitutional coup in 2016 and the new neoliberal President Michel Temer began to cut social spending. Although Temer did not dare to significantly restrict the very popular Bolsa familia programme, it underwent a partial reduction. According to the Brazilian Ministry of Regional Development, fewer than 14 million families received Bolsa familia in 2017, approximately 44 million people. Thus, 11 million people lost this type of income as a result of the asocial Temer government and the subsequent neoliberal Bolsonaro government. In addition, dozens of other social programmes have been cancelled, again leading to an increase in poverty in Brazil, in some cases to hunger and thirst in places where sources of drinking water have not been provided.

According to the 2018 data, 25.3 million people lived in poverty, which was greatly exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Brazil has long been the second most affected country in the world in terms of the number of people infected as a result of the pandemic. As at the end of April 2021, it is in third place behind the United States and India, with a total of over 14 million infected and more than 400,000 dead. Bolsonaro's asocial policy has had fatal consequences for Brazilians.

The Bolsonaro government gradually exacerbated the situation that during the coronavirus pandemic the situation of large numbers of the poor deteriorated so much that the

government was forced to introduce a special social benefit under pressure from mass protests in order to protect the very existence of the government. In April 2020, an exceptional social protection measure was introduced into law (medidas excepcionais de proteção social), which is a social benefit of the continuous provision of services (benefício de prestação continuada = BPC) in a state of health emergency during the coronavirus pandemic.⁴⁰ This benefit is also called „emergency basic income“ (renda básica emergencial). The benefit is R\$ 600 (USD 115 in 2020) per month for citizens over the age of 18 who do not receive social benefits other than the Bolsa familia. At the same time, a condition for providing the benefit is that the person has „monthly family income per capita of no more than half of the minimum wage of R\$522.5 (USD 100), or a total monthly family income up to three minimum wages R\$ 3,135 (USD 608), and has not earned income in excess of the income tax exemption in fiscal year 2018.“⁴¹ The government originally expected the benefit to be paid out to approximately 54 million people, but 107 million applied for it. The benefit was approved for 59 million people, the others were rejected.

However, President Bolsonaro, who has criticized the benefit, tried to halve it and end it earlier than some members of his government and the social mobilization of citizens, who instead sought to preserve it. In the situation of the pandemic, where social and political conflict between many citizens and the government is escalating in Brazil, the government was considering extending the Bolsa familia to more people, or even to

⁴⁰ Lei N^o 13.982, de 2 de Abril de 2020 (http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2020/lei/13982.htm, retrieved: 2 May 2020).

⁴¹ Santos Rocha, T., Brazilian Emergency Workers Aid: the short-term response that exposes a structural problem. BIEN 18 June, 2020. (<https://basicincome.org/news/2020/06/brazilian-emergency-workers-aid-the-short-term-response-that-exposes-a-structural-problem/>, retrieved: 18 June 2020).

the entire population, thus introducing an unconditional basic income. However, it was not done.

Nevertheless, there is the important local programme *Renda Básica de Cidadania* (Citizens' Basic Income) in the city of Maricá in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Originally, in 2013, the city introduced its own local digital currency called mumbuca and also a law which established a Renda Mínima Mumbuca (Mumbuca Minimum Income) of 85 mumbucas per month paid to 14,000 poor households from 2014. In 2015, another income was initiated, the Renda Básica (Basic Income), supplementing the Renda Mínima Mumbuca by 10 mumbucas. In 2017, the financial amount was increased: a total for both the programmes of 130 mumbucas (approximately USD 26, PPP USD 58). In 2019, Renda Mínima was integrated into Renda Básica de Cidadania (Citizens' Basic Income), and the sum of 130 mumbucas was converted into an income per individual (not per household). Then, at the end of 2019, the programme was extended, and now includes 42 000 persons. There are around 160 000 inhabitants in Maricá. Thus, every one of the four residents receives this kind of income. The condition for a recipient is to live there „for at least three years and belong to a household earning less than three times Brazil's minimum monthly income of R\$ 1045 per month (approximately USD 205).“ During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Citizens' Basic Income was increased temporarily to the equivalent of 300 reais (USD 58 per person, PPP USD 130).⁴²

⁴² Fact Sheet: Maricá Basic Income. The Jain Family Institute and The Universidade Federal Fluminense, July 2020 (<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f03b142d0412e25521412d8/t/5f2c188256203f7f04feb6dc/1596725379404/Marica+Basic+Income+Fact+Sheet.pdf>, retrieved: 22 December 2021); Glüsing, J. A City in Brazil Experiments with the Unconditional Basic Income. Spiegel International, 20. 5. 2021 (<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/socialist-utopia-a-city-in-brazil-experiments-with-the-unconditional-basic-income-a->

Therefore, this kind of Renda Básica is not universal and unconditional but it makes a difference for individual persons and households due to the fact that the poverty line per capita is 178 reais (USD 33) per month. Moreover, because the digital currency can be used only in Maricá, it significantly helps the local economy there. It has a multiplicative effect. This income programme was introduced by Washington Quaquá, a social scientist, who was mayor of Maricá from 2009 to 2017. As a senior member of the above-mentioned Partido dos Trabalhadores, he is also close to ex-President Lula. He is inspired by the northern European model of a welfare state and by China's economic model with a long-term strategic programme and support for innovative start-ups. He plans to invest in long-term funds which can be filled by revenues from the license fees from Petrobras, the partially state-owned oil firm, operating oil fields nearby Maricá. Oil fields have been an important revenue source for the city, and Mr. Quaquá's strategic plan aims to allowing continuation of the Renda Básica de Cidadania programme when this revenue source dries up in a few decades. This social programme is currently the most significant experiment with basic income in Latin America.

At the same time, activities by social and civic movements and groups have been taking place in various places of Brazil and also striving to introduce a basic income. *The basic income we want* campaign is organized by many citizens and 270 socially-oriented organizations and networks.⁴³ The campaign prepared documents that demand a socially stronger version of social welfare than the one proposed by the government during the

f93a5a89-2412-4d5a-b614-8cb9854eb030, retrieved: 22 December 2021); Prefeitura de Maricá. Renda Básica da Cidadania (<https://www.marica.rj.gov.br/tag/renda-basica-da-cidadania/>, retrieved: 20 December 2021).

⁴³ Renda básica que queremos (<https://www.rendabasica.org.br/>, retrieved: 10 December 2020)

pandemic. It called on politicians to address these documents and introduce a basic income that is commensurate with social justice and civil rights, without limiting the social protection programmes already in place. It is clear that social and political polarization is a motivating factor for the government when considering the introduction of basic income. Unfortunately, rational arguments have not been enough but social and other conflicts are also necessary, as in the past.

Alaska: the first state with a permanent basic income

Alaska is just one of the states of the USA, but since it is the first state in the world where unconditional basic income was permanently introduced and has operated successfully for decades, it is worth dealing with this case separately.

Because the people of Alaska were interested in basic income, they opened up new sources of funding to fund it. During the 1970 s, oil production began in Alaska and the state enjoyed a new influx of income. However, after lawmakers quickly spent nearly \$ 900 million, residents became concerned that a strong dependence on oil revenues during the boom could lead to an undesirable budget deficit in times of declining production.⁴⁴ In response, a Permanent Fund was set up to ensure that current revenues were partly retained for the future and that the spending of these by civil servants was reduced.

Money from the fund is also invested in a diversified manner in public and private assets to generate long-term returns without possible major risks. Revenues from oil production also decreased from 12.2 percent in 1982 to 0.6 percent in 2016 as a share of the fund's total value. For these reasons, the value of dividend payments for a given year is largely independent of the local Alaskan economy and oil production revenues.

The year 1982 is significant in terms of basic income. Since 1982, part of the fund's income has been distributed to Alaskans in the form of an unconditional basic income, which is referred to there as a dividend. The dividend is approximately 10 percent of the average income from the Fund over the last 5 years and

⁴⁴ See, for example: Jones, D., Marinescu, I. The Labor Market Impacts of Universal and Permanent Cash Transfers: Evidence from the Alaska Permanent Fund. *Electronic Journal*. SSRN 10.2139/ssrn.3118343. 2018. (https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3118343, retrieved: 10 November 2020).

is received once a year in the same amount by each resident (including children). Its amount varies depending on the stock market and other factors. The value of the dividend was only 331 USD in 1984, but from 1996 it has exceeded 1,000 USD, and in 2015 reached 2,072 USD.

The Permanent Fund's financial benefit is paid to all Alaskans who have lived there for an entire calendar year and intend to remain in Alaska indefinitely. The calendar year is calculated from 1 January to 31 December, which means that if residence began on 2 January, the calendar year would only run from the following January. However, a natural person is not entitled to basic income for a given dividend year if he/she has lived outside Alaska for more than 180 days or if he/she has been convicted of specified crimes. However, there are exceptions, so-called allowable absence, such as military service, treatment, care for elderly parents, etc.

A representative survey conducted in Alaska in March and April 2017 showed that the dividend is very popular with Alaskans. For example, 40 percent of respondents said the dividend had had a significant impact on their lives over the past five years, while only 20 percent said they felt no impact. Respondents were also asked how basic income affects their willingness to work. 55 percent see no effect, 21 percent see a positive effect, and 16 percent report a negative effect.

A 2018 study found that the dividend had no effect on employment and increased part-time work by 17 percent. The authors of the study also stated that their results suggest that universal and permanent cash transfers do not significantly reduce overall employment. Furthermore, a 2019 study found that the fears of some people of an increase in crime after the introduction of basic income due to the purchase of problematic items are unfounded.

The introduction of unconditional basic income in Alaska has shown that this is a successful project and that the people of Alaska want it to continue. No Alaska politician is proposing to repeal or limit it, as they would likely lose the favour of the Alaskan people.

