

↳ Adrienne Goehler

**Sustainability needs Deceleration needs**  
**Basic Income | Livelihood**  
**enables Deceleration enables Sustainability**

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of the German original print version:  
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# Introduction

## **Patrizia Nanz Scientific Director IASS Potsdam**

Every society needs to protect people against economic crises and hardship in order to safeguard their human dignity. A decade ago, this became an established international political consensus and was subsequently integrated into the very first of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 1.3). Human beings will only be able to care for others and the environment if they don't have to fear for their livelihoods. A universal basic income could contribute to realizing such a system of social protection. It is therefore not surprising that UN institutions have revisited the idea of a Universal Basic Income since the Covid-19 crisis hit the world with disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable in our societies. This reinvigorated debate provides a timely occasion for the IASS to offer this abridged and online English-language edition of Adrienne Goehler's book, which was originally produced for a German-speaking readership. We are very grateful for the opportunity to join forces with the Heinrich Böll Foundation in this endeavour, a committed advocate of socio-ecological issues and well connected in the global South. The varied and vivid stories told in this volume support the idea that humans can, in myriad ways, shape and determine not only their everyday lives, but also the institutional and political world around them. As this book powerfully reminds us through these stories, Universal Basic Income | Livelihood might help people to contribute to sustainability transformations. I am convinced that successful transformations towards sustainability need such stories and narratives as much as they need sound scientific knowledge and evidence. That's why I am very pleased that the IASS scientific work towards sustainability is now also supplemented by the narratives collected in this online edition.

## **Barbara Unmüßig President Heinrich-Böll-Foundation**

The corona pandemic is acting as a fire accelerator, exacerbating massive inequalities around the world and reinforcing them in concert with many other crises – from climate catastrophe to government failure. It exposes exploitative conditions in the global economy – such as suffered by millions of migrant workers in agriculture, in mining, in the textile sector and in the global care economy. As data now demonstrate, we are not all equally threatened by the virus or affected by the measures taken to stem its spread. The vulnerable groups, the already marginalized in every country, are disproportionately affected. In any case, in the short term the pandemic will deepen the global divide. I applaud the United Nations Development Programme | UNDP for proposing, that a Basic Income should be paid to the more than 2.7 billion people living on or below the poverty line – at least temporarily. Instead of paying off debts, the interest and redemption payments could flow into the basic income. The pandemic could thus become the starting point for new initiatives to tackle social inequality and climate change with aid and debt relief packages and to address the structural causes of poverty and resource exploitation. More than ever before, it has become clear that the precariously employed and the millions upon millions in the informal sector need social security systems that will not let them fall into disarray when disasters such as a pandemic or droughts, storms and floods strike. This is a debate that is timely and needs to be advanced urgently internationally. Therefore, the Heinrich Böll Foundation supports the English online edition of selected articles of the book »Sustainability needs Deceleration needs Basic Income | Livelihood«.

# Opening remarks

**This title in its bulkiness is both: a thesis and the shortest possible summary<sup>1</sup>**

**Nachhaltigkeit braucht  
Entschleunigung braucht  
Grund<sup>ein</sup><sub>aus</sub>kommen**

**Grund<sup>ein</sup><sub>aus</sub>kommen  
ermöglicht Entschleunigung  
ermöglicht Nachhaltigkeit**

**Sustainability Needs  
Deceleration Needs  
Basic Income | Livelihood**

**Basic Income | Livelihood  
Enables Deceleration  
Enables Sustainability**

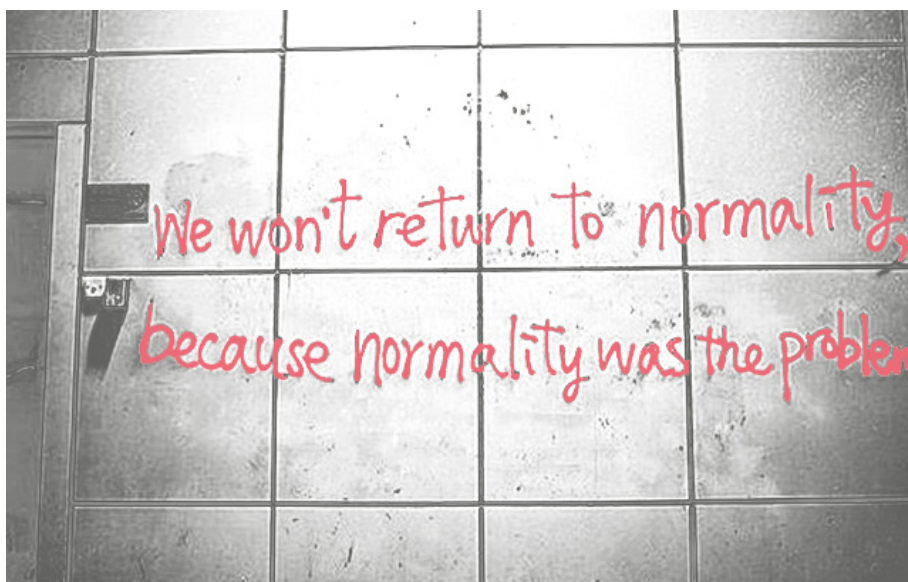
The initial idea of making this triangular relationship more internationally accessible – not least for their own research – came from fellow-colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies | IASS in Potsdam. But without COVID 19 this publication would not have gained such a sense of urgency. The virus acted and still acts like a magnifying glass, bringing the research topics we work on more sharply into focus; it calls so much into question, paralyzes and unveils what was already latent. Irrefutable certainties and litanies like »there is no alternative«, which appeared to be set in stone, lost their validity – just like the dictate of acceleration that reversed turned into its opposite. Since March 2020 the world has experienced forced deceleration. How can that become self-determined? How might we preserve the precious experience of slowing down in our minds and actions? The planet got a

<sup>1</sup> Published in March 2020, Parthas Verlag, Berlin



breathing space, but simultaneously concern is mounting over the way in which the necessary fight against global warming is being overlooked. More and more people are connecting the pandemic to the overexploitation of nature and humans; it has exposed the utter vulnerability of both. We have to deal with the fact that the virus is hitting the poor hardest worldwide, that the pandemic is cementing gender roles, because the required care work in hospitals and homes is mainly done by women. And suddenly, the fact that many of the self-employed people, including artists and scientists, are losing their livelihoods becomes apparent, naked and unembellished. The question of 'the pursuit of happiness' is also posed anew, or perhaps for the first time, to the immobilized 'homo economicus.' Since April 2020, the debates on the basic income have acquired unexpected dynamics and a sense of urgency worldwide. What if a Basic Income were introduced? If that meant we had more time (!) to transform the difficulties of the pandemic into a fundamentally different way of cultivating, thinking, eating, travelling, doing business, etc.

In July 2020, the United Nations Development Programme | UNDP proposed the immediate introduction of a temporary Basic Income that could stem the spread of the coronavirus pandemic by allowing the world's poorest people to stay at home. »A six-month guaranteed handout for 2.7 billion living below or just above the poverty line in 132 developing countries would cost around \$199 billion per month and could be funded by repurposing external debt service payments«<sup>2</sup>.



2 [https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/newscentre/news/2020/Temporary\\_Basic\\_Income\\_to\\_protect\\_the\\_worlds\\_poorest\\_people\\_slow\\_COVID19.html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/newscentre/news/2020/Temporary_Basic_Income_to_protect_the_worlds_poorest_people_slow_COVID19.html)

# Introduction

**Up front: I'm not an academic, but nevertheless I conduct research because I am driven by questions and seek answers. I agree with the late author and literary scholar Silvia Bovenschen, who migrated from science to art, because she was no longer interested in ›cleanly supporting‹ maximally original theses, but rather in the freedom and independence of thought, in »wild thinking«, which she no longer found in the dominating scientific practices**

Even though as a psychologist, I learned from Alexander von Humboldt that truly everything is connected to everything, everything is interwoven with everything. Since the 1980s, I have been occupying myself in my writings and actions with the liquefaction of ossified borders, conventions and viewing habits. This is because I am convinced that it's not the usual boundaries and well-trodden paths but rather deeply transdisciplinary forms of knowledge and multiple perspectives that will allow for a creative approach to an "insecure, fluid modernity," which – according to Zygmunt Bauman – has no more inherited places and structures to share. Thus the disappearance of a general sense of security is perceptible, and with it, fear increases. It is a fear that, as we have observed with great concern in recent times, is also expresses itself through massive nationalism, xenophobia and homophobia, misogyny and excesses of violence. It is a fear that calls for easy and quick solutions and for people who simplify the world for a homogeneity that can exist only in projections. The global economic and power elites as well as the states and their acting institutions not only lack answers but are currently increasing and accelerating the danger of fracturing democracies. On a worldwide scale, the social and democratic basis of societies is being eroded; the displacement battle is visible in its extreme, and ideas of justice are becoming polarized. Rapidly increasing inequality takes expression in the fact that 43 billionaires retain as much wealth as half of the world's population. The richest one percent thus has more capital than the entire rest.<sup>3</sup>

3 According to Oxfam, 82 percent of global asset growth went to the wealthiest one percent last year, while the poorer half of the world population – approximately 3.7 billion people – got nothing. One per-

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With a warm home and enough to eat a human being is not yet very much, but he must have that warm home and enough to eat if his better nature is to be activated

**Friedrich von Schiller**

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This unmistakable fact of worsening social inequality is, in the meantime, assessed as a systemic risk in the sustainability sciences.<sup>4</sup> This is why an ecological transformation without social equality is not conceivable. It is painful and depressing that this essential correlation is receiving so little attention.

Where people are exposed to threat, to fear and poverty, where they cannot address their abilities and wishes to shape and be useful, the basis of security, of empathy for others, for the world around them, for the planet, erodes.

Cultural scientist and gender theorist Christina v. Braun has asserted that 'fundamentalisms thrive where foundations are lacking.' Whoever doesn't feel like she and he is being addressed or taken seriously, or whoever often has the feeling of being part of the problem instead of the solution, will also not feel responsible for a worldwide paradigm shift that is so urgently needed in order to make possible a livable life for all of the world's 7.8 billion people.

These are conceivably poor premises to anchor to anchor questions of sustainability in people's consciousnesses and give them the space (for action) that they need. Reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change | IPCC are unambiguous; according to them, a small window of time to react remains for us – maybe a decade – to make a good and dignified life possible for all still existing species on our extremely weakened planet by taking radical steps and substantial cuts. In order to keep the rise in temperature below 1.5 degrees, we have to invest five times more effort(!).<sup>5</sup>

A dignified life for everyone can only be a life in which the limitation of worldwide resources and climate change are essential benchmarks for action. This must be connected to a practical critique of the unavoidable

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cent of the world's populace owns more than half of world's wealth. <https://www.oxfam.de/unsere-arbeit/themen/soziale-ungleichheit>. Davos World Economic Forum, January 2018

4 Discussion paper from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies | IASS, Systemische Risiken und Dynamische Strukturen, 2017

5 According to the IPCC, an ice-free Arctic Ocean in summer will exist probably one time per century with 1.5 degrees of warming. At two degrees, probably at least one time per decade. Approximately 70 to 90 percent of the coral reefs disappear when it gets 1.5 degrees warmer than it was before industrialization. At two degrees, they will practically all be lost. Most researchers agree that the world is heading towards three to four degrees of warming without additional efforts to avoid this. zdf heute Journal, 8.10.18

See the global report of the Weltdiversitätsrates | World Diversity Council 6.5.2019: »Nature is getting worse to an unprecedented degree, and the extinction of species is accelerating – with serious effects for people throughout the world.«

consequences of 'higher, faster, further, richer' that produce increasing social inequality worldwide. This stands in opposition to any possible idea of sustainable life. In the discourse about sustainability, a more systematic integration of the themes of social inequality, decent livelihoods and risks of poverty is necessary – and, vice versa, aspects of sustainability also have to be negotiated in the context of social issues. Now strong common action is necessary to confront the increasing risks of poverty that make a sustainable life impossible – even while the ecological footprint of poorer people worldwide is clearly smaller than that of wealthier people.<sup>6</sup>

The distortions sketched out here can only be dealt with if we leave behind thinking and acting in silos and start creating permeabilities between fields of conflict, establish an understanding and do what is obvious and plausible: connect scientific and artistic knowledge and approaches to movements in order to fashion together the necessary transformation in common.

Only then can the view become clear that people have to be almost free of fear in respect to their livelihood in order to experience themselves as a subject of change and take part in their surroundings.

Sustainability has to be built on a foundation of the senses

Sustainability needs new forms of learning

Sustainability has to deal with new forms of work

Sustainability presents other assignments to academic teaching and research

Sustainability is to connect in knowledge, experience and action

An aesthetics of sustainability targets the creation of contexts.

The current dominant academic practice mostly obscures the first sustainability researcher Alexander von Humboldt's legacy. As early as 1799, he asserted that everything is an »interdependency ( ... ), all living beings are animated by the same breath«.<sup>2</sup> Neither does one find his view in scientific discourses, according to which art and science must be thought together, for a world that we cannot fathom without our intuition and imagination. »Nature must be felt«.

The current sustainability sciences are lacking three things: an approach to the magic and poetry of nature, an open view towards artistic research and a dissemination of knowledge relevant to action beyond the academic community. Science and politics must dare more Humboldt!

Much to my great astonishment, the most obvious and most needed connection doesn't exist. There are basically no reciprocal references between the transformative sciences and the networks that are growing worldwide and are currently testing and researching the effects of an Unconditional Basic Income | UBI in pilot projects at numerous places across the world and researching its effects. In various scientific discourses on sustainability,

<sup>6</sup> Seen historically, social inequality belongs to the essential causes of societal decay. See Davide Brocchi: *Nachhaltigkeit und soziale Ungleichheit*, Springer 2019

one can find – in addition to ecology and economy as the two pillars(!) of sustainability – a dutiful though peripheral reference to the ›pillar‹ of the social. However, the list of scientific publications about this dimension of sustainability is far shorter and is not present in the top journals.

Though there are numerous academics who are thinking about the financial feasibility of a an UBI with respect to tax on resources, ecology, CO2 or transactions, the cultural and social effects of a Livelihood and the resulting expansion of possibilities for sustainable life practice have not yet been described.

A fearless economic existence – as my thesis goes – is the best prerequisite for a person to be able to take her and his fate into her own hands. A livelihood could be something like the hammer and anvil one needs to forge her own luck.

And so this question becomes pressing: why does the international movement for a Basic Income not explicitly refer to the global sustainability goals | SDGs<sup>7</sup> that were passed by the United Nations in 2016:

**Goal 1: No poverty – End poverty in all its forms everywhere.<sup>8</sup>**

By 2030, end extreme poverty – currently defined as the share of people who are forced to survive on less than 1.25 dollars per day – for all people in the world.

**Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.**

By 2030, enable all people, regardless of their age, gender, handicap, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status to become self-determined and support their social, economic and political inclusion.

Instead of making the very obvious connection between these goals and the goals of the international Basic Income movement, mutual ignorance dominates. Still.

<sup>7</sup> Just as this publication is being completed, I heard about an initiative of the international guaranteed basic income network BIEN; it is their declared objective to introduce a Universal Basic Income | UBI based on the 17 SDGs.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

## Basic Income | Basic Livelihood

There is a certain risk inherent in replacing the fairly well-established term ›Basic Income | Grundeinkommen‹ with the term ›Livelihood | Grundauskommen‹. On various international search sites on the Internet, the findings are in a proportion of 10:1.

Despite this disparity, I would like to continue exploring the term Livelihood and its connotations because it establishes a relationship to universal human rights as well as the concept of 'what one needs to live'. In addition, the meaning resonates with 'being on good terms' with others | miteinander auskommen and 'coping with' or 'managing circumstances' | zurechtkommen.

