

UBI: How to finally get introduced – a pragmatic approach from Austria

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The UBI movement is gaining track and attention globally, Austria is no exception in that regard.

The crucial challenge lying ahead of the Austrian UBI movement seems similar to other states and may sound familiar to activists around the globe: How to transform the rising awareness into political capital to finally achieve the introduction of the UBI?

Generation Grundeinkommen, an Austrian civil society association, has set-up a strategic road map to get the introduction on the national level done until mid of the upcoming decade. This long-time perspective is supplemented by tactical milestones that need to be achieved over the mid-term future.

The political system in Austria is based on the principles of representative democracies – meaning the legislative power embodies the prerogative of parliament. In the Austrian case these constitutional foundations are complemented by different mechanisms of direct democracy. Any political strategy needs to understand these checks and balances to conceptualize a valid strategy about how to gain democratic legitimation for the introduction of the UBI.

To frame it differently and more pragmatically: There are different options to choose from when planning and structuring a political campaign intending not only to promote the idea of the UBI but following the ambition to implement it.

Given the particular substance of the UBI, Generation Grundeinkommen made the deliberate decision to utilize the tools of direct democracy in future in order to first create public awareness and then channel the will of a majority.

Two steps are therefore planned: First a popular petition is rolled out to raise public consciousness for the UBI. If surpassing a certain threshold than it would be mandatory for parliament to hold a session entirely dedicated to the issue and discussing the proposal. Public attention would definitely be growing. Sailing with

tailwind the movement would embark on the journey heading for the final destination of a national referendum. The people deciding upon a simple Yes or No question.

The development of course needs to be framed and accompanied by various activities, correlated to the different stages of the palpable progress, containing political activities as well as community building and a smart communication policy.

Differently to other comparable initiatives the financing model of the UBI would be presented to the public right ahead of the campaign – in May 2019. Therefore, Generation Grundeinkommen has already commissioned the economics department of the University Linz in Austria to validate a programmatic tax proposal. The defining research question would be: How to get the UBI financed merely by consumption taxes?

The abstract can just superficially mention some crucial aspects of the thought through plan. The presentation would of course immerse deeper into the matter, explaining what activities are planned in detail, showing how the envisioned activities would be correlated with the different stages of the process and it would explain the cornerstones the tax model would be build upon.