Canada: student support and health improvement

Mincome was a Canadian pilot experiment with an unconditional basic income named guaranteed annual income, which took place in the province of Manitoba in the 1970 s.⁴⁵ The project was co-financed 25 percent by the provincial government in Manitoba and 75 percent by the Canadian federal government under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his New Democratic Party. The project lasted four years from 1974 until 1979, when a new Conservative government came to power. The purpose of the experiment was primarily to assess the social impact of basic income, including whether its recipient would be discouraged from looking for work, and if so, to what extent.⁴⁶

Families from Winnipeg and adjacent rural areas of Manitoba, whose annual income was below a certain threshold, were randomly selected for the experimental sample; for example, if it was a family of four, it must have been under C\$ 13,000. These families were further divided into three groups, which differed according to the amount of basic annual income they received, which in turn differed according to the size of the family. The amount was set at C\$ 3,800, C\$ 4,800 and C\$ 5,800 per year for a family of four. Each of these groups was then divided into three further subgroups according to the marginal tax rate,

⁴⁵ Hum, D., Simpson, W., A Guaranteed Annual Income? From Mincome to the Millenium. *Options*, 1 January 2001. A guaranteed annual income? From mincome to millennium (irpp.org).

⁴⁶ Forget, E. Reconsidering a Guaranteed Annual Income: lessons from MINCOME. *Public Sector Digest*. pp. 18-23, 2015; Forget, E. The Town with No Poverty: The Health Effects of a Canadian Guaranteed Annual Income Field Experiment. *Canadian Public Policy*. 37. pp. 283- 305, 2011; Cox, D. Canada's forgotten universal basic income experiment. *www.bbc.com*. 24 June 2020. (<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200624-canadas-forgotten-universal-basic-income-experiment>, retrieved: 10 November 2020).

which was 35, 50 and 75 percent. The most generous variant (C\$ 5,800 and 35 percent) and the least generous (C\$ 3,800 and 75 percent) were not tested.

Furthermore, the experiment was carried out in the city of Dauphin, which had a population of about 10,000, so it was large enough to generate enough data to draw relevant conclusions, but was not so large as to make the research too expensive. This research was unique worldwide in that the researchers spoke in person to each family and were offered that if their income, for whatever reason, fell below a certain threshold, which was C\$ 13,000 for a family of four (C\$ 64,000 inflation-adjusted today) they were entitled to a guaranteed basic income, the value of which in turn depended on the size of the family. The marginal tax rate was 50 percent. During the experiment, almost one-fifth of the city's population received a basic income.

Families who were previously on social support stated that they did not see any noticeable difference in their standard of living after the introduction of the guaranteed income, but for people who were not entitled to social support under the traditional system – especially the elderly, the working poor or men living alone of productive age – a guaranteed income meant a significant increase in income.

The pilot project showed that there was only a small reduction in the number of hours worked. Only two smaller groups of the population had a relevant reduction in hours worked, but for good reasons, which improved the living standards of basic income beneficiaries. On the one hand, there were some married women who extended their maternity leave thanks to guaranteed income. Then there were some young single men who used the guaranteed income to complete their education, which they had previously interrupted or terminated due to work.

Basic income had a positive effect in increasing the number of adolescents who completed secondary school. Boys often

dropped out of school at the age of 16 and looked for work on farms or factories. However, during the four years of the experiment, the probability of graduating from school increased significantly. In 1976, 100% of secondary school students enrolled in the final year. Very often these students were the first in their family ever to finish secondary school. The reason is that when guaranteed income was introduced, families decided that they could support their sons at school for a little longer. According to the researchers, this is in some respects the most impressive result of the experiment, because here we can see an investment in the development of the populace.

Another very positive result was that there was a significant improvement in the health of those involved in the project. There was an 8.5% decrease in hospitalizations in the community, mainly due to fewer traffic accidents or work injuries, often related to alcohol, and also due to mental health problems.

Evelyn Forget, a Canadian economist specializing in health economics who analysed the results of the experiments, believes that this was a direct result of the greater life security which a basic income provided. According to her, the results are very significant and point to a strong relationship between a reduction in poverty and improved health, since a decline of 8.5% over four years is relatively significant.

Joy Taylor, who was 18 at the time the experiment began and was just married, says people had far fewer financial worries during the experiment, which improved their mental state. Her husband was suddenly able to get a loan to open a small business, and in general, banks were more willing to lend money to found small businesses, start-ups, because payments were guaranteed. Other families remember that some things were suddenly more affordable. For one of the participants, who was 10 years old at the time of the start of the experiment, the introduction of a guaranteed income meant a visit to the dentist for the first time.

A guaranteed income offered stability and predictability. Families knew what they could rely on and that there was some support, no matter how agricultural prices changed or what the weather fluctuations were that year. Beneficiaries realized that sudden illness, disability or the unpredictable economic situation were not financially devastating.

Forget say that based on the research results, she has documented as a health economist that Canada's health care system is really used to treat the effects of poverty, which is an inefficient and costly approach. It is expected that after a few years of living a difficult life in poverty, people will become ill from the situation, and then the system there will try to improve their health in various possible ways. Poverty not only affects its victims, but costs everyone. Not only does it shorten the lives of the poor, but it also increases the costs of society as a whole, from direct benefits to the poor and the funding of their administration, through the provision of special education for the poor, up to increased police and court costs.

Forget also encourages people to imagine the differences in the life chances of two young men in the mid-1970s, with one graduating from secondary school and the other not. The first chose a good, lasting job, while the second chose work on a farm or in a factory, both of which were sensible choices in the 1970s. Subsequently, however, unemployment in the latter two sectors rose, jobs were increasingly precarious and wages lagged behind. The impact of the opportunities a young person had when choosing a job affected not only his whole life, but also the life of his family.

In April 2017, the Provincial Government of Ontario launched a pilot guaranteed income programme covering three areas: Hamilton, Lindsay a Thunder Bay.⁴⁷ 4,000 people on low

⁴⁷ Standing, G. *Battling Eight Giants: Basic Income Now*. London: Bloomsbury 2020.

incomes were enrolled in the programme. One-person households received C\$ 17,000 a year and households consisting of couples received C\$ 24,000. People with disabilities received a supplement in addition. The experiment took the form of a negative income tax, as guaranteed income fell by 50 cents for every extra dollar earned and was also paid to households, not individuals.

However, the experiment lasted only a very short time, because it was abolished by a new right-wing government in August 2018. That government thereby broke its election promise to allow the experiment to continue. The suspension of the programme led to public protests. The researchers conducted a basic survey and were ready to issue a basic report. However, the new government instructed the assessment team to return all documentation, thus preventing the public from learning of the findings to date.

In view of the fact that the participants in the experiment had created financial and other liabilities during the experiment, because they assumed that they would receive the basic income for a certain period of time, the government extended the payments by 18 months. However, no further data were collected. However, the unofficial results of the project found that there was a significant increase in volunteer work and that 88% of beneficiaries felt less stressed.

USA: fighting poverty and depression

Between 1968 and 1980, four experiments with a guaranteed basic income took place in the United States and one in Canada. Although these experiments, which were referred to as guaranteed basic income, took the form of a negative income tax and not a universal, unconditional basic income, both variants are similar enough that the results of the negative tax experiments are also of great value to the current discussions on basic income. However, these experiments terminated and their results were only published when the expansion and improvement of the social welfare system had been discontinued under the influence of right-wing governments. This political context probably had a significant effect on the reception of the results of these experiments.⁴⁸

In the United States, these experiments were part of the so-called „war on poverty,“ in which civil rights activists turned their attention to poverty and inequality. The US reconsidered its current social system and sought to expand and improve it. For example, Martin Luther King presented his reasons for introducing basic income in his final book in 1967, entitled: „Where do we go from here? Chaos or community?“ He concluded that previous efforts to fight poverty had been too „slow and dwarfed.“ The government believed that it could uplift the poor by gradually addressing the root causes of their impoverishment, by providing better housing, education and better support for families. But this effort was too small and disorganized. King also believed that all past programmes had another common element behind their

⁴⁸ Widerquist, K. A Critical Analysis of Basic Income Experiments for Researchers, Policymakers, and Citizens. Switzerland: Palgrave, 2018; Widerquist, K. A failure to communicate: What (if anything) can we learn from the negative income tax experiments? *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 2005, 34, pp. 49-81.

failure, namely that they were indirect. Each of the above poverty-eradication measures seeks to tackle poverty by addressing something else first.

The first experiment with basic income in the USA was carried out between 1968 and 1972. It was originally planned to run it entirely in New Jersey, but since it was not possible to find enough poor white participants, a second location in Pennsylvania had to be opened up in order for the experimental sample to be racially representative. The sample consisted of 983 people and consisted of two-parent black, white and Latino families, whose income was below 150% of the poverty line. Families received a guaranteed income for three years.

The second experiment was conducted in rural Iowa and North Carolina between 1970 and 1972. It served largely as a rural counterpart to the New Jersey experiment, which focused on the urban population. The experimental sample included 729 members with the families receiving a guaranteed income for two years. People met the same criteria as the New Jersey experiment, except that single-parent households were now included. Few Latino Americans were included in the sample.

A third experiment was conducted in Gary, Indiana from 1971 to 1974. The people, numbering 967, were mostly black and from single-parent families. These groups received a guaranteed income for 3 years.

The fourth and largest experiment in the United States took place in the Seattle and Denver metropolitan areas, where the experimental group contained 4,800 members. The sample included black, white, and Latino families with at least one economically dependent member and whose income was less than \$ 11,000 per year for single-parent families and less than \$ 13,000 per year for two-parent families. The experiment began in 1970 and was originally scheduled to be completed within six years. Later, however, the research team obtained agreement to extending the experiment with a small sample

by 20 years. Thus, the project was due to last until the early 1990 s, but was eventually cancelled in 1980, so that some people had a guaranteed income for about 9 years. For part of this time, they were led to believe that they would have it secured for 20 years.