Living, make a living, subsistence, sustenance, alimentation, bread and butter, well-being, get by, survive, hang on, daily bread, endure, withstand, persevere, sustain, carry through, come through, keep afloat, live on, live through, pull through, see through, nine-to-five, to make a living, to keep oneself afloat, one's livelihood is taken care of, one's money is enough to live on, to get along, to be sufficient, to suffice, to be rich, to make a living, to make ends meet, to get along, to find a living, get along with, stand well with, harmonize<sup>9</sup>

Basic Income is dominated by the aspect of paid work, the idea of earning, wages for performance; there is too little freedom associated to it:

earnings, pay, payoff, revenue, salary, wages, compensation, reward, remuneration, benefits, returns, gains, assets, take-home pay, net pay, net, hire, takings, fee, bread, bacon, gravy, harvest, cash on the barrel, wage, compensation, remuneration, pay, payment, expense allowance, earnings, remuneration, gratification, Heuer, fee, reimbursement of expenses, salary, salair, tantieme, earnings, remuneration<sup>10</sup>

Grundauskommen, well-being, is not based on exchange, is a gift without an expectation, reflects a different ambience than simply being paid for time, is not a relationship of exchange. It is about the foundation of life for all: Basic Livelihood. And the path must lead from Einkommen to Auskommen, from income to livelihood<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.openthesaurus.de/synonyme/Auskommen> translation

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.openthesaurus.de/synonyme/Lohn> translation

<sup>11</sup> Prof. Dr. Barbara Adam, 2018, discussion

I directly associate AUSKOMMEN with my 18 years of life and that of my parents in the German Democratic Republic. It was a keyword for my attitude towards life back then: We had our AUSKOMMEN; we lacked personal freedom, but not the existential fundamentals for life. We had an apartment for 56 East German Marks, a Trabi, kindergarten, school and a healthcare system for free. My parents' work colleagues were their friends; we spent free time with them in private places of retreat such as the dacha with a garden. There was enough to eat, even if it was limited in amount and options. This AUSKOMMEN made a reliable social net possible. But it didn't help against the suspicion, the fear, the distrust in others; this was instrumentalized by the Stasi. Neither did it help against the so defining fact that the border tore my family into two parts and this separation drove my father to alcoholism. Without personal freedom, a BASIC INCOME | LIVELIHOOD, does not enable self-determined lifestyles.<sup>12</sup>

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I alternate between using the two terms because I understand this publication as a contribution to the discussion within the movement for a Universal Basic Income as well as the discourse on sustainability. But I would also like to strongly invite a consideration of Basic Income as Livelihood. In German, the two terms are both words that are created by joining together two compounds. They constitute a linguistic puzzle, comparable to the shift in perspective present in the terms convex vs. concave. Einkommen vs. Auskommen – the German terms only differ in their first syllables. In English there is neither a uniform designation nor a uniform spelling, one finds Basic Livelihood and Livelihood side by side, just like: Guaranteed Basic Income, Universal Basic Income | UBI, Unconditional Basic Income | UBI, guaranteed universal basic income, unconditional basic income. In South Africa and Namibia, the term Basic Income Grant | BIG is common. To make reading easier, I will primarily use Livelihood and Basic Income or UBI in particular in the combination Basic Income | Livelihood. I base my general thoughts about the Basic Income on the definition used by the Basic Income Earth Network | BIEN<sup>13</sup>:

A **Basic Income** is a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means-test or work requirement.

➤ **Periodic** – It is paid at regular intervals \_for example every month\_, not as a one-off grant.

➤ **Cash payment** – It is paid in an appropriate medium of exchange, allowing those who receive it to decide what they spend it on. It is not, therefore,

<sup>12</sup> Kathrin Wolf, Leipzig, went to the West Germany directly after the Berlin Wall fell

<sup>13</sup> <https://basicincome.org>

paid either in kind \_such as food or services\_ or in vouchers dedicated to a specific use.

➤ **Individual** – It is paid on an individual basis – and not, for instance, to households.

➤ **Universal** – It is paid to all, without means test.

➤ **Unconditional** – It is paid without a requirement to work or to demonstrate willingness-to-work.<sup>14</sup>

A note on the pages between the contributions that look like wallpaper: with the help of a search engine, I spent over a year following up on and collecting new articles in newspapers and magazines on the keywords Grundeinkommen, Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen | BGE, Basic Income, Unconditioned and Universal Basic Income. I was astonished by the extent to which this concept is being reported on internationally and controversially, and seem to have the interest of the majority for their urgent discussion. Throughout the world, this concept appears within and across the entire range of discourses from major dailies, business and financial papers all the way to small regional papers and online magazines of every political orientation. Such widespread conversation indicates that this is definitely no longer a niche issue or an extraordinary subject.

## Deceleration

Time and the feeling of permanent acceleration – breathlessness – plays a role among many interviews and contributions in this publication. A sustainable life practice is not compatible with an often described and felt lack of time, with the strongly sensed pressure to increase efficiency and self-optimization, or with the feeling of not keeping up in an accelerated present, which forces us to multitask. It demands synchronicity from us and intensifies our perception of stress.

Complaints about acceleration have been already connected with industrialization. But to the extent that acceleration has intensified and radicalized in our present days, it no longer just effects work conditions but also all of life. Acceleration has become totalizing. The philosopher Byung-Chul Han, author of the »The Burnout Society | Müdigkeitsgesellschaft«<sup>15</sup>, describes the most important change of capitalism from Marx's time, when factory owners and workers faced each other in a relationship of exploitation, to the current conditions of self-exploitation, in which people have become the entrepreneurs of themselves, caught in the illusion of self-realization. Thus neoliberalism forms a free entrepreneur out of an oppressed worker, who now endlessly works towards his own self-optimization.

We are constantly saving time by using faster means of transport, fast food, faster information media and tools, and so we pack more and more into a single day. Hartmut Rosa calls it the »quantity increase per time unit«. We

14 The World Bank has published a substantial report titled »Exploring Universal Basic Income: A guide to navigating concepts, evidence, and practices«, <https://basicincome.org/news/2020/08/a-new-world-bank-report-exploring-universal-basic-income/> Malcolm Tony, 2020

15 Byung-Chul Han The Burnout Society, Stanford Briefs, 2015



believe that we need to be reachable 24/7, as though we were constantly on call. The present with its impositions makes us pant; our fantasy suffers under the weight of exhaustion and multiple fears. We find ourselves in a rat race, the speed of which we cannot determine. Many people don't believe they can escape it. The significant increase in depression and burnout are symptoms of this »too much«, which is simultaneously too little.<sup>16</sup>

Adrienne Goehler



Gabriela Wachter: Money Performance Career Efficiency Performance Growth Competition

The time researcher Barbara Adam thus also postulates: »We don't just need an ecological ›footprint‹, but also a ›timeprint‹ ». And: »The idea of the ecological footprint refers to the dimensions of space and matter but negates the dimension of time. At best it leaves the time element implicit. When time is included explicitly as ecological timeprint, parallel to the ecological footprint, then the time element becomes visible: we are challenged to think about the reach of action over time as their span range from nano-seconds to millennia.«<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> In addition, mental illness is also the biggest cause for sickness-related early retirements. In the last 22 years, the percentage of people who went into retirement early as a result of mental suffering increased from 18.6 to 43 percent. Deutsche Rentenversicherung 2018 and Destatis 2017: The costs for mental illness alone amount to 44.4 billion euros per year in Germany.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Adam: Time. Polity Press, 2004

It is with great longing that I remember »Momo«, the protagonist from Michael Ende's novel. Those who own people's time, so Momo recognized, have unlimited power. She brought the time back that had been stolen by the grey »time thieves« when she realized that people had forgotten, in the course of saving time, to live in the here-and-now and to enjoy life's beauty. And I think back to John Franklin, the polar researcher whom Stan Nadolny memorialized in his novel »The Discovery of Slowness« because his perception rejected everything that was fast and superficial; it transformed slowness into calm.

I also feel connected to Hartmut Rosa through the idea of deceleration as a further prerequisite for the chance of leading a sustainable life. Rosa can only see the process of this transformation as being successful when it exists in conversation with a different approach to time, and with a Basic Income. Here, in advance, a quote from the discussion between Hartmut Rosa and Maheba Goedeke Tort: »The current basic social security system enables us to avoid starvation, but it takes away our place in the world«.

### **Digitalization of Work and Basic Income | Livelihood**

In addition to the immense challenges sketched out above, there is another Herculean assignment: the comprehensive new determination of life and work in the context of an advancing digitalization in which gainful employment will change qualitatively and quantitatively in diverse and very fundamental ways. In connection to the increasing meaning of the service sector, work-society is characterized by the fact that an increasing part of the populace no longer has consistent – not to mention life-long – gainful employment, but rather works on a self-employed or project basis. This is often accompanied by poorer payment and greater insecurity.

At the beginning of the digital age in the year 2002, the people could – for the first time – store more information digitally than with the analog method. Another ten years later, the term Arbeit 4.0 | work 4.0 began circulating; it designates the fourth industrial revolution. Since then, there have been a large number of studies that grapple with the effects of work life until now. Many of them assume a considerable loss of traditional gainful jobs which will be done by machines in the future; they also predict radical changes. An often cited – and at the same time also often criticized – study by the researchers Osborne and Frey from Oxford University assumes that there is a high risk of 47% of positions of gainful employment in the USA to become automated in the coming years.<sup>18</sup> In 2016, the Davos World Economic Forum estimated the number of workplaces that would disappear in the 15 most important industrial and newly industrialized countries as a result of the »fourth industrial revolution« at 5 million in the next five years.<sup>19</sup> Women's jobs are particularly affected.<sup>20</sup>

18 Frey, C.B.; Osborne, The Future of Employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation? Oxford 2013

19 [www.bilanz.ch](http://www.bilanz.ch) 20.01.16

20 [www.libess.de](http://www.libess.de) A study about the effects of advancing digitalization on work. 16.02.18

Corporations such as Siemens, SAP, Telecom and the big players in Silicon Valley have agreed about these prognoses, whereby the discussion about a Basic Income has gained speed because it has been strengthened by a rather unexpected side.

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A kind of guaranteed basic income will be completely unavoidable (...), because not everyone on this earth is a software engineer.

**Siemens CEO Kaeser,  
Wirtschaftsgipfel of the SZ, 20.11.16**

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A unconditional basic income helps everyone.

**SAP CEO Leukert, faz 21.01.16**

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The idea of a unconditional basic income is interesting given the background of today's problems of distribution: there is a lot to do, but the tasks don't reach the people who could perform them and the people don't find the tasks that they would like to fulfill.

**Thomas Jorberg, Vorstand GLS Bank |  
www.wirtschaft-fuer-grundeinkommen.com**

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Approximately every second citizen supports the idea of a guaranteed basic income. According to a study by the Deutsche Wirtschaftsinstitut | DIW, between 45 and 52 percent of the populace support the introduction of this model. The authors cite representative surveys from the years between 2016 and 2018. But there are big differences between young and old, East and West – as well as the open questions of financing. The Green party and the Linke are demanding model testing.

**MDR.de 10.04.19**

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In contrast, the current federal government and influential voices from the unions continue to insist that the introduction of algorithms in the worlds of work can create as many new positions of gainful employment as would be destroyed by them.

This optimistic perception is even questioned by a study that was financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research.<sup>21</sup> The authors conclude, with many subjunctive verbs, that fears of possible unemployment were possibly exaggerated. »Thus the substitution of work by machines possibly also increases the demand for work in the sectors«. And »for the observed European countries and observed period of time,« i.e.

the past, »people are running more with than against machines.« These opinions include another small but fine »if ... then« determination: »The scale of the positive labor demand effects resulting from automation critically depends on the distribution of profits from technological change.« Is it calming when researchers come to the conclusion that fears are exaggerated? And when the German Trade Union Federation | Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund comes to the conclusion: »We see neither a necessity nor social acceptance for a system change towards a guaranteed basic income«?<sup>22</sup>

In any case, it seems to me to be rather negligent to refrain from talking openly, loudly and controversially about the inevitable or feared effects of and for people, freed from their work whose feelings Richard Sennett describes as »the specter of uselessness«.<sup>23</sup> How one reacts to the speechlessness of governmental politics can be interpreted from the last election results.

A lack of existential fear is vital to be able to experience the disappearance of traditional gainful employment – as it is expected by the large digital players in business – not as a threat but rather as a moment of freedom to think, test and do other things. And here, a worldwide conceived and envisaged Basic Income as a human right for everyone could be a foundation. Because if you don't have to fear for your own survival, if you have your Livelihood, you can be more generous and relaxed about everything – also in dealing with the unknown future of our work and life ...

**Those who don't have to fear for their existence can think about work in a completely different way.**

One could also consider a position as it was already formulated in 1983 by the Protestant Church of Westfalia: »When gainful employment runs out, then there is the possibility and necessity to rediscover and reanimate the wealth of the »vita activa««.<sup>24</sup> But it demands individual, societal and political bravery. Because breaking out from under the grip of the past, necessitates dealing with fear and independence, with the loss of personal security and state welfare.

One can imagine how it could influence the psychological state of the republic if the fear of so many were to subside – the fear of losing one's existence and being stuck in a trap of dependency, unemployment and social marginalization. An air of dignity could flow through the land because individuals, even if at a very modest level, would have the freedom to choose. To be able to decide from time to time that the bare essentials has to suffice in order to devote oneself to someone or something else or just leisure – this could set energy free.

22 DGB, Kursbuch Arbeiten 4.0.

23 Richard Sennett. Die Kultur des neuen Kapitalismus. Berlin 2006

24 Elisabeth Conradi, Sabine Plonz (Um)Bewertung und (Neu)organisation der Tätigkeiten, SWI Verlag 2000

Because above all, chronic existential fear is the big opponent of the creativity and sovereignty we need on all levels to handle the insecurities of the present day, to organize life and work, so that we could all have our livelihoods and, in the process, move along a path that does not mean the exploitation of nature for a supposed progress.

This is why a focus is being placed more and more on the question of what forms of recognition and participation can be – and must be – offered by society to its citizens if conventional gainful employment gives fewer and fewer people the perspective of social positioning and at the same time too much of the socially necessary work remains unpaid.

A Livelihood could inspire the development of fundamentally different ways of living and working. This would make it easier for the vision of a just, peaceful and ecologically reconciled society to come into being. This way, the »transformation that is especially relevant, even existential, for the future of humanity ( ... ), the shaping of our lifestyles in accordance with the foundations of sustainable development«<sup>25</sup> can be considered more easily.

### **Interrelationship between sustainability, deceleration and Basic Income | Livelihood.**

Two researchers at the IASS<sup>26</sup> determined the essential qualities and pre-requisites for sustainability in a survey among colleagues: fairness and participation stand at the top of the list. Both motifs, as I observe, are not sufficiently reflected in the international scientific publications on the subject of sustainability. But both, fairness as well as participation could be fulfilled through the establishment of a Basic Livelihood.

All of the contexts and questions mentioned here are good reasons to say: we must sound out the relationships between wealth and poverty anew. We must contrast the loss of traditional gainful employment with the need for ecological, societal and socially necessary work, which has remained mostly unpaid up to this point and is a burden on women's backs.

25 Transformations to Sustainability in the Anthropocene, IASS  
<https://www.iass-potsdam.de/en/institute>

26 Narratives and Images of Sustainability. Wie wir Nachhaltigkeit am IASS erzählen: Manuel Rivera, Oscar Schmidt, März 2018; unpublished manuscript

For this reason, I have created a triangle of relationships that I consider to be fundamental and reciprocally strengthening in their interrelationship as well as indispensable, if the necessary major changes are meant to succeed, to which transformative sustainability research would like to contribute.

**Sustainability needs  
deceleration needs  
Basic Income | Livelihood**

**Basic Income | Livelihood  
enables deceleration  
enables sustainability**

I have discussed this interrelationship with many people – people who are looking at the issue from different perspectives, who come from different regions in terms of expertise and geography, and who are introducing their respective knowledge and experience into this discourse.

The first internal echo in response to the sketch of my research subject at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies | IASS, was encouraging.

Dear Adrienne,

Thank you so much for your lecture on the truly exciting and inspiring concept of an unconditional guaranteed basic income. I continue to ruminate on it, and questions as well as ideas are wandering through my head. How does a society change so that the possibility arises to experience work not primarily as a necessary way of making money, but rather as a meaningful task? How do social conditions change when more people can perform social tasks because it does not completely undermine them financially? Or would an unconditional basic income be counterproductive here, because less pressure could be built up to pay for this work adequately and with dignity? Would an unconditional, a guaranteed basic income advance freedom and self-determination and create a new self-consciousness? Or would it be an expanded form of bread and games that lulls people into complacency and thus prevents them from critically examining and recognizing where fundamental change is necessary? Would it lead to more justice, or – without it being criticized loud enough – to the wealth of this world remaining on the bank accounts of the very few? It is good that there are people who are addressing this question intensely! <sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Judith von Pogrell, IASS

While I was leafing through my thoughts, I found and gathered my counterpart rather than systematically searching for them; wherever I felt a resonance, whether a blink, a curiosity, a violent reaction, even a rejection, I followed it up.

I adopt and recontextualize others' smart ideas because, for me, sustainability also means not constantly reinventing the wheel. Thus I will include a number of older texts from different authors.

I am interested in what could change other people's work if the people with whom and for whom they respectively work had a Unconditional Basic Income. How would these individual lives develop if chronic existential fear did not dominate everything? How would agricultural policy and developmental policy look like if they were tied to a Basic Income in the respective countries? What can we learn from the pilot projects of a Universal Basic Income in Namibia and Kenya?

Or how could an entire region change if the phase-out from fossil fuels was accompanied by an Universal Basic Income? This is why the Lusatia coal region repeatedly comes up as an obvious place to test out a new socially acceptable model like the Basic Income.

It has become a book of essays and interviews, full of narratives of headstrong and obstinate characters who questioned the interrelation I claimed.

I collected their stories, texts and objects. Discoveries of sketches, drawings, tears, association and I got insights into very different perspectives and approaches of the people who are getting closer to a vision of the good life for all.

Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may be based only on considerations of the common good.

**1789, Declaration of Human and Civic Rights**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**1948, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,  
United Nations General Assembly**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of solidarity.

