

How proceed with UBI-Europe and a new <citizens' initiative UBI> ?

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The UBI represents an impulse for public debate and – in view of the crisis – clearly points out to better solutions. Launching a new try we could make use of the experiences gained in our first attempt, and would have a good chance to get the votes required. In doing this, a number of questions need to be answered: Should an implementation of an emancipatory UBI happen step by step or should the structural changes in the social system accompanying its introduction rather be immediate? At times of economic crisis 'big' measures are often easier to implement than small ones as these bigger changes may appear as being more adequate to the crisis and may therefore seem more inspiring or better suited for activating societal movement. In this perspective even big changes within short periods of time seem possible. One important prerequisite for this is the forming of alliances (with groups of the widest variety).

It is the aim of UBIE to cross-link individuals and groups committed to or interested in the UBI-project, to stimulate research and gain practical experience in this field, as well as spread the idea of UBI and promote well-informed public debate on this issue on a European and a world-wide scale. The ultimate goal is, of course, to introduce UBI globally.

UBI is an income high enough to safeguard a person's existence materially, and to render possible their participation/inclusion in society, and which is granted to everyone **unconditionally** and on an **individual basis, without** any **examination of their neediness** or any **'service' in return**, like for example willingness or obligation to work or to accept employment. UBIE's commitment to these four above-mentioned criteria does not exclude debates or projects of forms of partial basic income as long as it remains clear that such a partial basic income does not in any way involve any dismantling of the welfare state, and that **the ultimate aim is the basic income observing the four criteria** mentioned. (The phrasing here is based upon the proposal to change the charter of BIEN: request brought forward to adopt the 4th criterion <safeguarding of material existence and partial safeguarding> in Seoul.)

Pilot schemes / gradual implementation

a) 'vertically':

What this means is that the UBI, initially at least, is tested in a form that does not secure a person's living and participating (economically, socially, culturally, politically, ...) in society (- partial UBI).

Experience shows that within a neoliberal logic social benefits tend to be cut rather than increased.

There is a great risk that the advantages sought through UBI – such as: social (material) security, more freedom in developing one’s personality and in self-determining one’s lifestyle (combining of employment, social / political activity, family, time dedicated to recreation and leisure...) cannot be realised with such an approach. Also, the ‘uncoupling’ from security of one’s livelihood and employment would not be possible.

b) ‘horizontally’:

This means an approach in which UBI is introduced step by step, each step pertaining to a specific stage in a person’s life: sufficient basic income for children, for adults during sabbaticals, adequate basic retirement pensions, sufficiently high ‘existence-securing’ payments or benefits (which should also be ‘individualised’ - i.e. each individual should have the same right to them - while any restrictions or enforcing measures should be done away with, to get rid of all possibilities to sanction people), sufficient student or education benefits... - all that could then swiftly be embraced by or further developed towards a UBI.

In such an approach more and more groups in society could gradually be encompassed. And neoliberal intentions could not make use of all that! (As a consequence of this, this latter approach is preferable to partial basic income schemes which will always be under major neoliberal threat.)

This approach seems auspicious also as it promises constant extension: Gradually, more and more people would be put in a position to live free and self-determined lives.

c) ‘supported by cost-free provision of certain public goods and services’ (e.g. public transport, energy supplies, etc.)

With such an approach the actual amount of the Unconditional Basic Income could be considerably lower without lessening its emancipatory effect.

Strategically relevant arguments for UBI:

We should bear in mind what the goals are that the UBI can help to achieve:

By providing financial security

UBI as an important step towards realising the human right to social security and personal development.

The ‘good life’ for all

Greater social justice (redistribution of wealth from rich to poor)

Democratic participation in decision-making

New definition and assessment of labour

Life is not just work(ing life)

Creation of opportunities for engagement in activities pursuing ecological, cultural, social, economic and political aims

Liberation from the fear of losing one's livelihood, stress relief

Advancement of health

Total abolition of poverty due to lack of income

More equal distribution of opportunities in general, gender equality in particular, justice in distribution of resources

Social peace