When designing a negative tax, two parameters are central. The first is the minimum income that the beneficiary receives if he/she has no other income. These experiments aimed to find out whether and what value of guaranteed income is sufficient to significantly reduce or even eliminate poverty. For this reason, guaranteed incomes of between 50% and 150% of the poverty line were tested.

The second central parameter for a negative tax is the marginal tax rate by which benefits are reduced by a certain percentage for every dollar earned – only at a certain level of earned income will the entire benefit be taxed. Although a higher marginal tax rate is associated with lower overall costs, it discourages job search more and leads to a greater risk of a „poverty trap“. On the contrary, a lower tax rate leads to a greater redistribution towards people with incomes above the poverty line. Redistribution to this group may be desirable from the point of view of justice (as a reward for their working for low wages), but it increases the cost of a programme primarily conceived as an anti-poverty policy. The experimenters tested nine different values, from 0.3 to 0.8. However, the use of so many different variables reduced the number of test subjects in each category and thus reduced the statistical reliability of the results.

The final research reports focused on how experiments transformed work efforts, specifically how much the annual hours worked in the experimental group were reduced compared to the control group for three categories of workers: husbands, wives and single mothers. The relative reduction in the workforce varied considerably across these four experiments.

For husbands, it ranged from 0.5% to 9.0%, meaning that the experimental group worked approximately 0.5 to 4 hours per week less than the control group, which is 20 to 130 hours per year, or 1 to 4 weeks full-time per year.

Three studies averaged the results of these four experiments and found a reduction in labour supply ranging from 5 to 7.9%. Wives and single mothers worked fewer hours than men. Wives reduced their work effort by 0 to 27% and single mothers by 15 to 30%. These percentages correspond to a reduction in work done of 0 to 166 hours per year.

The Canadian economist and political philosopher Karl Wilderquist points out the pitfalls in interpreting the results of these experiments. The pilot projects focus on comparisons between the control and experimental groups, but are not predictions of how the labour market would change were basic income to be introduced nationwide. Therefore, several assumptions need to be considered.

The project participants come from a small part of the population, specifically people with incomes close to the poverty line. For this part of the income population, the biggest negative effect is to be expected in terms of job search, because the amount of guaranteed income is high in relation to their possible earnings. The response of this group is thus greater than the reaction of the entire population when introducing a national basic income. One study which used computer simulations estimated that the reduction of 4.5% in work found would result in a reduction in work of only 1.6% if a national programme was introduced. However, this is a very negligible level.

The projects did not examine how the introduction of basic income would translate into an increase in labour demand. However, economic theory predicts that there would be an increase in wages, especially for low-income groups, which would act as a counterweight to the reduction in the supply of this labour force.

These pieces of research have often been misinterpreted as meaning that 5 to 7.9 percent of the family's primary breadwinners have dropped out from the work process as a result of the introduction of a guaranteed income. In reality, however, this was minimal, and the primary breadwinners in both the experimental and control groups left posts (either voluntarily or by dismissal) in approximately the same proportion. However, people in the experimental group take longer to find their next job if they become unemployed.

Non-experts writing about the experiments have assumed that any reduction in labour supply, no matter how small, was negative. However, it is not desirable to put the unemployed into a position where they are desperately trying to start another job as soon as possible. It is not only bad in itself for them to have to go through this difficult situation, but it also reduces their ability to negotiate the required wages and decent working conditions. A longer period of unemployment can thus be socially beneficial, as it will enable the employee to find a suitable job, which is also suitable for the company.

In terms of overall evaluation, most researchers consider the results of the pilot projects to be quite promising. The comparison of the control and experimental groups showed that the material impacts of poverty were significantly reduced. As for any relative reduction in work effort, it was not significant and was still on a sustainable scale.

A key problem in evaluating the results of pilot projects is that monitoring only the issue of respondents' employment efforts distracts from the question of what good results these projects have achieved in other objectives, especially in reducing poverty and increasing the well-being of low-income people. When evaluating projects it is therefore necessary to focus on their positive impact outside the labour market, specifically on quality of life indicators.

Some studies have found a positive impact of guaranteed basic income on improved school attendance, better evaluation of pupils by teachers and better results in school tests. Furthermore, some studies have found that children from the experimental group stayed in school significantly longer than children from the control group and that more adults continue their education. Other studies have shown that the number of low-birthweight infants has decreased, household indebtedness has fallen, medical care has improved and the quality of nutrition has improved, especially for children. It has also been found that there was a reduction in domestic violence and a reduction in the number of acute psychiatric hospitalizations.

However, a finding that the divorce rate in the experimental group in the fourth experiment increased compared to the control group attracted great attention. This was widely presented as something negative, although scientists justified it by saying that a guaranteed income freed women from financial dependence on their husbands. After all, it would be unfair to take as positive that women stay with their husbands only because of their financial dependence.

The results of the fourth and largest experiment were not published until Congress was already discussing the policy proposed by President Carter, which was already a long way from the guaranteed income model. Dozens of technical reports from these experiments with large amounts of data were simplified into two statements: guaranteed income led to a reduction in work effort and to increased divorce rates. The fact, that the demotivating effect when looking for a job was very low, escaped people's attention. In addition, the researchers themselves expected a certain demotivating effect from the beginning and were pleased to find that it was so low and the programme was therefore sustainable. Unfortunately, many members of Congress and commentators in the media responded as if the mere existence of a demotivating effect disqualified the programme.

As for the increased divorce rate: Ten years later, a re-analysis of the data revealed that a statistical error had occurred in their original evaluation. In fact, there had been no increase in divorce rates at all.⁴⁹

A pilot project is currently underway in Stockton, California, where \$ 500 is being paid monthly to 125 beneficiaries for 24 months. The payment is unconditional and beneficiaries were randomly selected from neighbourhoods with average or below average incomes. The entire programme budget of \$ 3 million has been fully funded by philanthropists.⁵⁰

The results collected from the first year, i.e. from February 2019 to February 2020, found that the payment beneficiaries obtained a full-time job twice as much as the members of the control group. Payment beneficiaries were less nervous and depressed, both over time and when compared to the control group. There was also a statistically significant improvement in emotional health, a decrease in fatigue and an increase in overall well-being. Beneficiaries also had a greater ability to pay for unexpected expenses, which was particularly important as the findings of this research already included the beginnings of the pandemic. Beneficiaries spent money on basic needs: 37% on food, 22% on household goods, clothing and footwear, 11% on public services and 10% on car costs. Less than 1% was spent on alcohol and tobacco.

The results published for the first year thus show that guaranteed income significantly improves job prospects, financial stability and the overall psychological well-being of

⁴⁹ Bregman, R. Utopia for realists: unconditional income, open borders, 15 hours of work per week. *De Correspondent* 2016.

⁵⁰ McConville, S. Guaranteed Income Increases Employment, Improves Financial and Physical Health. Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration, 3 March 2021 (<https://www.stocktondemonstration.org/press-landing/guaranteed-income-increases-employment-improves-financial-and-physical-health>, retrieved: 5 March 2021).

the beneficiaries. The results of this research so far are thus different from some opinions which simply claim that a cash payment discourages people from working.

AFRICA

Kenya: eradicating poverty in the developing countryside

Unconditional basic income is receiving increasing attention worldwide, as it is one way to alleviate poverty and reduce social inequalities. It has been successfully implemented on almost all continents, with Africa being no exception, where the unconditional basic income project has met with great success. Nor is Kenya an exception to this.

Global experimental projects which have introduced basic income in the short term, have found that: first, this income does not reduce employment efforts; second, the cash benefit is not spent on alcohol or tobacco products, but used by people mainly to buy food; third, this income has enabled people to achieve a higher level of education; fourth, unconditional income has led to investment in small businesses; fifth, income continued to ensure a long-term standard of living; sixth, income improved and extended average life expectancy.⁵¹ Based on the findings so date, the organizers of the Kenyan project have similar expectations. Kenya is currently conducting a basic income experiment in two counties, Siaya and Bomet, where a total of 860,000 people live, of whom approximately 630,000 are below the poverty line, which is \$ 15 per person in rural areas and \$ 28 in urban areas.⁵² The interim results of this project, as in Namibia, for example, are very positive, not only in terms of improving the economic situation, but also in terms of the positive psychological effects. This was a project

⁵¹ Innovations for Poverty Action. The Effects of a Universal Basic Income in Kenya (<https://www.poverty-action.org/study/effects-universal-basic-income-kenya>, retrieved: 20 October 2020).

⁵² Ibid.

prepared in great detail, which aims to map in detail the overall development of unconditional basic income, in all its possible forms and impacts on society.

The project in these two regions includes 295 villages and 14,474 households, with the villages being randomly assigned to one of four groups. First, 100 villages will not receive any income. Second, the long-term introduction of unconditional basic income: 44 villages receive income that is sufficient to cover their basic needs. For 12 years, each adult will receive \$0.75 per day. Third, the short-term introduction of unconditional basic income - 80 villages will receive payments sufficient to cover their basic needs. For two years, each adult receives \$0.75 per day. Fourth, an unconditional basic income lump sum – 71 villages will receive a lump sum equivalent to the short-term introduction of unconditional basic income. This is approximately \$ 500 for each adult.⁵³

The project is currently comparing the results from the groups and is monitoring changes in the behaviour of individual members of the population. Project researchers are also comparing the effects of lump sum payments on the short-term and long-term introduction of unconditional basic income to determine the effects on the transfer of capital and assets. Thanks to this project, we can see a positive change in the economic status of people after the introduction of basic income, or in their use of time, gender relations, a change in their outlook on life and approach to risk-taking, especially in business. Unconditional basic income is not about people stopping working, but having them work in a sector that will bring them an increase in living standards.