**2018, Amnesty International reworked version,  
sensitive to discrimination**

The idea of a Basic Income | Livelihood is a gradually spreading proclamation into reality. Its origins lie in Thomas Morus' »Utopia«. It

- ↳ is a necessary, but not sufficient requirement for opening up spaces of possibility
- ↳ is neither a universal remedy nor an all-purpose cleaner
- ↳ will not turn a frog into a prince
- ↳ would be a paradigm shift from ›must and should‹ to ›can and want‹
- ↳ is a decontamination agent
- ↳ would empower self-empowerment
- ↳ could balance out the development from increasingly desolate rural areas to boomtowns
- ↳ is an anti-victim idea
- ↳ provides the freedom to choose between different life concepts and phases
- ↳ is a social and psychological antithesis to the social transfer systems and thus of shame, fear and stigmatization
- ↳ enables a redistribution between approximately 56 billion paid and 96 billion unpaid working hours per year
- ↳ can enable the coexistence of diverse forms of gainful employment, care, further education and the social and cultural activities through the separation of work and income
- ↳ would create the foundation for a more just distribution of income between women and men 231 years (!) after the French Revolution

Without existential fear, the idea of doing and creating something that is based on one's own potential, abilities and wishes could flourish. This is the reason for the passion that drives the debate: it's about DIGNITY. About freedom. About the possibility to say NO to meaningless and degrading work, and to low wages. It strengthens the individual!

With a Unconditional Basic Income, it could be about Karl Marx's vision of a fulfilling life, of an oscillation between; it being possible ›to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind without ever becoming a herdsman or critic.«<sup>28</sup>

**Adrienne Goehler**

28 Die deutsche Ideologie. Marx/Engels, MEW 3 <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/8116796-for-as-soon-as-the-distribution-of-labour-comes-into>



It is about the ability of humans to bring new  
things into the world

Hannah Arendt



# Basic Income | Livelihood – Who gives me words to tell ... Mother's milk and lunch box

**Elke Schmitter** word specialist for novels, poems, stories and articles

We do not only talk with words, our words also tell us something. They are little storage media; insignificant, yet growing in richness and significance the longer we contemplate them, engage with them and carefully disassemble them. How this works is slightly different from person to person and from generation to generation. As children we were raised by adults and were familiarized with their language and their vocabulary. But who raised the adults?

My German parents were children in the 20s and 30s of the last Century. Their parents were humble working-class people. Back then this meant that they had an income which was a little more than the bare minimum. Their demands were minimal and that is how it had to be.

The threat of destitution was not a nightly bedfellow, but it was dangerously close: visible in their neighborhood – a few doors down – at the doorstep of other families, who had been unlucky once too often.

For my parents that meant not to expect too much, and it meant that all achievements came from hard work. »There is no such thing as a free lunch« was a saying of my childhood. It came from my grandparents, whose children were my parents, who got it with their mothers' milk, as it were, and in their lunch boxes. »There is no such thing as a free lunch« meant that you get nothing for free. Whatever you want in life has to be earned first.

Whoever was raised this way is suspicious of the idea of a Basic Income. What kind of a shady deal lurks hidden behind this, and how much will I owe? I still experience this reflex whenever there is talk of Basic Income. I can counter the reflex, and can reason why it is wrong. But reflexes are actually rarely wrong, for they are tiny storage media also, inconspicuous but full of their own wisdom. And much faster than rational reflection.

Basic Livelihood: There is something warm and comforting about it. Whoever manages to secure their existence by living within their means is seen as wise, in many if not in all cultures. A feeling of being content resonates in these words, but also a hint of the prudence involved in pre-

caution, care, and self-knowledge (for only I can know what I truly need to get by). There is also something social embedded within it. Whoever meets their basic needs has the (spare) capacity to care for others. A person whose basic needs are met can face the world without fear, and does not have to rush, themselves or others, in order to achieve things. This person manages without worry. When the present is safe, the future can be open, unhindered by worries and thwarted desires that enslave.

For those who have to fear for their very existence, time becomes oppressive, like being trapped under an upside-down funnel; there are only shadows as far as the eye can see, and the sky is reduced to a small bright spot far above.

It is a good sign that the younger generation more readily accepts the idea of a Basic Income | Basic Livelihood. Security and prosperity, experienced over generations, has obviously made them more generous, not just towards themselves but also towards others.

# Work Out (Livelihood) work-in-progress, 2019

**Christin Lahr** artist, curator, professor for media art  
in Berlin and Leipzig

The idea of 7.67 billion people reclining in hammocks with their basic needs taken care of would be a living manifestation of contemporary prosperity; presumably, it would guarantee widespread buoyancy and well-being. In many respects, if people assumed this position regularly, it would have a positive impact on the parameters used to calculate our ecological footprint (gha)<sup>29</sup> and would bring about a long-term improvement in the climate. Welcome side effects would include an outlook less conducive to destructive and warlike action as well as financial savings in the internal and external security and healthcare sectors. It's too bad that we're neither physically nor mentally capable of lazing around for any length of time.

22 percent of Germany's ecological footprint for traffic and transportation  
35 percent for food  
25 percent for housing and energy  
18 percent for consumerism and leisure activities.<sup>30</sup>

A person at rest uses a lot less energy than in phases of work, stress, or exaggerated haste; this is also reflected in the food supply. Depending on body weight, mass, basal metabolism, and activity, a person exhales around 168 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub> per year in a resting state, and 2,040 kilograms CO<sub>2</sub> under continuous stress. The resulting CO<sub>2</sub> content of the exhaled air of all 83 million citizens of Germany is 13,944,000 tons per year at rest and 169,320,000 tons in an (over-)excited state. Across the board, if 7.67 billion people worldwide were to adopt a decelerated attitude and lifestyle, it would significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

<sup>29</sup> In order to be able to compare the ecological footprint of different countries or regions, the values are given in »global hectares« per person and year. The unit is usually abbreviated »gha.«

<sup>30</sup> Giljum, Sustainable Europe Research Institute | SERI 2007 and <https://www.fussabdruck.de/oekologischer-fussabdruck/ueber-den-oekologischen-fussabdruck/>

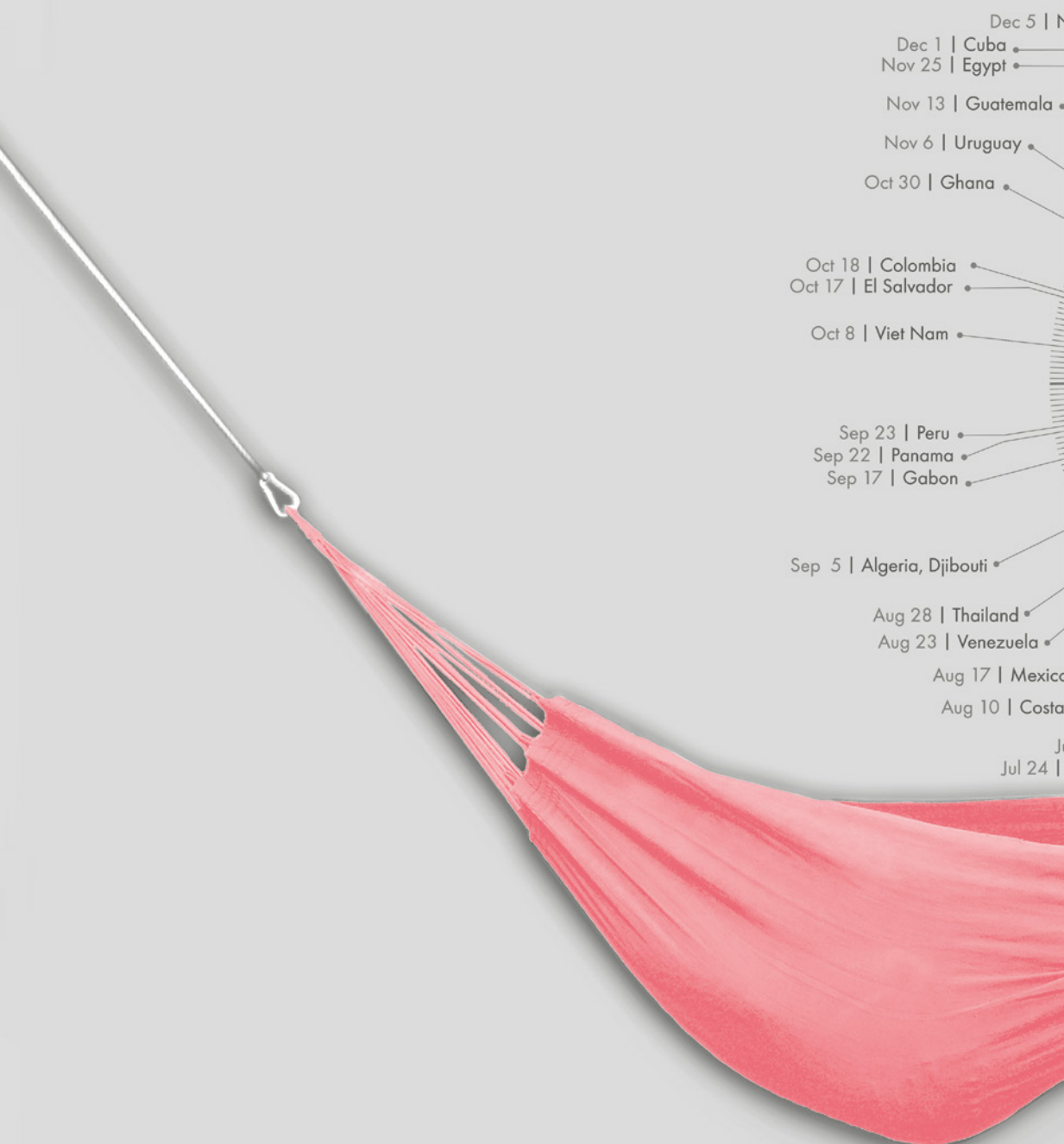
As early as the nineteenth century, the French socialist Paul Lafargue contested the widely propagated »right to work« from 1848 with his provocative satirical pamphlet from 1880, »The Right to Be Lazy,« which strongly criticized bourgeois morality and the consequences of overproduction as well as the ideological, capitalist working concept of his time. The associated »furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny«<sup>31</sup> rules over us to this day. While Lafargue regarded self-determined »laziness« as a form of self-empowerment against socio-political paternalism and as the essence of being human, when it gains legitimacy in the form of a clever »power nap« optimization strategy, even »doing nothing« becomes subjected to the capitalist logic of exploitation of our over-regulated, hyperactive working world.

The saying »If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,«<sup>32</sup> taken out of context from Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, not only served as a guiding principle and tool of subjugation for the utilitarianism of the emerging industrial age; it was also misused by various systems for religious, political, or other ideological purposes. To this day, this belief continues to regard people with suspicion instead of trust, and it solidifies the status quo of rule based on fear, control, and dependency. In the course of increasing digitization and automation, the rediscovery of slowness is becoming more urgent than ever. In contrast to machines, humans cannot be accelerated infinitely; they run the risk of becoming obsolete. Against this backdrop, the self-determined choice of »doing nothing« becomes a free will's option to act, to be human without feeling guilty, while hanging out becomes a fluid form of resistance against an externally determined, false work ethic and an ideology of unlimited growth.

31 Paul Lafargue, The Right to Be Lazy, 1883 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lafargue/1883/lazy/>

32 »For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.« – 2 Thessalonians 3:10–11

# WORK\_OUT (livelihood)





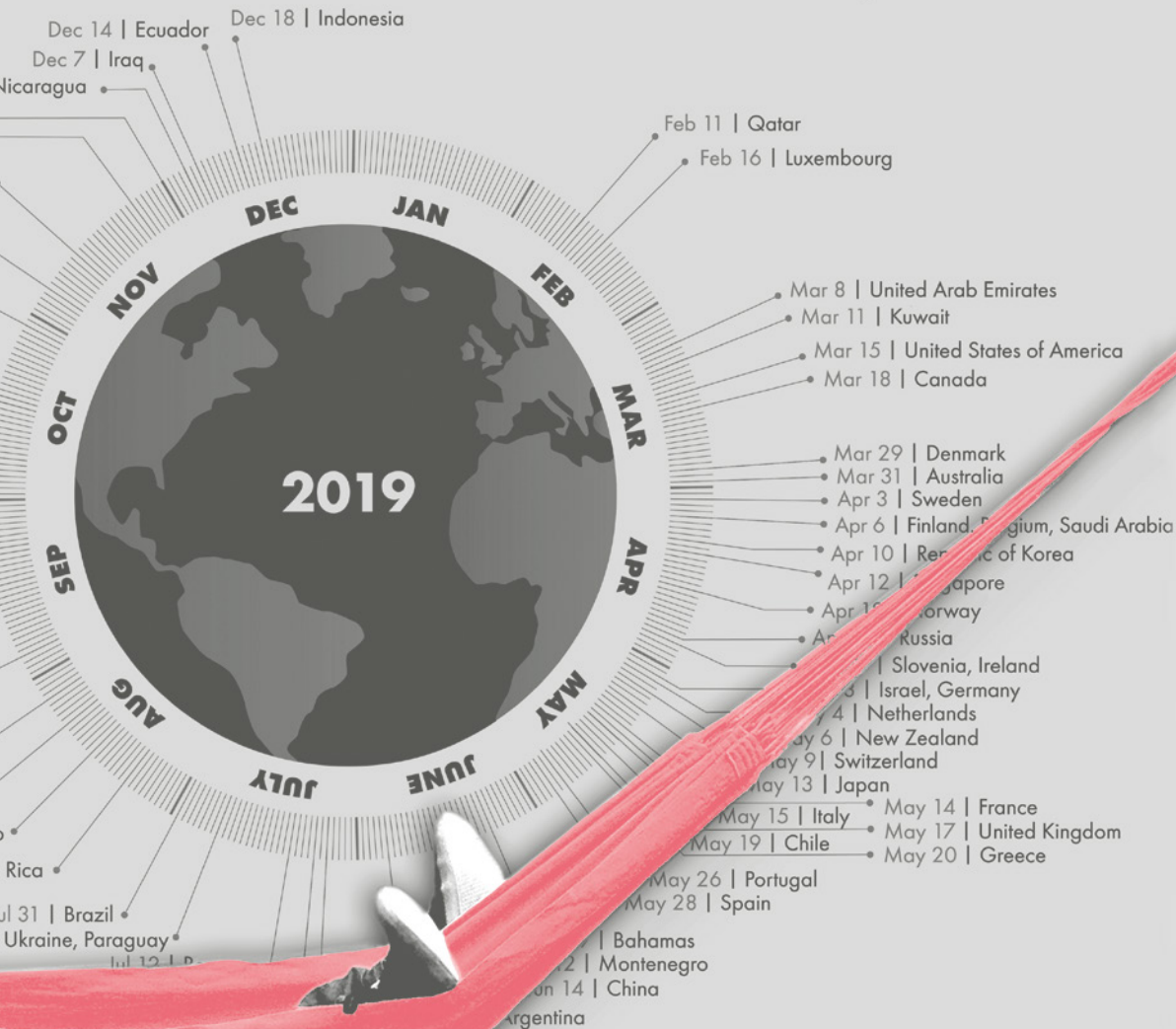


EARTH  
OVERSHOOT  
DAY

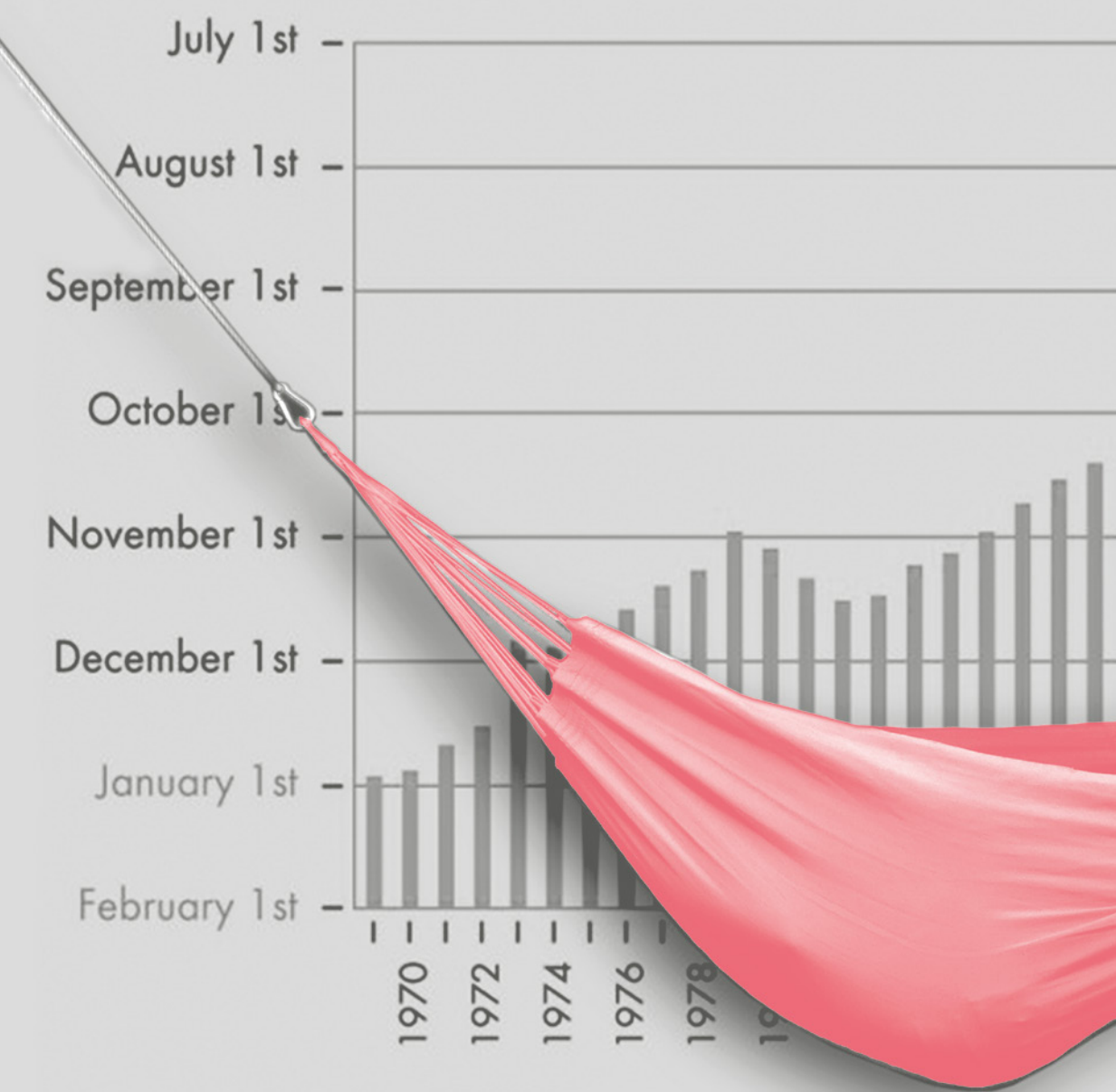
Source: Global Footprint Network National Footprint Accounts 2019