⁵³ Give Directly. Launch a basic income (<https://www.givedirectly.org/ubi-study/>, retrieved: 20 October 2020).

Namibia: against extreme poverty and disease

Namibia, for example, proves that unconditional basic income can be afforded by countries that are significantly poorer than the Member States of the European Union.⁵⁴ Due to its past, Namibia is one of the countries which are poorer than South Africa. Within the framework of cooperation and the customs union in effect between the two states, there is also productive inspiration. In Namibia, 50% to 60% of the population now lives in poverty, and has to survive on \$ 1 to \$ 2 a day. During the period when unconditional basic income was paid in the Otjivero-Omitara area, poverty fell by 39%, reaching similar numbers to those in South Africa.⁵⁵

In January 2008, the Basic Income Grant pilot project was launched in the Otjivero-Omitara area of Namibia. From January 2008 to March 2012, all residents under the age of 60 received an unconditional basic income of \$ 80 Namibia per month (\$4.5), without any imposed conditions. This income was provided to every person regardless of their social and economic status. The pilot project was designed and implemented by the Namibian Basic Income Grant Coalition (founded in 2004).

The Basic Income Grant evaluation report then compared the results of the baseline study and the panel survey and found that the overall impact of unconditional income had excellent results.⁵⁶ First, the local community set up its own committee to advise residents on how they can raise their living standards with

⁵⁴ Lenggenhagen, L., Nature, War and Development: South Africa's Caprivi Strip, 1960–1980. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 41, 2015, 3, 467–483.

⁵⁵ Petrova, G., Namibia – UBI success and institutional failure. BIEN (<https://basicincome.org/news/2020/07/namibia-ubi-success-and-institutional-failure/>, retrieved: 20 October 2020).

⁵⁶ Pilot Project. BIG – Coalition Namibia (http://www.bignam.org/BIG_pilot.html, retrieved: 14 December 2021).

the money obtained. The introduction of unconditional income has helped to increase the social mobility of citizens and has strengthened the position of the community. Second, thanks to basic income, malnutrition in children in this area fell by 25%. Third, since the introduction of an unconditional basic income, most people have been able to expand their work in terms of wages, profits, family profits, and also of self-employment. This finding contradicts critics' claim that unconditional income would lead to laziness and dependence. Fourth, there is compelling evidence that more people are now able to engage in more productive activities and that unconditional income supports local economic growth and development. In Otjivero, several small businesses were set up simply thanks to basic income. Fifth, more children began attending school and the improved financial situation allowed schools to purchase teaching materials for their pupils. The school principal stated that the rate of leaving school early at her school was 30% to 40% before the introduction of basic income. By July 2008, those figures had been reduced to just 5%. Sixth, unconditional basic income also supported treatment for people suffering from HIV/AIDS. The project provides access to government organizations and also contributes to nutrition. Seventh, since the introduction of basic income, residents have made much greater use of the local health clinic. People are now paying 4 Namibian dollars per visit, and the clinic's income has increased fivefold. Eighth, poverty-related crime (illegal hunting, theft, etc.) fell by more than 20%. Ninth, basic income helped young people to stand on their own two feet. For example, many young women have been freed from the need to go into prostitution.⁵⁷

These positives from the pilot project report show that unconditional basic income has the potential to raise the living

⁵⁷ Petrova, G., Namibia – UBI success and institutional failure, *op cit.*

standards of the population and to improve their economic situation. Moreover, it has proved so successful that there is currently an effort to extend it to the whole of Namibia. However, there is as yet insufficient political will, which could change thanks to the current information and discussion campaigns on behalf of unconditional basic income.

South Africa: a return to the experiment

Another African country where unconditional basic income has been successfully implemented is South Africa (SA), where an inspiring pilot project is running. The redistribution system, developed most in the early 1990 s, paid all men over the age of 65 and all women over the age of 60 a monthly allowance of 600 rand, which is approximately \$37. This amount was entirely unconditional. For beneficiaries only property status was determined, which excluded all households that would be entitled to pensions from another sector. At that time, it included approximately 80% of the black and 10% of the Caucasian population of the ages in question.⁵⁸

South Africa is currently returning to unconditional basic income since it had a positive impact on development. In its current form, basic income will be part of a series of packages and will focus on helping the unemployed.

The coronavirus crisis has shown the problem of institutional systems around the world, including in South Africa, where the divide between the social strata is opening up more and more. It was the coronavirus crisis that brought about the reintroduction of unconditional basic income in South Africa, reviving a policy that was at the heart of Nelson Mandela's government after the fall of apartheid in 1994.

The organizers propose to increase income for all who earn less than a set limit. Below this level, working citizens do not pay income tax. In a numerical example, a person earning the minimum wage of 3,500 rand per month (\$248/month) or 42,000 rand/year (\$ 2,981/year) would receive an additional 1,500 rand per month (\$106/month). This represents a 43%

⁵⁸ Coelho, A., South Africa: The „Purple cow“ party is proposing a Negative Income Tax form of basic income. BIEN (<https://basicincome.org/topic/south-africa/>, retrieved: 15 October 2020).

increase in monthly income. This income applies to all people below the threshold, including the unemployed. In practice, this means that no one will ever receive less than 3,250 rand/month (\$231/month), which is close to South Africa's official minimum wage. For context, social retirement contributions from the South African government are currently only 1,700 rand/month (\$121/month), which is about half the minimum wage.⁵⁹

Unconditional basic income will be introduced in the country in the spring of 2021 at the earliest, due to the fact that there is currently a so-called emergency allowance of 350 rand (about \$20.57), as well as an increase in existing grants for children and pensioners. This financial contribution was introduced in early 2020 due to the announcement of the coronavirus lockdown.⁶⁰

Due to the rules of the tax system, fewer and fewer people pay tax, because unemployment is growing faster than employment. This issue then goes hand in hand with the ever-increasing pressure to provide social security. Unconditional basic income is one of the options that can positively change these conditions. Therefore, more countries in Africa should focus on and become aware of the positive effects of unconditional basic income and the benefits that this unconditional amount brings.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Toyana, M., South Africa will not have universal basic income grant this year, minister says. Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-safrica-economy-universalincomegrant-idUSKCN24W2WK>, retrieved: 20 December 2020).

Uganda: expansion of the pilot project

Many countries have already introduced unconditional basic income experimentally, and many have thereby reduced crime, have better economic conditions for business and, of course, a reduction in poverty. This is why Uganda, one of the poorest countries in the world, has begun experimenting with financial benefits.

In 2008 in small groups (10-40 people), young people were offered a lump sum of \$ 382 to learn a skilled trade. This should enable their greater earning potential. The aim was not to provide for a family or to make it easier to obtain food; the main goal was to increase productivity and secure a better job that would permanently lift the basic income recipient out of poverty.⁶¹ In this case, each group of people had to sign up for the project jointly. Half of the groups that signed up already existed in some form, such as agricultural collectives and sports clubs. Each of these groups had to draw up a written proposal, which was examined by government officials. As most members of the groups were not literate, they were offered counselling to help them compile their written application.⁶²

After four years of the project, the results were encouraging, as many people in the groups formalized their businesses and hired labour, increasing business assets and earnings. For some, it was an answer to the question of how to help young ambitious people from poor countries to change their lives and build up

⁶¹ Matthews, D., Study: giving out cash in Uganda helped after 4 years. After 9 years, not so much. Vox (<https://www.vox.com/2018/9/10/17827836/cash-basic-income-uganda-study-blattman-charity>, retrieved: 30 October 2020).

⁶² Uganda's basic income pilot begins - The village in the swamp. World Basic Income. (<https://www.worldbasicincome.org.uk/blog/-ugandas-basic-income-pilot-begins-the-village-in-the-swamp>, retrieved: 4 May 2021).

a good job. However, a check on the groups after nine years was not at first glance as successful as originally expected. The total income of the groups was lower and for the most part did not exceed expenses. Nevertheless, many of them had bought farm animals and agricultural machinery, so this investment definitely paid off for them in the future. In the long run, however, the basic financial benefit did not have a significant effect on career development and entrepreneurship.⁶³ However, the programme received a great positive response, which is why the project for unconditional basic income followed it very quickly.

In 2017, a pilot project for unconditional basic income was launched in Uganda, which included an unnamed village of 50 households. The basic income was set at about 30% of the average wage of low-income families at \$18.25 per month for an adult and \$9.13 for children. The project organizers primarily examine the impact of basic income across four dimensions: first, access to health care; second, the education of women and girls; third, involvement in democratic institutions; fourth, local economic development.⁶⁴

The organizers have big plans for this pilot programme. In addition to monitoring the impact of basic income on the selected community, they plan to expand the project to other locations in Uganda. This effort to introduce unconditional basic income in sub-Saharan Africa is not unique, let us recall Kenya and Namibia, for example. In Uganda, however, they have been working on this project for a long time and have had an impressive response.

⁶³ Matthews, D., Study: giving out cash in Uganda helped after 4 years. After 9 years, not so much, op cit.

⁶⁴ McFarland, K., Uganda: Two-year basic income pilot set to launch in 2017. BIEN (<https://basicincome.org/news/2016/11/uganda-two-year-basic-income-pilot-set-to-launch-in-2017/>, retrieved: 30 October 2020).

ASIA

India: the way out of mass poverty

There is a country where the unconditional basic income project has not only met expectations, but has even exceeded them. No wonder, as it is the country with the second highest population in the world (1.37 billion people), and home to 40% of the global poor. Therefore, a successful project to eradicate poverty is very welcome there. We are talking about India.⁶⁵

A universal basic income pilot programme was launched in India in 2010 in the central state of Madhya Pradesh. In 2016, a nationwide debate began in India on the introduction of a basic income, as a result of inadequate social care outcomes and, in particular, concerns about technological unemployment.

The project, which began in 2010, was designed as a controlled study that included comprehensive data collection. In selected villages in Madhya Pradesh, six thousand men, women and children received a monthly annuity for one and a half years. A total of fifteen thousand people were included in the project. The project consisted of two pilot programmes. The first included eight villages and the second included one tribal village.⁶⁶ The basic income was set to provide enough to change the standard of living, but not enough to change it significantly. The amount was set at 20% to 30% of the income of low-income families. From June 2011 to May 2012, basic

⁶⁵ Davala, S., Jhabvala, R., Standing, G. *Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing 2015.

⁶⁶ Schjoedt, R., *India's Basic Income Experiment. Pathways' perspectives on social policy in international development*, 21, p. 1 (<https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Indias-Basic-Income-Experiment-PP21.pdf>, retrieved: 31 October 2020).

income was paid monthly at the rate of \$4.40 for an adult and \$2.20 for a child. After May, the value of the basic income was increased by 50%.⁶⁷

In the villages studied, the impact on living conditions was enormous. Many people used part of the money to improve their housing, for example by repairing the roof. The increase in assets in the tribal village grew from 35.5% to 83%. Mobile phone ownership increased from 9% to 61% and of scooters and motorcycles from 3% to 30%.⁶⁸ These are assets that can fundamentally change the ability to get jobs, create a job, or access information in general.

Another benefit was securing sufficient food intake. The tribal village underwent the main change in eating habits, where the consumption of lentils and legumes, vegetables, eggs and meat increased significantly. At the end of the project, the proportion of children with normal weight increased by as much as 20%.

In addition, people in the villages surveyed increased their education spending. In addition, basic income has helped to prevent adolescents from dropping out of secondary schools, which has improved school attendance overall.⁶⁹

Because the basic income was provided to individuals and not to whole households, it gave many women their own money. Thanks to this benefit, their position in society has changed. About 60% of women said that basic income allowed them to have a greater influence on household expenditure.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Qazi, M., *India's Case for Universal Basic Income*. The Leaflet. Constitution First (<https://www.theleaflet.in/indias-case-for-universal-basic-income/>, retrieved: 4 May 2021).

⁶⁹ Neelakantan, A., *India needs a Universal basic income scheme*. The New Indian Express (<https://www.newindianexpress.com/magazine/voices/2021/feb/14/india-needs-a-universal-basic-income-scheme-2262796.html>, retrieved: 4 May 2020).

⁷⁰ Schjoedt, R., *India's Basic Income Experiment*, op. cit., pp. 2–5.

The unconditional basic income project in India has proved its worth. Over the course of a few years, more basic income projects will be launched there, for example in 2022, basic income will be introduced in Sikkim State, one of the smallest states in India.

Iran: a replacement for subsidies

Iran launched an unconditional basic income project in 2011 in the form of cash transfers. The immediate reason for the introduction of a national basic income in Iran was a significant reduction in gas and bread subsidies by the then president at the end of 2010. For the last 40 years in Iran, there have been subsidies that have saved people money on bread, heating and fuel. However, in 2011, the programme was turned into a cash transfer project because the government believed that energy subsidies benefited richer individuals more than poor ones. Another reason for the abolition of the original subsidies was an effort to improve the environment, as energy subsidies supported higher fuel consumption.⁷¹

Iran's experience with unconditional basic income is paradoxical. The concept is practically unknown in the country and is almost completely absent from public discourse. Nevertheless, as of December 2010, all Iranians resident in the country are entitled to a monthly cash transfer of RL 455,000 (about USD 45) per person. These unconditional transfers are officially known as „cash subsidies“ because they replace the aforementioned price subsidies.⁷²

The government has launched a monthly financial benefit to individual family accounts of 29% of average monthly household income and 6.5% of GDP. This is about \$1.50 per person per day.⁷³ However, the change from the 40-year-old measures also

⁷¹ Weller, C., Iran tried its own basic income scheme – and people didn't give up working. Business Insider (<https://www.businessinsider.com/iran-basic-income-results-2017-5>, retrieved: 16 December 2020).

⁷² Tabatabai, H., Iran: A Bumpy Road toward Basic Income. *Basic Income Guarantee and Politics*, 2012, pp. 285–300.

⁷³ Geier, C., Universal basic income in Iran. *Borgen Project* (<https://borgenproject.org/universal-basic-income-in-iran/>, retrieved: 20

brought with it fears that the new project would negatively affect the labour supply. As in other countries where the unconditional basic income experiment was introduced or has been discussed, the question arose in Iran as to whether the population would have less incentive to work due to the unconditional benefit. In the end, only one age group was affected by a negative labour supply, the one in the range from 20 to 29 years. However, this is due to the fact that this age group is engaged in postgraduate education, which thus far largely prevents it from working, but better prepares it for future employment. In Iran, moreover, this age group is generally among the least productive.⁷⁴

For other age groups, such as housewives, teachers or delivery men, the results were that people spent more time at work. However, it is difficult to evaluate this project independently, because the previous energy subsidy programme brought citizens greater financial benefits. However, the basic income project also brings with it benefits to citizens that need to be explored in the longer term.⁷⁵

October 2020).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Tabatabai, H., Iran: A Bumpy Road toward Basic Income, op. cit., pp. 285–300.

Macao: casino-cash

One of the places experimenting with a basic income is Macao, where more than 20,000 people live per square kilometre. Basic income is used here to redistribute income from gambling in an area called „the Las Vegas of China.“

Since 2008, Macao has distributed funding to all residents every year as part of its regional Wealth Partaking Scheme (WPS). Permanent residents received 5,000 pataca, or MOP, per year (cca \$630) and MOP 3,000 (cca \$400) were provided to non-residents.⁷⁶

In 2017, the government of the Macao Special Administrative Region approved a programme called the Wealth Partaking Scheme 2017, under which permanent residents are even entitled to an annual unconditional basic income of MOP 9,000 (cca USD 1,128).⁷⁷ In 2018, this amount was raised to MOP 10,000 MOP for local residents and to MOP 6,000 for non-residents and those without residence in Macau receive MOP 5,400 (approximately USD 672). Since 2008, the government in Macau has been providing its citizens with an annual state bonus.⁷⁸ The total budget for WPS 2017 is MOP 6,080 million, which is approximately USD 757 million.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Kwong, BKK, A Comparative Analysis of the Cash Handout Policy of Hong Kong and Macau. In: *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 42, 2013, 3, pp. 87–100.

⁷⁷ Lopez, E. V., et al., *Universal Basic Income: A Working paper. A Policy Option for China beyond 2020?*, 2017, p. 31 (https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Enrique-Valencia-Lopez/publication/331629579_UNDP_Universal_Basic_Income/links/5c836e8c92851c6950641ae1/UNDP-Universal-Basic-Income.pdf, retrieved: 4 May 2021).

⁷⁸ Coelho, A., *China: Macao's Wealth Partaking Scheme expands. BIEN.* (<https://basicincome.org/news/2018/12/china-macaos-wealth-partaking-scheme-expands/>, retrieved: 12 December 2020).

⁷⁹ ATAL – Técnica de Apoyo al Legislativo, *Renta Basica Universal*, 2017, p. 35. (<http://fundacion2020.org.gt/images/fundacion2020/>

The basic income for seniors, civil servants and people receiving a retirement pension is performed by bank transfer. For most of the rest of the population, financial aid is sent by cheque by post. For Wealth Partaking Scheme recipients under the age of 18, the check is credited to the recipient's account or to the account of one of their parents.⁸⁰

One of the reasons why WPS 2017 was introduced in Macau was the devastating Hurricane Hato, which also hit this area in August 2017. This caused major social problems and unrest, and the WPS was meant to be a way to alleviate public dissatisfaction and stop large-scale demonstrations. The second, more important reason why basic income was introduced in this area was to reduce inequalities between local people.⁸¹

temas/Renta_Basica_Universal_conocida_x_ATAL_02-08-17.pdf, retrieved: 4 May 2021).

⁸⁰ Cheng, F., Wealth Partaking Scheme: Macau's small UBI. BIEN. (<https://basicincome.org/news/2017/07/wealth-partaking-scheme-macaus-small-ubi/>, retrieved: 15 November 2020).

⁸¹ Coelho, A., China: Macao's Wealth Partaking Scheme expands, *op. cit.*

THE GLOBAL LEVEL

The United Nations: a basic income for the global poor and for all humanity

Unconditional basic income has already been tested at the local level of cities and regions as well as at the state level. Initiatives to implement it have already taken place at the macro-regional level, for example in the proposal to pay the so-called euro-dividend at the level of the entire European Union as one of the versions of a basic income in the year-round European Citizens' Initiative for Unconditional Basic Income in 2013-2014. There have also been proposals to introduce a basic income at a higher level, specifically for the payment of a global basic income. However, so far this global activity has only taken place as a non-institutionalized proposal from citizens, which is occasionally presented at various conferences, demonstrations and forums, such as the World Social Forum.