Global Footprint Network  
Advancing the Science of Sustainability

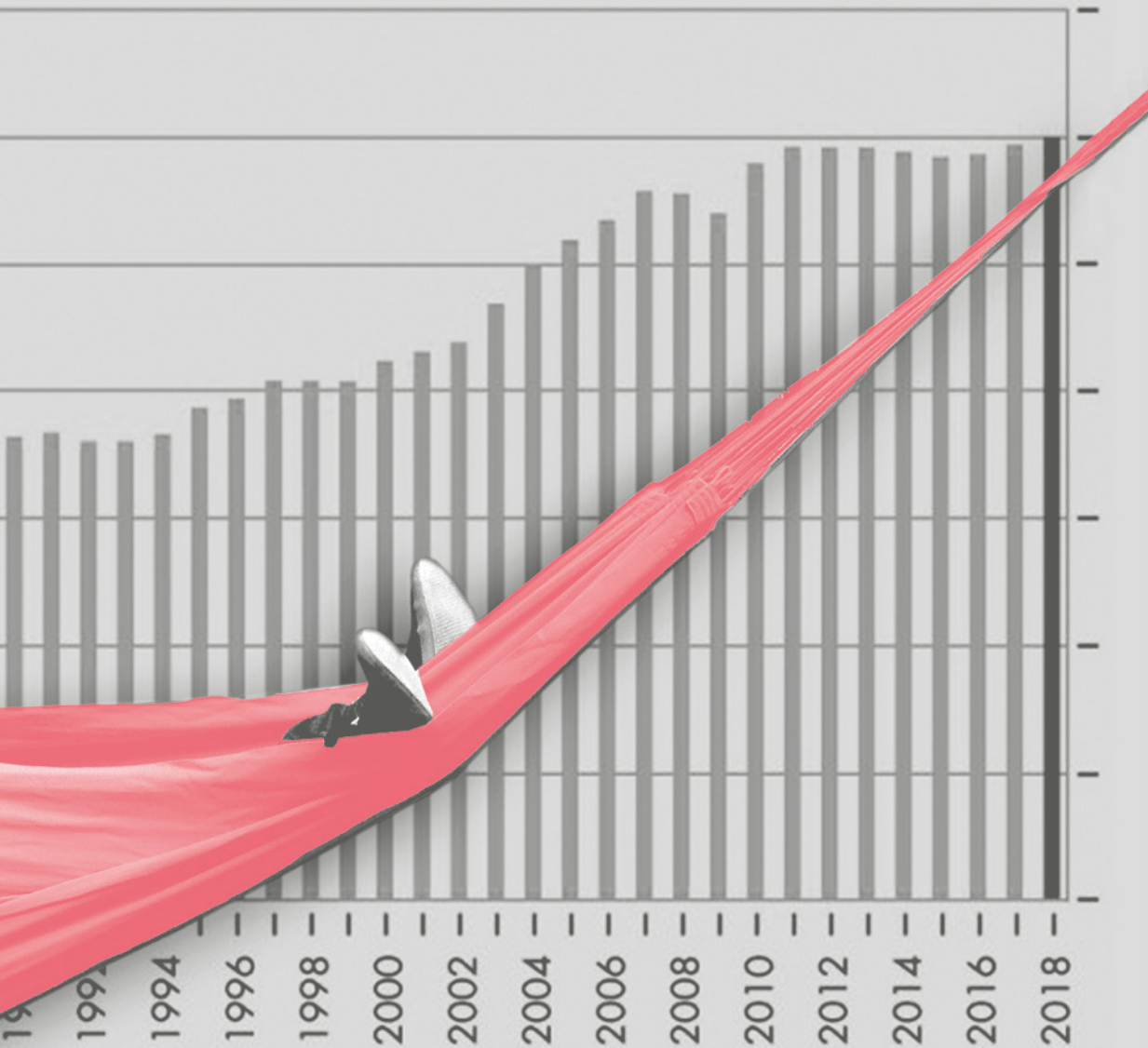


WORK\_OUT (livelihood)





Source: Global Footprint Network National Footprint Accounts 2018



selves in difficult financial situations: They often have very low incomes, don't . **Thinking about work as more than a paycheque** [Policy Options](#) Income is not the only thing that disappears when a job is lost. ... **Justin Haskins: AOC's socialist dream would make Democrats the party of Karl Marx** [Fox News](#) Some Democrats have also called for a new system of publicly-owned banks, universal basic income programs, »free« college tuition and college debt ... **Umstrittene Gruppierung : Demo gegen Altersarmut in Saarbrücken endet mit Rangelei** [Saarbrücker Zeitung](#) Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen«, erklärt Lukas im ruhigen Ton. Er kenne die Vorwürfe gegen »Fridays gegen Altersarmut«, sei aber trotzdem ...

**25.01.2020 Grundeinkommen Und Konsumsteuer** [guarchibao.space](#) Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen und Solidarisches. Die Konsumsteuer: Finanzierungsform einer freiheitlichen Gesellschaft – oder verkapptes ... **Japanese billionaire is giving away \$9 million to his Twitter followers in a happiness experiment** [GOOD Magazine](#) The experiment is also an attempt by the billionaire to test the benefits of a universal basic income (UBI). Over the past few years, governments across ... **Empty Bowls staff working to end food insecurity** [WDTV](#) »For the kids in our county, the thought of having enough food to eat isn't that were making a basic income and we can afford food,« Cruze said. »It's the ... **Trump embraces leftist view that deficits don't matter** [OCRegister](#) Democrats shrug at debt spending because they want to spend more on Medicare for All, free college, universal basic income and a list of social ... **AOC is No MLK National Center for Public Policy** [Research](#) Dr. King surely challenged what is now called income inequality and, like President Richard Nixon, even floated an idea about universal basic income ... **The activist manifesto I pitched at Davos** [The Independent](#) ... giving free rein to climate protesters by enacting a global moratorium on suppressing climate protest movements, providing a universal basic income ...

**26.01.2020 Here's What Happened Today: Saturday** [thejournal.ie](#) The Green Party, in its election manifesto, has promised to introduce a Universal Basic Income, free travel for students and an overhaul of public .. **Green manifesto permits cyclists to break red lights** [The Times](#) The Greens also propose a »universal basic income«, which would be a non-means-tested »standard payment to every individual resident in the state ... **What will happen when robots have taken all the jobs?** [Telegraph.co.uk](#) Optimistic billionaires from Silicon Valley, perhaps as a salve to their own consciences, are now jumping on the idea of a universal basic income: to ... **Des Moines Register editorial board endorses Elizabeth Warren for president** [The Indianapolis Star](#) ... to further fracture a country riven by party, income and racial divides. ... and the radical nature of his universal basic income plan were drawbacks... **Bitcoin Cash Rockets 15% Despite Big Tax Drama** [CCN.com](#) Roger Ver questioned the wisdom of handing over \$6 million worth of BCH for it to become a »universal basic income« for developers. Quoting Deryk ... **Hard decisions come with climate action** [Aspen Times](#) Like Aspen. People around the world are already floating the idea of a universal basic income. People will lose their livelihoods when less service and ... **Greens eye 15 seats as Ryan promises to scrap homework** [Irish Examiner](#) The party has also proposed a universal basic income payment to all citizens without means-testing, lowering the voting age, and a referendum on ...

**27.01.2020 Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen als Auslöser apokalyptischer Furcht** [Legal Tribune Online](#) Schon seit dem Jahr 1597 waren für England und Wales von der Londoner Zentralgewalt Frühformen des Wohlfahrtsstaats etabliert worden: Die rund ... **US-Vorwahlkampf bei den Demokraten: Wer geht 2020 in Führung?** [Die Freiheitsliebe](#) Kongressabgeordnete aus Hawaii und der Anwalt und Hightech-Spekulant Andrew Yang, der ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen befürwortet. **Boomers Have Socialism—Why Not Millennials?** [The Atlantic](#) Senior citizens already receive a certain kind of universal basic income; it's called Social Security. While elderly Americans might balk at the idea of ... **Explained: How to understand what your Swedish payslip really means** [The Local Sweden](#) This is your basic salary; the amount you receive before tax, holiday, sick days, benefits and so on are taken into account. In other words, this is the ...

**After Other Attempts, Fairbanks Thinks Campaign For Congress Will Be Different** [KPCW](#) tightly control and govern the use of the land, but while generating revenue out of the land that can go back to all the people as a basic income.« **28.01.20 Künstliche Intelligenz wird die Arbeit nicht abschaffen** [Finanz und Wirtschaft](#) Viele Beobachter, die das Schlimmste befürchten, haben sich für ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommenausgesprochen, um eine absehbare ... **Die große Geschichte des Grundeinkommens beginnt erst noch** [Die Farbe des Geldes](#) Grundeinkommen Europa Book Rede vor Wirtschaftsvertretern! Vier-Tage-Woche oder bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen? Das macht Bundestagspräsident Schäuble zufolge vor ...

**Highlights from the 2020 Democratic debate in New Hampshire** [CNBC](#) Just days before the crucial New Hampshire primary, Democratic ... his central campaign promise to implement a universal basic income plan. **Fact Check: Martin Luther King Did Support a Guaranteed Income** [Breitbart](#) King advocated for a guaranteed income, or what is now more commonly called Universal Basic Income. This has become the cornerstone of Yang's ... **Winners and Losers of the Democratic Debate** [The New York Times](#) He barely registers in the polls, and he barely registered onstage. There's a reason: Universal basic income isn't a panacea ... ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ins Gespräch gebracht, damit diejenigen, die durch neue Technologien überflüssig werden, nicht ...

**Eine Expertin für künftige Krisen** [Tages-Anzeiger Online](#) Höhere Steuern für die Reichsten und vielleicht sogar Grundeinkommen – das fordert der Internationale Währungsfonds in ... **»Wenn Sie Ihren Beruf einem Siebenjährigen nicht erklären können, dann ist es kein Beruf«** [SPIEGEL ONLINE](#) Ich denke, ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen wäre ein Anfang. Aber sicher noch nicht das Ende. **26.12.2018 Universal Basic Income versus Jobs Guarantee– Which Serves Workers Better?** [The Century Foundation](#) A universal basic income (UBI), also known as basic income or unconditional basic income, is the idea that government should regularly provide ... **UBI - Universal Basic Income...Good or Bad?** [Financial Samurai](#)

# Approaches from the North and South

Approaches from the North  
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## Microcredits without a Basic Income often mean that a type of exploitative entrepreneurship establishes itself

**Christine von Weizsäcker** biologist, expert and mentor for women's organizations, in world-wide demand, a long-term passionate fighter against genetic engineering, president of Ecoropa, a European network for the integration of ecology, democracy and North-South equality, member of the board of the CBD Alliance, the international network of civil society organizations with a focus on the ›Convention on Biological Diversity‹ and the ›Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety‹

**Adrienne Goehler | AG** We need a deeper insight into your long and untiring activities so that your biography can become tangible for those who aren't yet aware of your work. These include being on the board of the Federation of German Scientists | VDW, having been awarded the Bavarian Prize for Natural Conservation – as a resident of Baden, no less – and having five children and 12 grandchildren together with the scientist and honorable president of the Club of Rome, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker. What also belongs to the history of your long work for and with civil society organizations is the clear awareness that you could not have survived economically with the work you were doing without practically having a Basic Income as a result of the shared economy in your household.

**Christine von Weizsäcker | CvW** Yes, in this respect I was very privileged. My husband always expressed solidarity with my work, even if I didn't bring any money home with it. The ›Zeitgeist‹ back then for men and women living together was truly different; you can sum it up as: ›As long as I am making the money, then you, all of you, will do as I say‹. This is the fate that many women and children share to the present day, though quite less so. But on occasion, the tax

authorities doubt the profit motive behind my activities when I try to deduct my travel costs. And I had to motivate many otherwise quite progressive organizations to make new fundamental decisions in order to get care costs reimbursed that were caused by my volunteer advice in their committees. There is still a lot to do to find solutions for these details.

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Let us make the following comparison, impartially and in accordance with the assessment criteria of the modern 'service economy': on the one hand, leading a household with small children, friends, a garden ... possibly also diet requirements, a husband's shift work or nursing duties for an older generation; on the other hand, illegal worklaying pipes. For the more ambitious alternative she<sup>33</sup> coined the term *Eigenarbeit* | *Eigenwork*<sup>34</sup>.

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**AG** So you can reach a lot by agreeing to have a conditional Basic Income in a partnership?

**CvW** And you can travel a lot and you always have a story to tell. The fundamental prerequisite was that we both had experience in both areas: in external work, but also in the common work within the family. We both know that paid work is not only self-realization, and unpaid work is not just leisure time.

**AG** I'm most interested in your experience in Africa and your knowledge of subsidiary models and subsistence economies in your heterogeneous work biography. In other words, your knowledge of efficient economic behavior to which a Basic Income could link up to in a relevant way.

**CvW** Many families in the global south manage on the basis of family solidarity and a little piece of land. Cash as another important foundation is often provided by the women who bring their products to market. When an income is reliable, even if it isn't much, then the entire family's wellbeing is improved. This reaches from a branched-out large family all the way to a clan, town community, tribe or district. However, without a little bit of cash, no household has new room to maneuver. Cohesion and solidarity may suffer and impoverishment is a threat. Moreover, young adults leave.

**AG** This was also an important finding in the Namibian town of Otjivero-Omitara, which was able to gain experience with a small Basic In-

33 Ernst von Weizsäcker on Christine von Weizsäcker. For a right to *Eigenarbeit* | *Eigenwork*, Reinbek 1978 and Christine and Ernst von Weizsäcker. *Self-employment in a dual economy*, Frankfurt 1979

34 *Eigenarbeit* | *Eigenwork* | *Eigenvalue* defines intrinsically valued, motivated and governed by the person/persons doing the work

come that initiated change in the entire town in 2008 and 2009.<sup>35</sup> Above all, it was an enormous boost for the women, who were able to fundamentally change their daily lives. They didn't have to cook outside, cowering over stolen firewood, but could stand inside with electricity at a stove. There was new paid work as babysitters or employees for seamstresses. The biggest insight, though, was that microcredits have the greatest impact when they are combined with a Basic Income's purchasing power. And a shift towards what I call a culture of trust was palpable. The women started buying more animals together, because then the number of young animals increased; they were thus able to help each other out with small loans.

**CwW** Microcredits without a Basic Income often mean that a kind of exploitative entrepreneurship establishes itself. Microcredits with a Basic Income would strengthen common entrepreneurship, because then all can invest and consume.

**AG** But in Otjivero I didn't have contact with the family units, the clans, that you talk about. Many men had already left their women and children before Basic Incomes were introduced in order to live in Windhoek, 100 kilometers away, do casual labor and often look for new women.

**CwW** In Africa, a family unit is not always father, mother and child, but it is rather often led by women. Here, the presence of grandmothers plays a major role in overall cooperation and – this is proven – also for children's health. Even though large parts of Africa are patriarchal on the surface, there is a matrilineal level below. This means that connections between women are very important, more stable and older.

**AG** That was also quite visible in Otjivero. By introducing Basic Incomes, what they called BIG | Basic Income Grant a committee was immediately formed primarily made up of women and girls from all of the ethnic groups in the village; it decided that on payout day, no alcohol would be served. Unfortunately, there was no independent scientific observation during this entire valuable period.

**CwW** But there are also similar projects that received a positive evaluation. At UN negotiations for the Convention on Biological Diversity

Adrienne Goehler

35 In the village, 930 people under the age of retirement received 100 Namibian dollars per month, which equates to about 10 Euros. It is a sum that is not quite enough to ensure survival, but it is enough to not just alleviate the greatest needs. The village has far more inhabitants; the reports waver between 1200 and 2000. Only those received a Basic Income who could present a document on the day of registration – even the prisoners from the village, who were mostly imprisoned due to petty theft or drug-related crimes. Children and young adults under 21 were given their 100 Namibian dollars through a »Primary Care Giver«: the person who cared for them, usually a mother or other female person in the family. Similar to microcredits, the Basic Income was accompanied and determined by public discussions in the community. The village selected a committee in which all generations and all ethnicities are represented: 15 women and three men. 1000 Euro für jeden. Freiheit. Gleichheit. Grundeinkommen. Adrienne Goehler, Götz Werner, Berlin 2010

in 2018, a woman spoke to me who is responsible at the Global Environmental Facility | GEF of the United Nations for the evaluation and allocation of small projects in the fields of environment and sustainability. She was asked to extend heartfelt greetings. From whom? From the grannies, the grandmothers in Oromia. Due to the history in this region, which is by far the largest region in terms of surface area and population, there were enormous problems with the allocation of land ownership after the civil war. Women who had lost men and sons in the conflicts were at a particular disadvantage. They only received as much land as they could work on. And women are not allowed to plow ...

**AG** ... and then they get less land because of it!

**CvW** Exactly. And because the young generation moved to the cities, the grandchildren often were sent back to the grandmothers and had to be provided for. But the grandmothers only had properties as large as a garden, which they then worked on with their hoes. This didn't even suffice for adequate nutrition, not to mention clothes or attending school. The grandmothers were shockingly thin, because they wanted to give their grandchildren at least the opportunity associated with having enough to eat. They then received a small start-up financing from the European Network Ecoropa<sup>36</sup>. I was already its president back then. The rest was organized by the Ethiopian women. And even the men in these villages didn't want to embarrass themselves in front of incalculable European women; they rediscovered their old rules of decency and care for all community members as a result. They plowed and made space available on delivery trucks so that the grannies' association could jointly sell their products at the urban markets. I then heard that according to the GEF<sup>37</sup> analyses this was evaluated as the best project in Ethiopia.

**CvW** However, there are still many unsolved problems when the informal sector – as subsistence, care and non-market solidarity – interacts with the formal sector – the market with its often-disputable pricing. The tools for bringing the two together are simply lacking. We urgently need a joint evaluation of the projects in which the project organizers and project participants are both involved on an equal basis. You will never learn anything from a project if both voices are not heard.

**AG** Why is this so difficult?

**CvW** Those who award the money hear polished stories, because they are oriented to the money flow – and not to what is actually happening on site. This is one of the tragedies of cooperation in development work. A colleague from Burkina Faso, who told me one of these ›real‹ stories, asked me afterwards: »And what companies and

36 Ecoropa, European Network for Ecological Reflection and Action, [www.ecoropa.info](http://www.ecoropa.info)

37 Global environmental facility is an international mechanism to finance projects for environmental protection in developing countries.

NGOs govern your country«? I had to swallow hard and I thought: »Hm, maybe the car and chemical industries? And as non-governmental organizations, maybe the Christian churches«?

**AG** Can you, as a long-distance ecologist, explain to me why one thinks so little about a Basic Income in the entire scientific sustainability scene? Even among social ecologists?

**CwW** That is a rather fundamental question. In the past, one generally considered things from the perspective of separate camps in sustainability studies as well as in the sustainability movement. On the one side, they were considering the protection of intact ecosystems void of people and, also, global greenhouse gas emission scenarios. The other side was thinking about social conditions that are prioritized in the first eleven sustainability targets. This regularly resulted in grave conflicts between environment, human rights and social justice. Only recently, the insight grows that the problems are interrelated and need to be addressed and solved jointly. In this context, the contributions of the ICCA Consortium<sup>38</sup> on the common well-being of nature and human communities are very impressive. They see them both as equally indispensable. Labour unions also have many approaches for joining the topics. In Germany, the IG Metall is prominent here.

**AG** Also when addressing the Basic Income? Are you aware that the current chairman of the German Trade Union Confederation | DGB which represents also the IG Metall said the outrageous sentence: »The basic income is nothing more than a scrapping premium for people«?<sup>39</sup>

**CwW** There is an ongoing difficult, yet unresolved discussion. There isn't even a consensus among women who have been discussing the issues of women and ecology for twenty years. The whole debate is gaining momentum through digitalization. But am I the only one who is being unpleasantly reminded of ancient Rome? One gives the urban populace, also in developing countries, bread and games so that they don't disrupt the system. And one doesn't think too much about the rural population. The countryside and the rural inhabitants become the cities' new colonies: in the minority and exploited. This is why I find the example of Namibia so exciting.

**AG** For me, the idea of a Basic Income and victims do not fit together at all; quite the contrary. Industries produce victims ... the globalized economy – whether by producing pollutants or accelerating work processes, or by workplaces with a precarious payment structure, or ...

Adrienne Goehler

38 [www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Consortium-Policy-Brief-no-5-Whose-inclusive-conservation.pdf](http://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Consortium-Policy-Brief-no-5-Whose-inclusive-conservation.pdf)

39 [https://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/auf-dem-falschen-weg-dgb-chef-das-grundeinkommen-ist-nichts-weiter-als-eine-abwrackpraemie-fuer-menschen\\_id\\_11986950.html](https://www.focus.de/finanzen/news/auf-dem-falschen-weg-dgb-chef-das-grundeinkommen-ist-nichts-weiter-als-eine-abwrackpraemie-fuer-menschen_id_11986950.html)



- CvW** ... because of unemployment, or because one can't manage to achieve the required speed. Of course, these are all good reasons why I really like the title of your book »Freiheit Gleichheit Grundeinkommen | Liberty Equality Basic Income«. But I still see the discussion about Basic Income as being too close to the idea of »What do I do with the victims? How do I keep them quiet«?
- AG** I would reply that a UBI empowers people to self-empowerment, and it thus does the exact opposite of silencing people or creating a victim status. The tired factory worker could consider alternatives if he or she would have the freedom to choose other activities; more meaningful and happy ones, more healthy ones.
- CvW** For decades now, whenever a new good idea surfaces, people say in the most brutal, primitive and unstructured way: »all fine and good, but it will cost us jobs«. And then every idea is dead in the water. With a Basic Income that secures an existence, the effect of this knockout argument would be weakened for relevant changes. And this would already be a very positive aspect.
- AG** With a view towards the relationship between men and women, it would be a powerful tool to increase the freedom to choose if both sexes, 231 years after the French Revolution, could operate on the same financial foundation. And the question of who would then take parental leave and for how long, or would even stay home for longer, would not be as cut and dry as it is today, since women on average make less and are thus often forced into traditional role conformity.
- CvW** The division of income between partners and the availability of kindergarten spots are already decisive. But that doesn't suffice as a basis for decision making. We do need more freedom – also the freedom to think about the sense or nonsense of activities and then to make our decisions accordingly. It's just stupid if you produce something during your working hours that makes you angry as a consumer afterwards or that you simply don't approve of due to negative environmental impacts.
- AG** And I claim that you can only contribute to the success of a sustainable transformation if you are free of fear. Because the greatest opponent to any opportunity for change is existential fear, which is strongly characteristic of our times. A »fear of unknown origin«, as the author Sybille Berg calls it. This fear is then strengthened by the fear of your gainful employment being replaced by an algorithm. Practical and theoretical experience in regard to independent work and women's work is needed here – experience just like yours. Because all of the approaches you have highlighted in your many publications should enter into the discussion about a Basic Income. Wouldn't they then have a far greater impact?

- Eigenarbeit | Eigenwork
- Dual economy
- Ensuring subsistence
- Venture capital financing
- Self-education steered by the learner
- Eigenhealth steered by the persons concerned
- The right to self-help
- The right to self-sufficiency
- Time sovereignty
- Self-help cooperative
- Self-education circle
- Error-friendly technology
- Neighborhood aid

**CvW** Yes, I have thought about many things systematically in these contexts. My experience is that in every labour market crisis and every financial crisis my old publications are once again in demand. But after the crises seem to be over, they disappear again into drawers and day-to-day business continues. However, my experience with my direct and peripheral surroundings tells me: those people who are not employed full time are the ones who are contributing the creative ideas. In the future, we are going to need all of our creativity, since just continuing »business as usual« will simply no longer be possible.

**AG** Sounds to me like a good reason to introduce an UBI | Unconditional Basic Income.

**CvW** One argues about the limits of growth, unemployment and the right to work. Seven eighths of the earth's wealth is used up by the industrial states. To extend their standard to all people would be ecological suicide, the planet's death by growth. So, full employment via growth in consumption is not a responsible option. What does »the right to work« mean then? What is work in the first place? We have to rethink things, all the way to the terms we use.

**AG** In your »Manifest für ein Recht auf Eigenarbeit | Manifesto for a Right to Eigenwork« you formulated in 1978: »No life without Eigenwork«. It means experiencing your own power. Work and its result are experienced as a unit. Even the closeness of production and enjoyment of the products can be experienced. This is satisfying«. Weren't you confronted with a wave of criticism that you were doing homage to a housewife's existence?

**CvW** I'm used to waves of criticism. Assuming the criticism isn't just a cheap devaluation, but rather what the term originally means – namely clearly exploring the differences – then I'm thankful for it. It is an inspiration to clarify thoughts and suggestions.

**AG** I find your advocacy for time sovereignty interesting.

**CvW** Back then and now, »unemployed« means zero hours of wage labor. »Employed« means up to 40 hours per week, and in the case of

career-advancing self-exploitation, far more than that. Time sovereignty<sup>40</sup> is, in contrast, that state in which employees have the right to work in a different work rhythm than the usual eight hours from Monday to Friday. They can, for example, work part time in the summer and full time in the winter, so that a garden can be optimally tended.

**AG** The need to be able to freely organize time is something that I currently experience to the extreme. I would even claim that there is a powerful longing for this. My own statistics correspond to the observations made by many other Basic Income activists and theoreticians: when asked, what people would like to change in their lives if they had a Unconditional Basic Income, most answers are: less gainful employment, more time for work in and for social relationships, more time for caring – which doesn't just mean classic nursing, but also for volunteer work, in a garden, nature ... care as a cultural activity. As it is to be expected, women express these wishes more explicitly.

**CvW** For me, leisure is missing in this list. Boredom is needed in order to find breakthrough solutions for the often-cited transition. I remember a great quote by the American film actress and director Jodie Foster. It went approximately like this: Why should I delegate the design of my home and care for my children, when this is what is precisely most important to me?

**AG** Jodie Foster is very wealthy. She can choose the area in which she wants to get help and can finance it. She can live for years off of the money in her bank accounts. But what other possibilities are there? Many of my talks with people have strengthened my belief that the primary focus has to be working in a more self-determined way in terms of time and income on a fundament of a Basic Income | Livelihood, without having to end up in a poorly paid part-time job. And yes, this also means leisure.

**CvW** But what happens to those people who André Gorz describes in his publications about the »South-Africanization of work«? Those people with well-paid jobs delegate their children and households to competent and rather correctly paid employees. They, on their part, delegate their children and household to less well-paid people. And so on. The last ones in line get bit by the dogs. They are poorly paid and have no one who can take care of their children and households.

And what are the criteria for self-determined, for meaningful work? Because meaning is not always adequately reflected by money flows. One almost forgot about this in the first big wave of the labour movement. But being committed to eliminating alienation and a lack of self-determination, the dedication to worker participation, international solidarity and solidarity with the life conditions of the

40 Bernhard Teriet. Die Wiedergewinnung der Zeitsouveränität. Reinbek 1977

precarious workers and those not in a formal work relationship is becoming more and more important. If one totally ignores the question of meaning in work, then this is truly proof of an unsustainable society. And this is why I wish that the question of meaning be posed more strongly in a broad discussion about Basic Income. The Federation of German Scientists | Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler, VDW is currently discussing whether this should be an Unconditional or a Conditional Basic Income. This question is raised in the context of a quick withdrawal from producing coal in the Lausitz region | Lusitia. Combining environmental protection and jobs is the task. What is your focus?

**AG** Being unconditional is one of the four criteria that the Basic Income Earth Network | BIEN has agreed upon; for me, this is the criterium that constitutes the decisive mental shift. It's not: ›those who don't work, shouldn't eat‹, as we have often heard from SPD politicians, but rather every citizen should receive a Basic Income without any means test. No one has the right to judge who is deserving and who doesn't – this is a degrading process, as we know from the Hartz IV welfare program process.

**CvW** If a community can give all of its members a basic security, then this has enormous cultural effects on living together peacefully in daily life, on social peace, on democracy. In a very touching and individual way, my children said: It just can't be that you get a pension of 500 or maybe 600 Euros a month for your valuable work for a better and healthier world, also having raised five children. This is absolutely laughable and disgraceful.

**AG** Cool, they finance you with a private Basic Income?

**CvW** They say: Together we will ensure that you have a good Livelihood | Auskommen. More generally, it's about having something to fall back on that offers a sense of security and allows for trust in the community to grow. Friends from developing countries, but also American friends have a sense of security in the knowledge that they will always find a guest room in our home should it become necessary and politically wise to leave their country for a while. That gives them freedom in their activities. I always sought combinations, as you can see. For a livelihood, there always has to be an understanding of ›taking care of your friendships and your cooperation with others‹ and the knowledge of having enough for a humble but simultaneously decent life. If you call that an Unconditional Basic Income | Livelihood then all the best wishes to you! This is what my children have promised me. It determines the economy in many African villages and in community life.

**AG** Would then what you call an economy of solidarity be more possible?

**CvW** An economy of solidarity and living together in solidarity does not just occur automatically, and they can't be imposed from outside, regardless of how sensible measures seem. They have to be re-invented in every place, by every sex, at every age and in consideration

of all backgrounds of experience. Both leisure and space are necessary: room to maneuver. A Basic Income might be an important contribution, but it's not a guarantee for free people in blossoming communities.

**AG** But only by revoking the obligation to work can you foster leisure. Let me ask how *Eigenarbeit* | *Eigenwork* could relate to my asserted relationship: ›Sustainability needs deceleration needs Basic Income | Livelihood ‹.

**CvW** As you know, there are an astounding number of definitions of sustainability. Unfortunately, also too many and too shallow management directives. I believe that sustainability has the best chance to thrive if we listen carefully, allow for diversity, perceive and discuss. Your ability to listen will be greatly improved if you have the time and the means to survive without fear. Precisely the discussion about a Basic Income can explore the difference between an expertocratic and democratic realization of sustainability: between having to function within a management scenario designed by experts only or being able to actively participating in shaping our common future and the future we want.<sup>41</sup>

41 See: Our Common Future: Brundtland Report on Environment and Development, 1987, The Future We Want: Outcome Document of Rio+20, 2012

## The people who are victims of poverty have never been involved in the decision-making processes about their lives

**Caroline Teti** director, external relation of ›Give directly‹, Nairobi, in conversation with **Anna-Sophie Brüning**<sup>42</sup>



**Caroline Teti | CT** What makes this project unique is the fact that it will last twelve years. There have been many Basic Income trials, but none of them has been run over such a long timeframe. That makes it unique. Since we want to learn about the effects of the Basic Income, we've designed the project as a randomized and controlled trial. This means that we select people randomly and assign them to four different groups. One group gets 22 dollars a month for 12 years.

**Anna Sophie Brüning | ASB** Adults get 22 dollars and what about children?  
**CT** No, the Basic Income is only paid to people who are over eighteen in the selected villages. So in the first group, the adult population of forty-four villages receives the Basic Income of 22 dollars over

<sup>42</sup> Basic Income Project in Kenya – Interview with Caroline Teti, August 2018  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAXQbd9-bf0>

12 years. In the second group, the adults in eighty villages also receive 22 dollars a month, but only for 24 months. In the third group, the adults in 77 villages receive the equivalent of 22 dollars a month over two years, but this time the money is paid in two equal instalments.

**ASB** The first half in the first year and the second half in the second year?

**CT** No, they get all that money over a four-month period. And the last group is our control group. These people live under the same conditions as the other three groups, but they aren't paid a Basic Income. They help us to understand how the Basic Income changes lives. So, by comparing their experiences with the experiences of the people who receive it, we will find out whether it has an effect, and if that effect is positive or negative. We started off in November 2017 by going to the first villages and registering people. The first group received their first payment in January 2018.

**ASB** Can you already see some general trends or make some conclusions?

**CT** For the duration of the project those villages are protected. We don't go near them. We have a team of researchers, professors from the US, from MIT, Princeton University, and UC San Diego, who do the assessment on our behalf. So, we don't interfere in those villages.