However, due to the pandemic, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)⁸² in the summer of 2020 published a proposal to introduce a basic income, which has become the largest institutionally designed project of basic income to date. This is a type of temporary basic income designed for the almost three billion poor and near-poor people in developing countries in many parts of the world, to help satisfy their basic needs and overcome the immediate consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. With a total of 7.8 billion people on the planet, these

⁸² 'Temporary Basic Income' could slow COVID surge, provide lifeline for world's poorest. UN News, 23 July 2020(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/07/1068871#:~:text=Temporary%20Basic%20Income%3A%20Protecting%20Poor,the%20poverty%20line%20in%20132>, retrieved: 10 October 2020).

three billion people currently make up more than 38% of the world's population.⁸³ These people could temporarily remain relatively isolated at home, making a significant contribution to reducing the spread of coronavirus and to their own health.

The proposal was elaborated in the publication *Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries*.⁸⁴ Although this proposal is not by definition formally a real unconditional basic income, it can be considered as a big experiment with basic income, as is the case in various countries. Its first limit is the temporary duration of the pandemic and the period immediately following it. The second limit is the restriction of basic income to lower income groups, but due to its unprecedented scope of a large number of people, it actually meets the basic income conditions better than just territorially (urban, regional, state or national) limited basic income projects, which formally meet the conditions set by defined borders. The number of people to be included in the project is really unprecedented in history.

Specifically, this means that basic income would provide a financial amount above the poverty line for the vulnerable part of the population in 132 developing countries. Overall, the payment of basic income would be acceptable and sustainable for countries, as it would represent only between 0.27 and 0.63 percent of their total GDP. The amount would vary according to the methodology adopted, depending on the calculation of the flat-rate financial amount across individual countries or on the calculation of income differences between countries. In all cases, both poor people and the near-poor – who can

⁸³ According to UN statistics, this is the total number of people on the planet as at 1 July 2020.

⁸⁴ Molina, G. G.; and Ortiz-Juarez, E. *Temporary Basic Income: Protecting Poor and Vulnerable People in Developing Countries*. UNDP Global Policy Network 2020.

easily fall into poverty due to their inability to work during the pandemic – are considered. Given that the proposal is based on the assumption that 7 out of 10 people work in developing countries in the informal market, they can easily lose their job if they are unable to leave home. These workers, as well as others, including low-income groups, young people, women, migrants and people with reduced working capacity, etc., do not usually have social security.

The proposal is based on the assumption that existing social assistance payments in the event of a pandemic have already verified the legitimacy of this type of payment and that it would therefore be possible to make more extensive payments in the form of basic income. By mid-March 2020, 1,055 different kinds of payments had been made in 200 countries and territories around the world. However, most of these payments were not made in countries where they are most needed. Only 13.2 percent of the total value of payments, \$77.9 billion, were made in low- and middle-income countries.

Temporary basic income would be paid to poor people and people slightly above the poverty line (to individuals, not families or other units). The poverty line here is calculated by default at \$1.9 (in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa), \$3.2 (in East Asia and the Pacific) and \$5.5 (in Central Asia and Europe) per day measured by the different living conditions in different countries, which require different costs.

The financial value of the temporary basic income would vary according to the conditions in each country. Depending on the specific version, the project would help at least the following number of people in these specific macro-regions of the world (in a more demanding variant, about a quarter more people):

Middle East and North Africa: 168 million people

Europe and Central Asia: 218 million people

Latin America and the Caribbean: 378 million people

East Asia and the Pacific: 521 million people
Sub-Saharan Africa: 708 million people
South Asia: 787 million people
Total: 2,780 million people, i.e. almost 2.8 billion people

With a total of 6.3 billion people living in developing countries, this means that 44.1% of the population of the world's developing countries would receive a temporary basic income.

The proposal provides for the payment of this financial amount for a period of six months. Financially, this would mean just 12% of the total amount spent on treating people and securing them against Covid-19 in 2020. However, it is assumed that this type of temporary basic income would not cover all the negative consequences of the pandemic for these people, as it is not an all-encompassing project. Nevertheless, it would help effectively cover the basic needs of these vulnerable people. In the current extraordinary conditions, the project, including extraordinary debt, has been supported by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. And as an example, Ghana has decided to implement a similar project on their territory. This is a gradual path to a situation where each person on the planet, all of humanity, could permanently receive an unconditional basic income.

(4) History: the pioneers of basic income

The aim of this part of the book is to trace the historical development of the concept of unconditional basic income, using as examples several important authors who formulated and promoted this idea. Thomas More was the first to mention the possibility of a universal income, in his seminal work *Utopia*. This idea was taken up and first systematically developed by Ioannes Lodovicus Vives, who is often neglected today and stands in the shadow of his much better-known contemporary. The concept of basic income was then developed by other prominent people such as Thomas Paine, Bertrand Russell and Martin Luther King.

Thomas More: the originator of the idea

As early as 1516, in his seminal work *Utopia*, the English scholar and statesman Sir Thomas More (1478–1535) criticised the fact that people were too poor and often had no choice but to steal. In *Utopia*, he describes that it is also inappropriate to sentence people to death because such a punishment will not reduce the number of robberies, thefts or various assaults. Thus, for 16th century England, he argues, it would be far more appropriate to construct a universal income that would remove the need for criminal acts, which often carried the threat of execution.⁸⁵ For More, the chopping off of limbs or even the death penalty is a totally inappropriate response for the reason that theft is not so great a crime for death to be the consequence.

Yet no punishment can prevent people from stealing if that is their only way to obtain food. It would be far more appropriate and useful to provide everyone with some means of livelihood.⁸⁶ The idea of providing certain benefits in kind is one possible concept that has also been discussed in later years. Charles Fourier, for example, suggested that a subsistence minimum should be paid in kind, which would prevent waste and guarantee basic needs for all.⁸⁷

In *Utopia*, More describes how easy it is to get into conditions of want, thanks to those who live an idle and ostentatious lifestyle while not contributing to the general interest. More criticizes and condemns such well-to-do citizens because, in his opinion, they are actually detrimental to the community

⁸⁵ Suplicy, E. M. *Citizen's Basic Income*. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Latin American Program, 2007, p. 5.

⁸⁶ More, T. *Utopia*. Planet PDF, 2016, pp. 20–21.

⁸⁷ Cunliffe, J.; Erreygers, G. *The Enigmatic Legacy of Charles Fourier: Joseph Charlier and Basic Income*. Warwick: University of Warwick institutional repository, 2001, p. 464.

and the greater interest. They occupy almost all, if not all, of the land, demolish towns and tear down houses, at best leaving the church alone to serve as a sheep stable. In this way, they are gradually turning all rural settlements into a bare wasteland. But because of this, small traders and farmers who have been forced to sell their estates lose their jobs. They have had to sell their furniture well below its price, because it would not fit into the small temporary premises into which they move, and they have to sell it as quickly as possible in order to have enough money to pay for a new and often more expensive dwelling in the city. In the next stage, the situation arises where these people cannot find work because they move to a non-agricultural area where their services are not needed. For this reason, in many places, prices increase. Thomas More gives the example of the price of wool, which in a short time rose so high that the craftsmen who made cloth from it could not buy it in. As a result, more people were put out of work and forced to steal to survive.⁸⁸

More says that sheep bred for wool are in the hands of rich oligarchic groups who don't want to sell the commodity before they can set a really high price. More therefore urges society to prevent the rich from buying up and trying to create an oligopoly or monopoly, thereby preventing the existence of people fed for idleness. This approach would also help the state, both financially and spiritually, according to More. Theft and other criminal offences would decrease and citizens would feel more secure and interpersonal relations would improve.⁸⁹

This idea forms the basic premise for the concept of unconditional income. In the background lies the possible reduction of economic and social disparities between the inhabitants of a country, and with it the prevention of conflict. The idea formulated by Thomas More was probably truly utopian and

⁸⁸ More, T. *Utopia*. Ibid, pp. 22–23.

⁸⁹ More, T. *Utopia*. Ibid, pp. 23–25.

unrealistic at the time. His concept of a basic income, especially in the context of the time, is quite original and progressive.

Thomas More focused on formulating ideas about modern free societies that centred on the measure of the ideal of utopian progress. This is the concept of communities slowly but surely moving towards positive and desirable changes, directly under human control rather than depending on Providence.⁹⁰

How did Thomas More arrive at these „salvatory ideas“ about material goods and the common good? We can look at *Utopia* itself. More writes: „It is even so in a commonwealth and in the councils of princes; if ill opinions cannot be quite rooted out, and you cannot cure some received vice according to your wishes, you must not, therefore, abandon the commonwealth, for the same reasons as you should not forsake the ship in a storm because you cannot command the winds. You are not obliged to assault people with discourses that are out of their road, when you see that their received notions must prevent your making an impression upon them: you ought rather to cast about and to manage things with all the dexterity in your power, so that, if you are not able to make them go well, they may be as little ill as possible; for, except all men were good, everything cannot be right, and that is a blessing that I do not at present hope to see“⁹¹

According to More, it is unlikely that everything would be good, because that could only happen if all people were good. For the author, the key idea is that he cannot imagine an ideal state where private property persists and where everything is measured by money. Such an arrangement cannot then be just or beneficial. More points out that it is precisely in such arrangements that a great differentiation within the population

⁹⁰ Adams, R. P. *The Better Part of Valor. More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496–1535*. Seattle: University of Washington, 1962, p. 141.

⁹¹ More, T. *Utopia*. *Ibid*, p. 52.

is undesirable. Therefore, he finds it reasonable to opt for Utopian arrangements. In such an arrangement, there is a small number of laws, where personal ability has full weight, and in the sharing of property all have everything in abundance. He categorically rejects that wellbeing can occur where people have private fortunes. He points out the reality that in such nations everyone looks out only for himself, and the wealthy will always be better off than the poor. And it will not happen that the rich will share their surplus with the poor. Wealth simply cannot be fairly distributed in this system, and human conditions cannot be fairly arranged. This is why the complete abolition of private property is needed.

In this context, we should remember that More's idea of public welfare was not just a basic income for all, but also the smallest possible social „gap“ between people.

Ioannes Lodovicus Vives: the first comprehensive proposal

The Spanish philosopher Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540),⁹² known mainly by his Latin name Ioannes Lodovicus Vives, (1493–1540), prepared the first systematic proposal for a basic minimum income shortly after More's *Utopia*, in *De Subvencione Pauperum sive de Humanis Necessitatibus*,⁹³ in which he told the mayor of the Flemish city of Bruges how to deal with Spanish rule.

Although it may at first glance seem that it was Utopia that laid the philosophical foundations for unconditional income, it must be said that although More came up with the idea of a basic income, it was Vives' comprehensive conception that allowed the idea to be developed and fully fleshed out for the first time.

De Subvencione Pauperum is both a philosophical concept in favour of the poorer classes and a practically oriented work. Indeed, Vives' writing also served a broader political purpose. At a time when welfare reform was strongly associated with a challenge to the authority of the Church, any proposal to entrust a reforming role to the secular authorities was highly controversial, especially in the context of Lutheranism. At the same time, Vives came to the defence of the welfare reform

⁹² The humanist philosopher Ioannes Lodovicus Vives was from Valencia, hence originally Catalan for John Luís Vives i March and Spanish for Juan Luis Vives March, but spent most of his adult life in the southern Netherlands. His views on the soul, his early insights into medical practice, and his views on emotion, memory and learning earned him the title „father“ of modern psychology. Vives was the first to illuminate some of the key ideas that laid the foundations for today's understanding of psychology.

⁹³ Vives, J.L. *De Subvencione Pauperum. Sive de humanis necessitatibus Libri duo*. Pariis: Ex officina Simonis Coline, 1530.

being presented, which might eventually be adopted within the Catholic Church.⁹⁴

In relation to social issues, Vives depicts the state of Europe within the context of a vision of a man who is capable of performing heroic deeds and carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. Such a man should have the ability to extricate himself from the mutually suicidal wars of princes. He would be motivated by a sense of urgent need for social reform and could create a tolerable state of law and order among nations. A great cultural renewal and renaissance had begun, yet paradoxically there was a breakdown in social behaviour and conduct. According to R.P. Adams, Vives tried to exhort the emperor in a similar way to Machiavelli in *The Prince*.⁹⁵ However, the nature of Vives's text is merely political, rather than being a direct political challenge, as in Machiavelli's case.

Vives's main argument, whether it relates to human needs, governance, or society in general, concerns peace as humanity's primary need. At the time he was writing, he considered the state of peace to be in great danger. He expressed wonder at how the achievements of human civilization could have come to be in such great danger. After all, human dignity and common sense make peace a necessity. Vives, like More, outlines in his theses that to live rightly is also to live in harmony with nature.⁹⁶

Vives's treatise can be seen as a confirmation of the reformist changes already under way in those poor regions. However, his ideas also reinforced this reform with new motifs. Both More

⁹⁴ Spicker, P. *The Origins of Modern Welfare*. Juan Luis Vives, *De Subventione Pauperum*, and *City of Ypres*, *Forma Subventionis Pauperum*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publisher, 2010, p. XIII; Adams, R.P. *The Better Part of Valor*. More, Erasmus, Colet, and Vives on Humanism, War, and Peace, 1496–1535, *ibid*, pp. 286–287.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 286–287.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 288–289.

and Vives had a direct or indirect influence on the development of social welfare in England, where legislation was introduced between 1531 and 1536 aimed at poverty and regulation of welfare.⁹⁷

This is also related to the fact that *De Subventionem Pauperum* was written at the request of Lord Lodewijk van Praet,⁹⁸ who, in Vives's words, contributed to the public welfare of England. At that time, the number of poor people in need of help was large and growing exponentially. Vives appealed at the time for people to come together in mutual effort, charity and to strengthen the solidarity of humanity.⁹⁹ According to Vives, people are connected by various commitments and their kindness should not be confined to the family or household circle. Each person has an obligation to repay his or her social debt to society.¹⁰⁰

It is clear from this that Vives was trying to improve social relations between people. In other parts of his texts, there is also an emphasis on the concept of human behaviour and action, which can be conceived as a desire for domination that is limited to a short period of time. Vives gives the example of ancient Macedonia, whose leaders tried to conquer the whole world but ultimately realized that they had failed even to conquer much of the world. Vives asks why this is so. First and foremost, he argues, it is arrogance and laziness that leads to war, sometimes foreign, sometimes civil, often worse than plague itself. Another reason is the ever-increasing number of people, some of whom wished to live off the labour of others

⁹⁷ Spicker, P. *The Origins of Modern Welfare*. Juan Luis Vives, *De Subventionem Pauperum*, and *City of Ypres, Forma Subventionis Pauperum*, *ibid*, p. XIII.

⁹⁸ Lord Lodewijk van Praet, born in Bruges, imperial ambassador to England.

⁹⁹ Vives, J. L. *De Subventionem Pauperum. Sive de humanis necessitatibus Libri duo*, *ibid*, pp. 3–4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 11–12.

who did not even have enough land to make a living. To avoid this state of affairs, the fields around towns should be divided among the citizens and the boundaries between them clearly marked by official laws.¹⁰¹

Some people were unable to work because of physical illness and fell into poverty. Others lost their trades in times of war or because of other disasters such as floods, fires or shipwrecks. It should be emphasized that the poor at that time were not just those who had no money, but also those who were deprived of physical strength, health or intelligence. To all of these a basic income would be of help, even if it also applied to those who had merely squandered their inheritance.¹⁰² According to Vives, the care of all those who are not fortunate enough to live in prosperity and are forced to beg and live on the streets should fall on the municipal authorities.¹⁰³ The concept of a general social system proposed by Vives was not linked to ecclesiastical institutions or theology, nor to social institutions such as hospitals. Vives was drawing attention to the assumption at the time that the new social system would have to deal with two extreme kinds of people. One will want all manner of generosity, but without knowing the value of money. Others in their sweet idleness and laziness will prey on the hard-working and responsible. In both these cases, it will be a social problem.¹⁰⁴

The work of both Ioannes Lodovico Vives and Thomas More had a positive influence on the poor laws in Spain and England in the late 16th century. Beginning in 1531, these laws allowed the elderly and disabled to at least apply to the parish for alms. Soon after, religious houses were authorized to raise funds along

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 13–14.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁰³ Vives, J. L. *Municipalización de la Beneficenci*. 9 October 2015 (<http://bivaldi.gva.es/corpus/unidad.cmd?idUnidad=11636 & idCorpus=1 & posicion=1>, retrieved: 7 November 2020).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

with landowners to provide for the poor who were willing to work in their regions. These themes appeared several centuries later in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.¹⁰⁵

More's and Vives's concepts represented the first articulations of the idea of a basic income with a view to the greater welfare of „ordinary“ people. Vives's theory foreshadowed the idea of a social programme, which aroused resentment among later thinkers dealing with a similar idea from the opposite point of view. In particular, it was not accepted by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, who were uncomfortable with the way in which subsidies were provided to the poor. More's and Vives's ideas also became the template for a number of later thinkers, and their idea of an unconditional basic income has influenced the views that are being put into practice in some countries today. These projects represent a pathway to new opportunities to reduce or eliminate poverty.

¹⁰⁵Suplicy, E. M. Citizen's Basic Income: The Answer is Blowing in the Wind, *ibid*, p. 15.

Thomas Paine: a dividend for all citizens

American revolutionary Thomas Paine came up with the idea of dividends for all citizens of the United States. Paine was one of the most important leaders of the American and French Revolutions who articulated one of the principle reasons why all should have an undeniable right to share in the wealth of the nation. Paine, born in Thetford, England, travelled to America to follow Benjamin Franklin. In 1774 he published a series of thirteen pamphlets. One of these, *Common Sense*, which he published anonymously in 1776, dealt with the American crisis. It was very influential, since it was distributed on the streets of Philadelphia and subsequently in all thirteen colonies, with a circulation of one hundred and fifty thousand copies. George Washington believed that it may have been one of the tools that caused Americans to change their minds in the struggle for independence.¹⁰⁶

But Thomas Paine was not the only American revolutionary to come up with the idea of a right to the wealth of the nation. In 1776, while serving as a delegate to the Virginia legislature, Thomas Jefferson proposed giving fifty acres of public land to any unpropertied individual who was willing to farm it. This was the first time that a new settler had ever been granted land. This programme was subsequently copied by other states, and it was probably the first government programme that sought to provide a secure income for the poor.¹⁰⁷ This idea also appealed to Paine, since it was farmland that constituted the only source of income for many residents at the time. It was certainly not the norm for every individual or family to own land. This

¹⁰⁶ Suplicy, E. M. *Citizen's Basic Income: The Answer is Blowing in the Wind*, *ibid*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ Basic Income. Thomas Jefferson, 10 October 2015 (<http://basicincome-europe.org/ubie/brief-history-basic-income-ideas/>, retrieved: 14 December 2021).

valuable commodity very often determined social status and the difference between wealth and poverty.

In an essay entitled *Agrarian Justice*, published in 1795 for the Directory and Parliament of France, Paine noted that poverty was created by a civilization that approved the right to private property.¹⁰⁸ In his essay, he stated that there is no denying the fact that the earth in its natural and cultivated state had been and continues to be the common property of mankind. In this state, every man was born to his personal property. He said that a person who cultivates the land and improves it should be entitled to a just remuneration from that activity,¹⁰⁹ but every owner should share his entitlement with other people in the matter of land ownership.¹¹⁰ Each owner of cultivated land owes society an annuity on the land they own.¹¹¹

Paine pointed out that poverty represented a natural right to private property. He also based his argument on the example of the indigenous population of the Americas, whom he said were now less disadvantaged than most of those who lived in European towns and cities.¹¹²

Paine proposed that a joint national fund should be created from this annuity, which would generate a return that would be distributed in the form of equal dividends to all to compensate for the loss of their natural inheritance. Every person at the age of twenty-one would receive fifteen pounds, and after reaching the age of fifty people would be entitled to receive ten pounds. All should have an equal share. Each individual would hold his own property as his share. Every individual in this world

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁰ Paine, T. *Agrarian Justice* (www.grundskyld.dk). Digital edition 1999, p. 8.<http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Paine1795.pdf>, retrieved: 7 November 2020).