**ASB** So you're just responsible for the technical transfer of the money?

**CT** Yes. We only visit the villages if there is a technical problem that needs to be fixed related to the transfer. It's the research teams that go into the village, they collect the baseline data, do a follow-up assessment and then they will evaluate the results. However, because we are as interested as you are, we have two villages that are not part of the experiment. We call them the pilot villages. The experience of the two pilot villages gives us an inkling of how our recipients feel when they start receiving the Basic Income.

In the case of one of those villages, the first Basic Income payment was made in in October 2016. We use that village to help us see what dynamics are likely to arise in the project villages. So, now, 24 months after that pilot village started to receive transfers, we can start to predict what will happen to those people who are going to receive money for 24 months. There are some really exciting developments. For example, the Basic Income has enabled people in the community to find a way of engaging with each other. In some cases they have joined together to form savings groups. So, of the 22 dollars they get from us, the group members each invest 10 dollars in the savings group. This money is pooled and then in one month it is given to one member of the group.

**ASB** Was that their own idea?

**CT** Yes. In one of the villages, a savings group had already been set up by ten women. They had the idea of collecting money and sharing it out every month. But before we came, they did not have a consistent source of money that they could use to sustain the group. So, when

we stepped in, they immediately thought: »Wow, we need to revive our group.« And they started to meet immediately. It began with just one group in that village. Twenty-three months later, nine such groups had been formed.

**ASB** Apart from yourselves, who else accompanies the project? What about the media?

**CT** There hasn't been much local media interest in the Basic Income.

**ASB** Why?

**CT** Maybe they don't find it sexy, I don't know ...

**ASB** But it is very sexy!

**CT** It is. It really is. It's new; it's something that is shaking up the status quo and my hope was that the local media would be chasing us, but that is still not the case. I spoke to two journalists who were very keen to write a story but they didn't get the OK from their editors. Unbelievable. The national media in Kenya has not picked up on it yet.

**ASB** That has changed a lot in Europe.

**CT** Most reports about our project come from Europe and the US. Tons and tons and tons of media coverage. I can't say how many stories have been written about it, but all have come from outside. In time, I am sure there's going to be more interest from the local media.

As for the politicians: in the areas we are working in they are very interested and committed. They monitor the project closely. They tell us that other politicians envy them for having such a good project for their citizens. We even had politicians who came to our office and asked: »Why can't you bring the project to us?« They know what it can do.

**ASB** Everything you say calls into question the kind of development aid that Europe used to give to this part of the world. I think it needs to be completely reinvented, because it's based on a hierarchy, where donors are at the top and recipients at the bottom, right?

**CT** Yes. Cash transfers are a way of bringing about change in the area of charity. What we tell donors is that it is very efficient to give cash and you get more value for your money. Right now, for every 100 dollars we at »Give Directly« get, 91 dollars go directly to the recipients. That's really a lot.

Secondly, cash is very easy to deliver. It takes a very short time to get the money into people's hands. So, the time you as a donor – spend overseeing how your money is allocated – is shorter.

Thirdly, cash empowers people. When you give people money, you put decisions in their hands. You give them a choice. What we've been doing mostly in development aid is sitting in boardrooms and trying to imagine what could be a problem in communities we've never visited with people we've never met. Then we design projects, send tons of money into those communities, and imagine that it is going to bring real change. The people who are victims of poverty have never been involved in the decision-making processes about their lives.

Cash gives them the autonomy to make decisions. I'm not saying we don't need community projects. We still need them; we need water,



healthcare, schools. But this can happen in a different way. If we want to change the lives of individuals at family level, we have to let them make the decisions themselves! And that is why we give cash. There is a study that shows that if donations took the form of direct cash payments, we would need to spend only half of what we are currently spending on development aid. So, out of 140 billion dollars, we would only need about 70 to 80 billion to lift people out of their current level of poverty. It's crazy. We are wasting almost half the money that goes into development aid.

**ASB** So, it's not about the amount of money but about securing power. This is crazy.

**CT** Yes, if you have power you can make decisions for other people, just because you have the power. And it doesn't mean that when you are in power, you can make the right decisions on behalf of the other people. Actually, when you put power in the hands of the people, they will make decisions that will save money, time, and resources. They will save you everything, including the drama and stress of having to think about what their problem is.

**ASB** And it will probably make them happier, richer and more independent.

**CT** Yes. I have been working for over 15 years for various NGOs and programs, and there are two things donors have always asked us about: sustainability and ownership. There is no way we can make people own things they have not been a part of, programs where they have not been involved in the design.

**ASB** Sounds logical.

**CT** When you give people money and they invest it in schools, they will own that investment and feel responsible for its success or failure. And people do invest. When you give them money, they don't just swallow it. When we go to the villages, they tell us: »We don't want to use kerosene; we want to use solar power.« And they don't just say it, they also do it. They have bought solar lamps and pay monthly installments for them. When people invest in solar energy, what is it if not environmental conservation?

**ASB** It works at all levels.

**CT** Only if we get more focused, can we save this world. If we still peddle power and use top-down approaches, we will keep doing the same thing over and over again and ask ourselves why our money is not creating any impact.<sup>43</sup>

43 More informations: <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/9/2/21409142/basic-income-kenya-weather-covid-19-crisis>  
<https://www.tbd.community/en/a/charity-giving-6000-kenyans-basic-income-life>  
 A search on Google for »Give Directly Kenya« yielded 2,430 results, | 9.9.20

## Today, everybody with a high net worth should be in favor of the Basic Income

**Thomas Jorberg** is the Board Spokesperson of GLS Bank, a bank that has enjoyed a reputation for social-ecological banking since 1974. He trained as a banker and holds a degree in economics. For his achievements in corporate governance, Jorberg received the Future Award in 2009, the B.A.U.M. Environmental Award in 2010, and the German Fairness Award in 2011. He is a member of the steering committee of the Global Alliance for Banking on Values, an international alliance of banks with a social and ecological orientation in support of sustainability on the financial market

**AG** You have consistently drawn connections between Unconditional Basic Income and sustainability, and written and talked about them extensively. This still makes you an absolute exception. I am stunned by the lack of references between the two movements, including the respective disciplines that underpin them, which remain trapped in their silos. How do you explain that fact that so little light has been shed on this connection so far?

**Thomas Jorberg | TJ** To me, an all-too-common ›pathological close-mindedness‹ is the explanation. It plays an unfortunate role in almost all political discussions, regardless of whether the subject is carbon emissions, Basic Income, or agriculture. People talk about something, but don't think of including the most obvious related aspects. Holistic thinking is missing. Bankers see things a bit differently because their job is to consider all business sectors and all areas of society.

**AG** I'm surprised to hear you, of all people, expressing such a view. The major financial players may be present in all spheres of the economy, but as a critical bank customer I feel that investments in armaments, agribusiness and pesticides, rare earths, land grab, and

entire wars dominate, because they bring the highest returns on investment. I do not detect any holistic thinking there.

**TJ** That's right, because the financial sector also acts like it is wearing blinders and doesn't take the effects of such investments into account. The approach is inextricably entwined with their business philosophy. When high return on investment is the primary goal, it leads banks to act accordingly. Money is earned with money, without tying it into any benefit for society. Many companies think similarly. They use fossil resources or poison the environment without having to pay anything for their actions. The same is true of the agricultural sector when high yields are prioritized over everything else. The businesses with this approach continuously increase their profits. But they destroy biodiversity and contaminate our drinking water in the process. And the general public has to bear the consequences.

**AG** As a sustainable banker, do you work differently?

**TJ** People's needs, those of future generations, and ecological resources are always our top priority. Let's stay with agriculture as an example. When it is ecologically managed, healthy food is the result. The well-being of people, animals, and plants is assured. Agricultural chemistry and genetic engineering become superfluous. A different example: the energy transition is often reduced to green electricity. But the energy system of the future requires so much more: connectivity across electricity, heat, and transportation. Citizen-led generation and storage, shared ideas. And, of course, energy conservation.

**AG** I found this slogan on one of the GLS Bank's flyers: »As much collaboration as possible.« You suggest that when we take a holistic approach, connections arise as a matter of course. But I don't really see evidence of that anywhere.

**TJ** We actually do see a worldwide consensus: almost 200 nations have committed to climate protection by signing the Paris Agreement. And the UN has adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals | SDGs. Their vision encompasses a worldwide reduction in poverty, less inequality, and sustainable production. It is critical to recognize that none of those goals can be attained in isolation, but depends on the achievement of all 17 SDGs. International agreements like those are an important first step. They can serve as a basis for introducing a Basic Income. Collaboration on a lot of different levels is required in order to attain such goals.

**AG** Are they more than empty political promises?

**TJ** The Fridays for Future movement clearly shows that civil society in particular can force our political representatives to act. And change is also a foot in the economy, because company executives are slowly realizing the dimensions of the transformation. Basic Income. Something has shifted. In 2019, everybody was talking about climate taxes – on everything from carbon dioxide to fertilizers and capital gains. These ideas were, of course, primarily developed with social or ecological reasons in mind. But today, we can also justify

them from an economic standpoint, because currently, more and more revenue streams<sup>44</sup> from national income are flowing toward capital. Digitalization will only amplify this trend.

**AG** In other words, more investment in capital and machines than in human labor.

**TJ** In capital and digital networks. Machines are no longer the only things that require and tie up enormous amounts of capital. But that will lead to more of the world's gross national product flowing to capital and less to labor, even though the world will be able to produce more. That will give rise to a distribution issue, making it a matter of economics. So how will consumers get their hands on the goods that a robot produces? How will they have the required purchasing power? There has to be a financial basis to cover that. Today, everyone with a high net worth should be in favor of the Basic Income because, in the long term, their capital gains depend on the sale of products. The same logic holds true for climate protection. If we want to uphold the Paris Agreement and slow down global warming, we have to turn into a climate-protecting society. And do so earlier than 2050. The longer we wait, the more it will cost. In other words, it makes much more economic sense to implement the goals quickly.

**AG** And where do you see this reflected in the political discourse on carbon taxes, transaction taxes, climate levies, and resource taxes?

**TJ** It isn't reflected enough. The carbon fee or carbon tax is dominating the discussion, making it obvious that old reflexes are taking over and the dimensions of the climate catastrophe are being ignored. Politicians seem to prefer to hype the issue of jobs and make demonstrative assertions instead. The federal government needs a game-changing strategy to achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2050, but hardly anyone is working on one. The debate around digitalization, on the contrary, has taken an entirely different tack. That purse is bottomless; money is no object. Regardless of whether it costs more jobs and more capital than the path toward more sustainability. When it comes to sustainability, they're putting on the brakes. The other way around would make more sense from the economic standpoint. Not just ecologically and socially.

**AG** And where do you see the forces that would bring about a rethink?

**TJ** I think that we will have carbon pricing within three years. It would initially replace the current energy taxes. This would keep everything affordable and generate a steering effect toward more climate protection.

**AG** How would you finance the Basic Income | Livelihood? I honestly have never asked a banker that question before.

**TJ** I would organize it via a 'minus tax'.

<sup>44</sup> Describes the type of revenue generation, e.g. product/service sales or royalties. Revenue streams are the profits expected in the business model

- AG** Are you referring to the concept of a 'negative income tax'<sup>45</sup> like the one that Milton Friedmann, the neoliberal economist, advocated?
- TJ** Yes. You would get a fixed sum every month, let's say 1,500 euros. If you earned more, the difference would be taxed. It could then be directly offset against the negative income tax. That would be an efficient way of rendering most of the welfare bureaucracy superfluous.
- AG** Are you opposed to a resource tax? If we assume that we have to bring social considerations and sustainability together to make a decent life possible for everyone on our planet of limited resources, various things have to happen at the same time, right now. Don't you think that a resource tax for financing the Basic Income | Livelihood makes sense – a tax that makes those who consume more pay more?
- TJ** I have not yet made the connection between a tax like that and Basic Income | Livelihood. The goal of a carbon tax is, after all, to stimulate a steering effect to drive emissions back to zero. We need a specific framework of market principles – at the very least, we will have to price in externalities in the future. Those who use ecological resources must pay for what they use. I don't see any other alternative, which is why I am also in favor of a carbon tax.
- AG** And a transaction tax?
- TJ** And taxes on capital and capital gains. Honestly, I think that a transaction tax is such a no-brainer that I haven't talked about it in a long time. But it's different now, because we still don't have one. At least they're talking about reintroducing the wealth tax. That is important because the gap is widening. The wealthy have more and more money, yet an increasing number of people are living in poverty. The arguments in this case are similar to those for the Basic Income: we need redistribution for both social and economic reasons.
- AG** Do you see any movement in this direction on the part of the government?
- TJ** Yes. The public discussion is there. We have come farthest in the case of carbon pricing. But the possibility of a tax on pesticides and fertilizers is also being widely discussed. The wealth tax and transaction or capital gains tax are prompting somewhat less debate. The same can be said for the Basic Income. So all four of GLS Bank's policy-related demands can already command a majority today.
- AG** According to various studies, 52 to 62 percent of Germans are in favor of a Basic Income, especially in view of the uncertainties inherent in the digitization of labour. But the coalition parties doggedly cling to the view that the digitization of labor will create just as many new jobs as it will destroy. It's remarkable that members of the

<sup>45</sup> Negative income tax. All citizens without income receive a benefit payment that covers the subsistence level (transfer payment and therefore a negative income tax). It decreases to the extent that citizens earn their own income. Positive income tax (the fiscal burden) is levied above a politically determined poverty line. Gabler Wirtschaftslexikon (in translation)

government have positioned themselves at such a great distance from the projections of most specialists. Although even the World Economic Forum pronounced that »We have to tax the machines, we have to tax algorithms, we will be able to tax less and less work in the conventional sense of the word,« the federal government ignored such statements until the German Employers' Association demanded that Labor Minister Heil finally pay more attention to the Basic Income.

**TJ** It is indeed regrettable that many politicians have drawn false conclusions. Most of them cleave to the outdated view that Germany's status as an economic power depends on a strong industrial base. And that voters are only concerned about holding on to their jobs. As a consequence, the effects of digitization are underestimated. However, it has already shaped our future. You only have to look at the current combined market value of the four GAFA companies: around 2.4 trillion euros. When taken together, all DAX 30 companies are worth 90 billion euros. The GAFA<sup>46</sup> companies are benefiting two to three times more from digitization than all the DAX companies put together. Now you can argue about how social and ecological their values are. But it's obvious that we are experiencing a disruptive development whose effects have not completely unfolded. The economy will soon look completely different.

**AG** Could the 30 DAX companies pursue a counter-strategy?

**TJ** Not unless they develop a truly future-proof business model. They will dwindle into insignificance on the stock market. Just like Deutsche Bank, when politicians tried unsuccessfully to merge it with the Commerzbank in 2019.

**AG** And we as taxpayers are supposed to save them again?

**TJ** Yes, of course. But the question actually was whether or not many people will lose their jobs if the big corporations disappear.

**AG** You think so, and so do I.

**TJ** That's also what the market valuations are saying. The general projection indicates that a few companies will dominate the digital infrastructure. They will skim off a significant portion of future value streams by commercializing billions of data. Capital will thus be concentrated in a handful of corporations. They will lack income at some point, and then jobs will be lost. Traditional industries will show similar behavior. They will either be automated so that functions disappear. Or they themselves will disappear, like the producers of fossil fuels or automotive suppliers. After all, electric cars don't need nearly as many parts.

**AG** But the governing parties put their heads in the sand, crying out from the depths that there will be just as much work, but the type of work will change. And the Internet giants only need to be properly

<sup>46</sup> Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple.

taxed. At the same time, they denounce Basic Income | Livelihood as a dangerous idea invented by neoliberal bankers and DAX companies, which would lead to the radical dissolution of the welfare state.

**TJ** The fascinating thing about the Basic Income is that those in favor of it hail from virtually all ideologies and schools of thought. Of course, the concepts of Basic Income are as varied as the motives behind them, with the spectrum ranging from the socialist alternative to the free-market liberal perspective on agreed wages. As in the case of sustainability, the different narratives need to be examined in detail. By the way, I think that fear is playing a major role in policymaking now. Systems are being transformed. That can happen in a managed way or emerge from disruption. Many politicians in Berlin are well aware of that. But their attempts to establish a politics of utopia for the long term have been unsuccessful. The Basic Income forces us to think contrary to the system, which is something most people are afraid of doing. Understandably so. But that is the only way to transform the system gradually.

**AG** At the beginning of our conversation, you said that you think it is absolutely necessary to introduce the Basic Income over the next few years.

**TJ** I'd like to alert you to a paradox here. Just when the automotive industry and politicians have announced that they want to invest enormous sums in driverless mobility, they've resurrected the old debate about a 130 km/h speed limit: ›free roads for free citizens‹. That isn't necessarily misguided. It is possible that automated driving will give rise to entirely new mobility concepts that replace private motorized transport. Cars will hopefully be fueled by renewables, move on highways lined up like train cars, and carry more passengers. That's all possible.

**AG** I've just had a thought: if driverless cars can't go faster than 130 km/h, that's going to offend many male souls. I find it hard to understand that all of our European neighbors have a speed limit, while we are the only ones who act like it would catapult us back to the Stone Age.

**TJ** I can understand how people can be against a speed limit but in favor of driverless cars. The two ideas are not compatible, but they obviously function politically.

**AG** Probably because they originate in two completely different discourses. Social considerations in one sphere and ecological considerations in another, with the economic dimension seen as ›not financeable.‹ How can a holistic viewpoint evolve if issues are debated in separate silos? I read an apt comment of yours in a journal: ›The concept of Basic Income is interesting given the current distribution problem. There is plenty to do, but the tasks are not finding their way to the people who can take care of them, and people are not finding their way to the tasks they want to take care of.‹

- TJ** We primarily value jobs based on money and prices. That leads to a situation in which many people are prevented from finding meaningful occupations. The nature of the remuneration often keeps people from taking up and developing extremely important tasks.
- AG** The way work is remunerated is a problem. Most freelance artists can sing a sad song about this. But the reductive concept of work as paid, gainful employment is an even greater problem. After all, it's women who do almost all of the unpaid work.
- TJ** But both problems lead us back to the issue of distribution, which is the greatest challenge. It's a problem of surplus, a luxury problem.
- AG** You could also say that it's an issue of human rights, and one of sustainability.
- TJ** Regardless of how you slice it, only two things drive change: one is a vision and the other is suffering. Right now, it looks like we need lots of suffering to arrive at a breakthrough, because a vision is nowhere in sight. That might sound a bit banal. But human history proves that real change has never happened in the absence of suffering. We humans are unique in that respect. Knowledge typically precedes disasters. But disasters are what deliver breakthroughs.
- AG** And in our highly developed, fully employed country, there isn't enough suffering yet? The poverty of single mothers, the 20 percent of children living in poverty, the people classified as the ›working poor‹, or those who have ended up on job creation schemes – that isn't quite enough?
- TJ** But if you've ever visited other countries, you'll know that our suffering is not comparable to the level you find in some Asian or African countries.
- AG** OK – even suffering is relative.
- TJ** But it is actually decreasing. That's the funny thing about the growth mania: the situation of poor people is improving, but very slowly. However, the growing gap between rich and poor might put a stop to this phenomenon.
- AG** You work on quite a number of projects in the countries of the ›Global South‹. What can you say about those countries when it comes to Basic Income | Livelihood and development policy?
- TJ** I think there is a reason that the idea emerged in the Global North with its embarrassment of riches. We don't have a Basic Income, but nobody is starving. Distribution is the issue. As a society, we have been preoccupied with it for a long time, but our approach has been to apply a cruel matrix of social systems. It's now time to take the next step. We can create a social system that supports human dignity and is more respectful and future-proof. Of course, it must be able to be scaled up to a global level, because the entire population of the world needs to be taken care of. And that will make the task more difficult.
- AG** The idea was initiated by the ›old white men‹ in Europe, the USA, and Canada who are being quoted extensively right now, starting



in 1516 with Thomas More and his work *Utopia*. But while there is plenty of debate but little movement towards its realization in Germany, countries like Kenya and Namibia are taking action.

**TJ** How can a country like Namibia finance a Basic Income? When the Basic Income is higher than the national income, it has to be financed externally.

**AG** In 2002, a tax commission independent of the ruling SWAPO party calculated that the best method by far for fighting poverty and inequality in Namibia would be a Universal Basic Income,<sup>47</sup> and it would also be affordable if taxes were raised slightly. The commission estimated that it take no more than three percent of GDP, which was around 240 million euros at the time. In the end, SWAPO refused to introduce a blanket Basic Income, but under Bishop Kameeta, a Basic Income project could be realized in at least one village with the support of NGO funds.

**TJ** As I said, the question of distribution that Germany is slowly beginning to consider is of course already being asked on the global level. I could leave 2.35 trillion with GAFA and let a portion of it flow from the rich countries to the poor ones as transfer payments. It's not necessarily a bad idea.

**AG** Given that we don't have much time left to change tack when it comes to the environment, I'd like to know what associations spring to your mind when you hear ›sustainability requires deceleration, requires a Basic Income | Livelihood‹ the triangular relationship I posited. The notion that the Basic Income could enable individual deceleration and then we could begin to think about how we could treat nature, the environment, and agriculture differently.

**TJ** I'll be honest: what first crossed my mind in relation to deceleration and sustainability is that things should actually be moving more quickly rather than slowing down. Although I do understand what you mean.

**AG** John Schellnhuber has also called it a kind of paradox. The idea that in climate policy in particular we need to act fast in order to then live the alternatives in deceleration.

**TJ** I wouldn't start calling it a paradox. You are speaking about deceleration at the level of the individual. There certainly needs to be a framework for it, but it's not required at the level of the state.

**AG** Right. Basic Income provides individuals with more options and the freedom to decide whether they want to get by with this small amount of money and have more time or whether they simply want to work a lot for good money. Most people I have asked about it at demonstrations, workshops, events, and train journeys say with a lot of verve: »I'd have more time for ...« And in the broadest sense,

47 »...that by far the best method of addressing poverty and inequality would be a Universal Basic Income« in: 1000 Euro für jeden. Freiheit Gleichheit. Grundeinkommen. Götz Werner and Adrienne Goehler, Berlin 2010

they are talking about more time for relationships, more time for »caring.« And practically nobody has ever said: »Great, I'd be able to buy even more.«

**TJ** I would understand better if you said we need more mindfulness. Because in that case I could still decide if that means speeding up or slowing down.

**AG** Yes, I think that would be OK too. And what about my claim that a Basic Income could contribute to more sustainability? Could they mutually define, reinforce, and enable each other?

**TJ** According to my understanding of sustainability, yes. Normally, sustainability is understood in the sense of »people, planet, profit«; it includes social, ecological, and economic dimensions. We need to finally prioritize this triple bottom line – something that is happening too infrequently today. When sustainability is the issue at all, the priorities are in the wrong order: the economy first and all other aspects subordinate to that. Instead, our top priority should be the people who live in an environment that they not only have to protect but also develop in harmony with it. And the economy is the means of achieving that goal. By definition.

**AG** In that spirit, the Basic Income becomes a culturally necessary, economic means of attaining more sustainability.

**TJ** In today's circumstances, I would say that a Basic Income | Livelihood is humane. Forward-looking and ecologically, culturally, and economically necessary.

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## If so, then only for women

**Sister Josefa Thusbaß** Schlehdorf Abbey, a convent of the Dominican Missionary Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena in King William's Town, South Africa; with provincial and missionary procur in Schlehdorf, Germany, former school principal; passionate photographer

**AG** How long have you been living here in the Convent of Schlehdorf?  
**Sister Josefa Thusbaß | Sr.JT** More than half a century. I entered the convent at the age of 22.

**AG** And before that?

**Sr.JT** I come from a farm. Girls went to elementary school there and then got married. School ended for me when I was 14.

**AG** And the other girls were already getting married at that stage?

**Sr.JT** No, they worked on the farms until they were married off at about 20, 22; that was the custom. A woman first had to be strong enough to be a farmer's wife. Back then, marriage was not only for love; a woman also had to be able to have children and work hard.

**AG** And you escaped this by deciding early to enter a convent?

**Sr.JT** It was what I always wanted, but I didn't think it was possible. There were no convents in my home area, and the rule at that time was that the eldest son got the farm, and the youngest daughter had to stay at home until he got married, until a new farmer's wife came into the house.

**AG** You were the youngest in the family?

**Sr.JT** Yes, that was my fate. But at 20, 21, my resolve strengthened and at 22 I entered the convent.

**AG** That also meant leaving the familiar surroundings of the village.

**Sr.JT** Yes. At the convent, the other sisters decided that I should go to high school and get some vocational training. And so I completed four years of schooling in two years at our convent school, flitting between different classes. After that, they decided I should do the school leaving exam (Abitur).

**AG** (laughing) In the same school?

**Sr.JT** No, as an external pupil in Murnau high school. My classmates were ten years younger than me. But I fit right in and was totally accepted by them; that was fantastic.

**AG** You were quite an exceptional person!

**Sr.JT** I went straight into the 11th grade without ever having had a math or a French class, and barely any English. During the first French lesson, the teacher told me snidely: »Go ahead and try, but I don't rate your chances highly.« That was all the motivation I needed. I thought to myself: I'll show her. At the end of the twelfth grade, I was top of the class in French (laughs). And since the convent wanted me as a teacher, I went to the university in Würzburg and stayed in a convent there.

**AG** And studied Romance languages?

**Sr.JT** Goodness me, no (laughing), Mathematics and Physics.

**AG** How casually you say that you left secondary school with no clue about math, but then went on to study Math and Physics. I raise my hat to you.

**Sr.JT** It sounds boastful, but I did the school leaving exam for highly gifted pupils and was awarded a very generous scholarship from the Maximilianeum Foundation. That was lovely. I always had some money left over.

**AG** And did this conflict with the order's principles?

**Sr.JT** No, there was no conflict there. For my teacher training, I stayed in the town of Marktoberdorf near here, but continued to live in the convent in order to do my teaching practice.

**AG** You seemed to have had a gift for making the most of the freedom you had and finding good opportunities?

**Sr.JT** That's true. After the state examination I immediately started teaching here in our convent school.

**AG** And it didn't take long before you became principal of the convent school?

**Sr.JT** First I taught for ten years at our girl's secondary school. Since the schools in the outside world were for boys only, girls were mainly educated in convents. Without them, education for girls would have remained in a sorry state for a long time. That's why I have always understood this task to be very missionary.

**AG** Looking back at the biographies of feminists of your generation, it nearly always emerges that they were taught by nuns in a convent school.

**Sr.JT** Yes. The convent schools pushed this very deliberately. Just like the pastors' daughters in the North. Angela Merkel is a pastor's daughter, as is Theresa May.

**AG** You were at the convent and head of the secondary school at the same time?

**Sr.JT** The school took up most of my time, and at the age of 65 I felt that I had to quit to make room for younger people. I wanted to focus on the convent, and then the treasurer of the order died and everyone said: now that would be right up your alley (laughs).

**AG** Once at the top, always at the top!

**Sr.JT** Well, I was the only one with some knowledge of IT and had been one of the first to set up a computer room in the school, because I

quickly realized that computers were going to change our lives. But, of course, I had no idea to what a huge extent.

**AG** Would I be right in thinking that throughout this time you had the sense of being supported by a Basic Income, even if it was not unconditional? I like the way you talk about how free a person can be when they have something like a scholarship. Because that is what interests me the most: The freedom that can arise if people's basic needs are covered.

**Sr.JT** Yes, I really appreciated that.

**AG** If I have understood you correctly, as treasurer of the order you also manage the donations made to support projects abroad. You have a mission procure, a missionary mandate.

**Sr.JT** Procure is the Latin equivalent of the Greek word *οίκος* and means to care for the court. So the procurator is the caretaker.

**AG** Is the mission procure tied to overseas work?

**Sr.JT** Well, in my function as procurator I have an overview of all the donations going to Africa or South America, and I also keep in touch with the people working on the ground there.

**AG** Because you cover such a broad spectrum, I wonder if and how the work carried out here in the convent and in international development cooperation would change if those with whom you work had a Basic Income | Livelihood.

**Sr.JT** If that were to happen, the Basic Income in these countries would have to go to women. You have to call a spade a spade: the men only waste it on drink.

**AG** That's quite a radical idea, but what you're saying has been confirmed in Otjivero, the village in Namibia where the Unconditional Basic Income | UBI was introduced as a pilot project. A village committee, where 13 of the 16 members were girls and women, therefore decided that no alcohol can be bought in the village on the day the Basic Income is paid out and it's generally only women who receive the Basic Income for children.

**Sr.JT** They knew well what was going on. And I would add that the Basic Income should be spent primarily on education.

**AG** Well, what the UBI is used for is not meant to be predetermined. But it just so happens that the women in Otjivero first made sure that their children went to school and got a school uniform. It was only after that that they began to set up small snack bars, grocery stores, a bakery, and even a chocolate manufactory.

**Sr.JT** This is also my experience of what can happen when women are helped. There are enough statistics that show that countries where women run the economy fare better. However, even in those countries there is a risk that some male rulers will appear on the scene and destroy everything that has been achieved.

**AG** Have you had any experience with microcredits? In Namibia I came to realize that microcredits have one major downside: The good ideas that women have in large numbers do not automatically translate

into purchasing power for the others. That changes radically when you combine a Basic Income and microcredits. This is what can move an economy forward.

**Sr.JT** When microcredits are in the hands of men – which is often the case, because in many countrys women are still not allowed to sign contracts – debt rescheduling becomes more frequent. The first loan is squandered and then a new one is taken out again and again until the whole thing goes down the drain. It really should be tied to strict conditions.

**AG** Which conditions can you think of?

**Sr.JT** Economic evidence must be provided and the education of the children must also be ascertained.

**AG** Would you also tie an UBI to these conditions?

**Sr.JT** Yes, and I would also insist that the UBI remains with the women, who, as you say, use it to foster their children's education. In South Africa, for example, there is a great danger that husbands will run away after the women have had two or three children. Because the men still have this idea that they can have several wives. But they can no longer afford them and so they run away from the first one and on to the next and so forth.

**AG** This was also clear for all to see in the Namibian village. The men left their wives and came back when they heard about the UBI. They were lying under the trees like logs, but the women did not let them back in again.

**Sr.JT** That was a huge step for them to make.

**AG** Without the Basic Income they would never have had the courage to say: ›Go away. You left me alone with four children for many years and now I don't need you anymore.‹

**Sr.JT** But it can also be very dangerous when women say: ›We don't need you anymore.‹ One of our women in a leading position was stabbed to death by her husband because he could not deal with her independence. And that was, sadly, just one of many similar cases.

**AG** How does your order operate in these countries? How could the work of the Dominican Sisters go beyond the area of education if the people with whom the sisters work had a Basic Income?

**Sr.JT** Where would the money come from?

**AG** That still has to be decided. In Kenya a huge Basic Income project is currently being implemented by the US-American NGO ›Give Directly,‹ which has collected enough money through crowdfunding to provide a Basic Income to around 200 villages over twelve years – including scientific monitoring. This is the brainchild of four American students from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who found out in 2008 that classical development work usually ends up in bureaucracy or the pockets of the ruling class. Their thesis is that far less money would be needed if people received it directly. As is always the case with Basic Income, it is based on trust in the individual.

**Sr.JT** But this can only be organised through NGOs, because governments always have to cooperate with the governments of the countries concerned. And that often fails, as we have painfully experienced in Zimbabwe. There, Mugabe was first seen as the great savior of the country but then he amassed his wealth and ransacked everything, supported by half of world's governments. That was a terrible development.

**AG** Are the Dominican Sisters not closer to NGOs than to governments? Would a UBI project not be a further development of your work on the ground? In Namibia, the liberation theologian Bishop Zephania Kameeta played a crucial role here, on the one hand in the executive committee of the governing party SWAPO, and on the other as the former head of the Evangelical Lutheran church in the Republic of Namibia.

**Sr.JT** In the two continents of Africa and South America, where we are present, we collaborate relatively little with government representatives. In most cases, cooperation is centered on various institutions, both in technical and financial terms. The church authorities play an important role here. The transfer of donations very often enables start-up financing for social projects, such as an advance payment for the purchase of sewing machines, which means the beginning of independence for women, seed packets, which can be the start of a small nursery, a personal cooking-stove with which a kiosk can be opened, etc.

**AG** Lobbyists, including NGOs, can do a lot of damage on the ground. This would seem to suggest that there would be less abuse if everybody had a Basic Income | Livelihood. Because then there would be nobody who could pocket the Basic Income five times, as we have seen in current practices. That would also correspond to your way of thinking, your mission, wouldn't it?

**Sr.JT** I still have some doubts, especially with regard to men. In Africa, I have seen that people often work just for today. In our latitudes, given the winters, we've always had to build up reserves. South Africa has another problem: the older black African generation has been so thoroughly broken down by Apartheid that people are locked in apathy.

A small example: One of the Dominican Sisters planted a vegetable and herb garden and paid a man, about 40 to 50 years old, to water it. When she came back from a trip, everything was dried up. He could not say why he had not watered the garden. She went out to buy new plants. When she returned, she found him watering devotedly, even though it had rained in the meantime.

**AG** So, no great identification with the work, and no initiative.

**Sr.JT** This is the generation that was transferred to the homelands because of Apartheid. You can't build anything big with this generation. But with the younger ones, it's a completely different story. When Apartheid came to an end, a lot of people took the opportu-



nity to get an education and made a huge leap on the social ladder. Many of them assumed leading positions. And some very well-educated black women joined our order. When I was there last time, I saw these slim black ladies with glasses and laptops under their arms striding down the corridor and I thought to myself: »Not bad, something is changing!«

**AG** I imagine that the world would change significantly, if these young women, but also older women, children and men, knew that they were facing a life with a Basic Income | Livelihood.

**Sr.JT** Provided we were all socially minded and in favor of this equal distribution. But in reality, there are always those who want to grab everything for themselves.