¹¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹¹² Sulpicy, E. M. *Citizen's Basic Income*, *ibid*, p. 5.

is born with legitimate rights to a certain kind of property or its equivalent.¹¹³ He pointed out that this payment should be seen as a right and not as charity.¹¹⁴ According to Thomas Paine, land was common property and a common cultural heritage.

According to Thomas Paine, there are two kinds of property. The first is natural property, or that which comes to us from the creator of the universe: earth, air, and water. The second kind is artificial or acquired property, such as an invention, including social incomes.¹¹⁵ In Thomas Paine's conception, it is important that all holders of high incomes should compulsorily give up a fair share of those incomes to create a fund that could be used to pay out an unconditional equal income to all citizens.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 12–13.

Bertrand Russell: the path to social justice and freedom

Throughout the twentieth century, philosophers, economists, and social scientists from across the political spectrum explored how to provide every citizen with the minimum income for basic survival. After analysing the major social movements that emerged during World War I, in 1918 the philosopher Bertrand Russell published *Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*. In his treatise, he argued for a certain sum of money to be paid to everyone, whether they worked or not. A much larger income would be guaranteed by the total amount of commodities produced. It should be granted to those who are willing to engage in any work that is generally recognised as useful.¹¹⁷

In his book, Russell argues that a combination of anarchism and socialism can act as a motivation to work. If most people work modestly and their work is productive, there is no obstacle to providing a living wage for all. In an anarchist regime, Russell argues, while there might be work inactivity, this could be addressed by an ordinance whereby a financial benefit would be provided only to those willing to work and to those who cannot work through no fault of their own.

Russell says that research shows that people who have low incomes now almost always prefer well-paid jobs in order to afford a higher standard of living. A small state income would not be enough for them because, in human terms, they crave a more challenging life.¹¹⁸ Russell sees basic income as the basic building block of a developed society that will be able to

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ Russell, B. *Proposed Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Cornwall, New York: Cornwall Press, 1918), pp. 80–81.

exist reliably thanks to it. Yet, according to Russell, it would be possible to provide a „middle“ income to those who are willing to work only half as many hours. Higher incomes would be awarded to those workers who work overtime. Such a system would be entirely consistent with socialism, though certainly not with anarchism. At the time Russell formulated these ideas, however, in the early twentieth century, he was satisfied that his theory of a basic income could combine liberty with justice and that it avoided the social dangers then to be found in the proposals of orthodox socialists and anarchists.¹¹⁹

Russell believed that the introduction of a basic income could also lead to a reduction in the average length of the working day, thereby achieving full employment.¹²⁰ He argued that there were two ways in which people could choose between freedom and a high income. The first way would mean doing work for only a few hours a day and receiving a relatively lower salary than those who work full time.¹²¹ The second way would be a basic living income for all people. Russell advocates that all people should have the same, whether they work or not. Every person could live without working in this system. It would be a kind of „vagrant wage“ that would be sufficient for the needs of survival, but not for luxury.

At the same time, Russell acknowledges that this model could potentially bring with it some difficulties, because if the majority of people chose to live this lifestyle, it could be too much of an economic burden on those in work. On the other hand, Russell does not think that there would be too many individuals who would prefer a life with only a basic income and freedom, over a relatively easy job.¹²² Most people want to

¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 81–82.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 127.

¹²¹ Russell, B. *Proposed Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism*, *ibid*, pp. 126–127.

¹²² Ibid, p. 127.

live in affluence, so even if some prefer total idleness, there is no presumption of a disintegration of society.

Russell's socialism inspired many other authors. After the First World War, a number of well-developed ideas emerged in Europe concerning needs, freedom, equality, justice and democracy through a universal basic income. Two of the most prominent theorists were Mabel and Dennis Milner, who in 1918 published a text entitled *Scheme for a State Bonus*. In 1920 Dennis Milner then developed the idea in more detail in *Higher Production by a Bonus on National Output*. Both of these books put forward a proposal for a minimum income that varied according to the level of national productivity.¹²³

In 1919, Bertram Pickard followed this up in his book *The Reasonable Revolution. Being a Discussion of a State Bonus Scheme – A Proposal for a National Minimum Income*, where he proposed a national basic income which should be definitely recognised as one means of the right to life and should represent an adequate sum of money from the right to land.¹²⁴

¹²³Suplicy, E. M. Citizen's Basic Income: The Answer is Blowing in the Wind, *ibid*, p. 20.

¹²⁴Pickard, B. *The reasonable revolution. Being a discussion of a state bonus scheme – A proposal for a National Minimum Income*. New York: The Macmillan Press 1919, pp. 15–18.

Martin Luther King: the social and civil rights movement

Although unconditional basic income has been referred to for several centuries, it was only from the 1960s onwards that it began to be considered an option for ending poverty. Martin Luther King was probably the most prominent figure of that time to advocate a basic income. At the same time, similar measures were also being considered by the American administration, whose proposals provide an important context for King's speeches and writings.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson's administration created a food stamp programme to be used to purchase food. A supplementary system was also added to this programme to ensure that the elderly and disabled received a guaranteed basic income. In 1969, then-President Richard Nixon asked Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a former assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, to formulate a plan to support families, which would impose a negative income tax. Nixon delivered an address to the nation where he said that the United States should accomplish two things that previous generations had thought impossible. The first was to achieve a successful flight to the Moon¹²⁵ and the second was to eradicate poverty with a „family assistance“ programme. Nixon stated on this occasion that, if passed into law, this programme would provide the equivalent of approximately 50% of the income, \$ 3,900 USD.¹²⁶ The bill was eventually passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 243:155; however, it was not voted through by the Senate Finance Committee in 1970 by a vote of 10:6.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Neil Armstrong landed on the moon the previous month.

¹²⁶ Nowadays, this amount corresponds to at least 16 thousand USD.

¹²⁷ Suplicy, E. M. Citizen's Basic Income, *ibid.*, p. 10.

Martin Luther King Jr., who was a powerful figure in the civil rights and social movement of the day, was convinced that the simplest approach of social action would one day prove to be the most effective. And for him, basic income was a simple approach compared to the complicated and less effective systems of the time.

King raised critical questions and tried to find answers, „Why are there forty million poor people in America?“ And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth.“¹²⁸ According to King, poverty is the result of several evils, such as a lack of education, limited job opportunities, poor housing that devalues home life and stifles initiative, and fragile family relationships that limit personal development. A guaranteed basic income is one possible solution to these problems and is the simplest and most effective solution to poverty.¹²⁹ King was aware that the proposal had previously been subjected to ridicule, but he also saw that it was gradually gaining prominence in more and more public discussions. He believed that greater motivation was necessary to make it a practical reality, and he sought to provide it through his public lectures and speeches.¹³⁰

King vigorously denounced the general tacit acceptance of the notion of poor people being labelled less competent and inferior. This applied mainly to those in the lowest income groups and those who had no employment due to old age or permanent illness. In King's words, poverty would be eliminated and human dignity respected when people had the major

¹²⁸ Speech by Martin Luther King at The Southern Christian Leadership conference 1967: King, M. L. „Where Do We Go From Here?“ In: also. *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* Ed. J. M. Washington. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco 1991, pp. 245–252.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

decisions about their own lives in their own hands. This would be possible if a person had a stable basic income.¹³¹

King was aware that solid institutional arrangements had to be in place to provide a basic income as a consistently progressive measure. First and foremost, basic income must be assessed in relation to society's median income, not the lowest income. A basic income that eliminates poverty and maintains a good standard of living must also be dynamic. It must increase automatically as overall social incomes rise. Also, if a periodic assessment shows that the national income has increased, a guaranteed income should be indexed. Without these guarantees, there could be a creeping decline in the basic income, which would then fail to fulfil its purpose. For Martin Luther King, an unconditional basic income represented a programme that would benefit all poor people in particular and society more generally.¹³²

Nowadays, universal or unconditional basic income is the subject of debate and response within political philosophy, political science, economics and other disciplines. While its major theorists and proponents, such as Philippe Van Parijs and Erik Olin Wright, are already well known, it is also increasingly debated by other authors, as well as by citizens, politicians and journalists. Those who do not yet recognise its necessity in the present day can try to look beyond the twenty-first century and imagine the lives of people in the era to follow. Then they will understand that basic income is now in the early stages of being put into practice. The idea of unconditional basic income that enables all people to live in dignity in society was not born overnight. It has its own rich history and a promising future.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

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BASIC INCOME IN THE WORLD

Arguments, experiments, history

This book is an updated version of the book
published in the Czech language in Epoque
in Prague in 2021:

*Základní příjem ve světě:
argumenty, experiment, dějiny.*

This book was published within
the “Global Conflicts and Local Interactions”
Research Program, Strategy AV21.

Kniha vychází v rámci výzkumného programu
“Globální konflikty a lokální souvislosti”, Strategie AV21.

Cover Art: Žaneta Kortusová.

Published by Epoque Ltd.,
Kaprova 12, 110 00 Praha 1,
in 2021.

Layout: Studio Prestig

Print Akcent tiskárna Vimperk, Ltd.

Epoque Publishing House

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