**AG** To avoid this, rules could be established, like in the Namibian village of Otjivero. The biologist and women's rights activist Christine von Weizsäcker, who has also contributed to this book, stressed in our conversation that African families often do not consist of father, mother, children, but only of women with children. If they could count on a reliable, regular Livelihood, their development prospects would be very different. This is also confirmed by the recent experiences in Kenya, which show that women also put aside some of their low but regular and expectable income for investments. It's this way of thinking and acting that I'm banking on as a prerequisite for the transformation to a more sustainable and self-determined life.

**Sr.JT** It would be important to give it a try because we cannot go on like this in the world, without coming to serious blows. The oppressed and exploited countries will defend themselves against the rich countries, they will fight back. Just think of all the plastic clogging up the Global South. Its mismanagement of the problem is, of course, partly to blame, but we're the ones who invented plastic and continue to offload it there.

**AG** Cultivating a garden has always been part of monastic life. Can you think of a possible connection between UBI and sustainable agriculture and nutrition?

**Sr.JT** Small-scale farming has to play a major role in order to resist the overexploitation by the large producers, who cream off the profits. But my question is always, also with regard to UBI | Livelihood: How do you prevent reckless profiteers from undermining everything in the end? Just like in South Africa: The sisters contribute to establishing a social infrastructure through their schools, but then the gold mine-owner decides to close the mine for three years and fires the workers. Given the existing high level of unemployment, there is hardly any other paid work to be found, which means that an entire area sinks into social poverty. For even the land that could be used for farming is also owned by the mine operator.

**AG** UBI | Livelihood would simply make people less vulnerable to the whims of their employers, because other forms of subsistence would be possible. Including forms of ecological subsistence that

can be used to counteract overexploitation. After all, we need to radically rethink our entire lives, going far beyond green economics or green growth.

What role can women like you play, who have not entered a religious order with a conditional Basic Income? Could a UBI | Livelihood be the fulfilment of the order's purpose by other means? Is it unrealistic to think that?

**Sr.JT** This Basic Income | Livelihood idea is fantastic and I would be immediately in favor of it, if it wasn't for the persistent abuse that ruins so much. But it's worth a try, because I don't think we have any other choices now.

**AG** On that point you agree with the CEO of GLS Bank. In his opinion, a Basic Income has long been ecologically and socially necessary so that people are not forced to accept the worst possible jobs for the environment. And given that capitalism is in the process of strangling itself, he argues that there is now a compelling economic case for an UBI.

**Sr.JT** That's how it is with us here in the convent: every sister is entitled to everything we have. Everyone gets what she needs. There is free board and lodging and healthcare, but no one is allowed to save her own money. We have put in place quite drastic mechanisms to ensure that this is the case. None of us has a bank account, no one can accumulate money. And I'm the one in charge of the joint account (laughs). All of us are committed to increasing our joint income as much as possible, for various reasons. Not only so that we ourselves have more, but also to fund our work in Africa and South America. That said, in the convent, too, there are sisters who work themselves to the bone, and others who can't or don't work as much, but are still ...

**AG** ... not kicked out because of laziness?

**Sr.JT** Yes, such differences are only to be expected; it's the same all over the world.

**AG** And you put up with them. That's just it. Every system can be exploited in one way or another, but if everyone and everything is under suspicion, that diminishes the capabilities of individuals and their dignity, as we see in the case of HARTZ IV.<sup>48</sup> I would therefore like to transfer the collective idea on which your order is based into the secular realm. Where does your money come from?

**Sr.JT** All of us work. My principal's salary went directly into the convent's funds. But our model is probably not suited to the outside world.

**AG** I'm not so sure about that. How would you characterize your missionary work today? It's no longer a mission in the classical colonial sense, is it?

Adrienne Goehler

48 The German unemployment and welfare package that has been in effect since 2005

- Sr.JT** Every era has its own particularities. Nowadays, our aim is not to prepare girls to become good Christian women, but educated women. It takes education, education, education! Even in the school, converting children to Catholicism wasn't our main priority. The children from the GDR with no denomination and the Muslim children were not turned into Christians, but we gave them an education. For me, it has always been important that every girl learns to be an independent woman as the basis for a fulfilled life. This was and still is my credo when it comes to missionary work with today's young women.
- AG** For me, Basic Income is closely linked to sustainability. Isn't the preservation of all creation an important part of your missionary ethos?
- Sr.JT** Yes, closely linked to the religious notion that human beings are the offspring of God or children of God, however you want to describe it. That's why they have the right to live in dignity and freedom. You're not just the product of two people that walks around and then dies.
- AG** And in the meantime costs a lot of money and causes trouble (laughs). I like to quote my philosopher friend Rudolf zur Lippe, who said: One thing that all people have in common is the fact that they weren't asked whether they wanted to be in the world. From this arises the duty of the human community to care for this being who hasn't been asked and cherish their dignity.
- Sr.JT** That's how we see it too. In our understanding, we are wanted and also loved by God. This endows every human being with the right to live in dignity. And there is a material and spiritual connection between all of us that goes beyond individuals, as well as this all-embracing energy that generates and sustains life every moment. We and the whole of creation are not the result of a random and mechanical process. We must finally abandon the old mechanistic idea of the world, shaped by Newton and other scientists, according to which everything in this world functions purely mechanically.
- AG** The human being has to accept the fact that they are not at the center but part of a larger web of life – even in the Anthropocene. Land, water, air and humans have to be seen in terms of their interrelationship; it's not about the domination of people over nature or other people. Surely the Dominican doctrines are not just about God, but also about land, agriculture, animals, and caring for the Earth?
- Sr.JT** We have just built two new houses with a groundwater heating system. We take groundwater from the earth, use the heat, and then send the water back into the earth. Of course, we still need electricity, this we have to admit. Our school was also the first in Bavaria to be awarded an ecological certificate. And we have completely transformed the convent and our agricultural production; our lands are now leased to an organic farmer. We never used pesticides in

our own garden anyway, based on the idea that all creation comes from God and therefore has to be protected.

**AG** Many people could take a leaf out of your book. Especially because we're not just overexploiting nature, but also our own human capacities. I think it's wonderful that the members of your order have not succumbed to the compulsion to self-optimize and be available all of the time.

**Sr.JT** On entering a religious order, the novice goes through a kind of religious apprenticeship, in which she learns to perform all the daily tasks with care and love. And she has to learn to take time to understand God's loving regard for all created things, which ultimately becomes her purpose in life. It is our right and our duty to take time every day to reflect on the essentials. When I was no longer school principal, I put away my I-Phone. I now only have a small emergency mobile phone and a computer with internet access. But anyone in business nowadays can no longer afford to do without a smartphone.

**AG** Because you as an order also have to remain? How do we break out of the kind of thinking that generates this permanent acceleration and addiction to efficiency?

**Sr.JT** Will we ever manage that? The first big battles and raids probably started when bronze was invented. Back then it seems that people started to realize that their neighbor or the next village had something that they wanted for themselves.

**AG** Man as the greatest enemy of man, then?

**Sr.JT** Well, certainly not always his friend. Even a Basic Income would not change this, I'm afraid. But that can't be an excuse to capitulate. We have to plow on. We can't be aghast at all the abuses and wrong turns. We have to be prepared for these setbacks.

**AG** But what is it that drives us? According to Albert Camus, we must imagine Sisyphus as a happy person. The idea of having to roll the rock up again and again never grabbed me, I must say.

**Sr.JT** Our one true task is to recognize that the stone will keep rolling down again and again. Especially in the context of the church, many people think that when they do good, things will automatically go according to their wishes. And then they are very quickly discouraged by reality. But you still have to carry on. It is our duty to awaken the good in people time and again. Because it is there. It takes persistence, I learned that in school. There are always children who drop off so much that their teachers recommend taking them out of school. I stopped that happening in the certainty that: ›You don't know what's inside that child. Find out!‹ Because it is our duty to view every child as a lucky bag. That is how we have achieved the lowest failure rate in all of southern Bavaria.

**AG** You draw the strength for this from your faith?

**Sr.JT** From the understanding that the human being is God's creation, especially the one who is to be abandoned.

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Give something to the community,  
and you will receive something back

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- AG** That quote from St. Augustine hangs among the photographs displayed in the stairway of the convent. Does it somehow connect with the idea of Basic Income | Livelihood? You live here in a small-town setting in southern Bavaria. What effect would a UBI | Livelihood have on this region?
- Sr.JT** It would encourage parents, especially mothers, to stay at home with their children for as long as they liked. I keep hearing about women who go back to work eight weeks after giving birth because they have to think of their pension. The fear of age poverty makes them get out and about again. But in my experience, children are much calmer and happier when the mother stays at home. I often had sick children on the sofa in my office, because we could not reach their mothers at work.
- AG** Well, did you also try to reach their fathers? Some critics argue that there is a danger that the UBI | Livelihood could take women out of the workforce, like a new version of the ›stay-at-home bonus‹. At the same time, more and more young fathers want to spend more time with their small children. I think a Basic Income | Livelihood could change how both sexes prioritize and allocate time to paid and unpaid work, which is urgently needed.
- Sr.JT** That's exactly what I mean. You've probably have heard that Bavaria now pays an educational allowance. There was a huge outcry from the rest of the country that this would send mothers back into the kitchen.
- AG** Well, experience has shown that such measures tend to cement gender roles. So what's crucial is freedom of choice. A woman shouldn't have to choose between staying at home and receiving the education allowance or going back to work immediately to ensure she gets a good pension. These are all constraints rather than approaches based on the particular needs of individuals and what makes sense for them. Of course, the Basic Income is not a cure-all and does not automatically imply a fairer distribution of childcare responsibilities, but it could help us to strike a balance between the different needs of adults and children – because it allows for more individual and flexible solutions.
- Sr.JT** In this region, a Basic Income | Livelihood would probably have the biggest impact on young families in terms of working hours and childcare, and perhaps lead to greater satisfaction among children. And of course, fathers should also avail of all these opportunities.
- AG** What could it mean for farming, which is the dominant industry here? You had mixed feelings about the very successful petition for a referendum ›Save the Bees‹, because you were afraid it could

harm small farms. Wouldn't a Basic Income provide security and encourage farmers to switch to organic farming?

**Sr.JT** If the farmers are landscape gardeners, then they must be paid for it. To some extent, this is already the case when farmers are given a few cents for not mowing their meadows until the wildlife teeming in there has been born. But it's far too little. That's why this petition for a referendum annoys me. When I see how actresses from Munich are getting the media to publicize their vote for the bees, I think to myself: »Did you also read the small print? Probably not!« I am also annoyed that the companies that produce all the poison are not being held to account, only the farmers.

**AG** But wasn't the petition for a referendum essentially initiated by the two ecological parties and environmental movements who have the interests of small farmers at heart? After all, it is directed against the agricultural industry with its toxic substances and against the EU's misguided subsidy policy.

**Sr.JT** Yes, but I am still deeply concerned that in the end a law will be pushed through that will not give the farmers any more freedom or adequate payments. Because if the petition leads to a referendum, which then leads to a law, then we would need a Basic Income for small farmers in order to achieve the kind of small-scale agriculture we truly want.

**AG** Could I summarize our conversation as follows? Although you rather skeptical of the Basic Income | Livelihood, you have identified two groups for whom it could be of great importance. You see its potential to empower women to wrest more education, autonomy and time for themselves. And you see the social aspect of sustainability strengthened by a Basic Income.

**Sr.JT** Yes, you can put it that way. I'm happy if I can contribute something to the spread of your idea.

Did you look out of the window this morning at the bright sky? With the strong foehn wind you can see a closed grid of condensation trails. You can literally feel the smoke screen on top of it. The planes dump their kerosene before landing in Munich. Why is it that this is not punished? There is still so much to do. We're back to Sisyphus again.

**AG** How do you view the initiative ›Maria 2.0‹, the strike by Catholic women for rights at all levels of the Church, for diaconate and priestly ordination?

**Sr.JT** I fully support the demand that women in the church be granted a long overdue equivalence. How is it possible that a religious community with over a billion members has for so long let the spiritual and intellectual power of women lie largely unused? Especially given that about four times as many women as men have gone out to bring Christianity into the world. Including our own courageous foundresses who went from Augsburg to South Africa in 1877 to found schools there. Despite all this, the church is still today a

male-dominated church, which now urgently needs to learn from the creative power of women and divide responsibilities equally between the sexes.

the options for a basic income as a policy for reform of the current social security system in Scotland, including, where appropriate, ... **Dann muss das Konsequenzen haben: Wie Arbeitsminister Heil Hartz-IV-Sanktionen verteidigt** [Business Insider Deutschland](#) Es trägt die Aufschrift »Mit einem bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen wäre Hitler Maler geblieben«. Kurz vor Beginn der Verhandlung protestiert einer ... **Motivieren Kürzungen und Sanktionen zur Arbeit?** [WirtschaftsWoche](#) Ob ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen der richtige Weg ist, Arbeitstätigkeiten aus eigenem Antrieb zu fördern? Die Forschung des Kollegen Theo ... **Mit der Kindergrund- sicherung schafft die SPD falsche Anreize** [Handelsblatt](#) So lehnt sie etwa ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ab. Deshalb überrascht es, wenn sich die Partei nun bei Grünen und Linken unterhakt, die ... **Darf das Existenzminimum gekürzt werden?** [Deutschlandfunk](#) von Leistungsberechtigten unbedingt beizubehalten.« Andernfalls sei der Anfang für eine Art bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen schon gemacht, ... **Hartz IV-Konzept verteidigt: Wolfgang Clement holt in Bornheim zum Rundumschlag aus** [Kölnische Rundschau](#) Eigenverantwortung ist der Grundsatz einer funktionierenden Gesellschaft. Welchen Sinn macht da ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen?« **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen?** [Kanal 21](#) Wir haben in der Bielefelder Innenstadt nachgefragt, was die Menschen von der Idee des bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens halten und ob sie es ... **Grundeinkommen** [DIW Berlin](#) Ein steuerfinanziertes bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen wäre unabhängig von der wirtschaftlichen Lage einer Person und nicht an die Ausübung ... **1200 Euro für alle! Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen** [vhs Dortmund](#) Eine Antwort findet sich in der Idee des bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens, die Ihnen Dr. Fliege vorstellt. Für ihn ist Deutschland auch im Jahr 2018 ... **Verdi-Basis macht wieder fürs Grundeinkommen** [mobilLabourNet Germany](#) Verdi-Basis macht wieder fürs Grundeinkommen mobil ... **überwältigender Mehrheit einen Antrag zum bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen: Es sollen ...** [Episode 13: Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen](#) Wolfgang Sonnenburg – Ein Plädoyer gegen das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen – und konkrete Impulse, wie jeder ein Purpose-basiertes Leben führen kann. **13.02.19 Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen macht Menschen glücklicher** [B.Z. Berlin](#) Auch in Deutschland wird seit langem über Modelle wie ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen diskutiert, dabei gehen die Fronten teils quer durch ... **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ist gut für die Gesundheit** [Tages-Anzeiger Online](#) Das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen wirkt sich positiv auf die Gesundheit von Arbeitslosen aus, beschleunigt aber nicht deren Rückkehr auf den. **Simone Lange spricht in Osnabrück und GMHütte über Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen** [noz.de – Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung](#) Zunehmende Ungleichheit: Lange räumte ein, dass sich ein »Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen« (BGE) nicht von heute auf morgen verordnen lasse... **Die Finanzen verschenken sinnlos Geld** [FAZ – Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#) Werden Menschen fauler, wenn der Staat ihnen ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen zahlt? Finnland hat das Experiment gewagt – und es ... **Grundeinkommen in Finnland**





Banksy. I don't believe in Global Warming, London (near Oval Bridge, Camden Town), 2009



BELIEVE IN  
WARMING

WARMING  
BETTER IN

## **I am certain that we will see a convergence in the next decade – that feminist, grass-roots, ecological and universal Basic Income movements will come together**

**Sarath Davala** sociologist, president of the international Basic Income Earth Network | BIEN, coordinator of the India Network for Basic Income | INBI<sup>49</sup> Interviewer **Thiago Pinto Barbosa**

**Thiago Pinto Barbosa | TPB** When did you first hear about Universal Basic Income | UBI?

**Sarath Davala | SD** I studied sociology, and for my doctorate work I researched industrial relations in a public sector company. After that, I landed in a job at a business school, where I taught industrial relations. I survived seven years there before switching to the voluntary sector. I knew I definitely wanted to work in rural regions. This is how I came across a women workers' union called SEWA<sup>50</sup>. I planned campaigns for them and helped them with fundraising. I had conducted research on various forms of work in the informal economy – local markets and basic services. Informal workers constitute 93-94% of the Indian economy. Through this union, I met Guy Standing, who had previously worked with the International Labor Organization | ILO, and has been working closely with SEWA. He is the author of the very important first book on the precariat and Basic Income. He was also one of the founders Basic Income Earth Network | BIEN. Together with SEWA, he had the idea to conduct a pilot study on UBI in Madhya Pradesh, where I was working at the time. That's how I became the director of the pilot project »Madhya Pradesh Unconditional Cash Transfer.«<sup>51</sup>

49 »Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India«, Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

50 Self-employed Women's Association, <http://www.sewa.org>

51 The first pilot research project dealing with Basic Income took place in the urban environment of New Delhi in 2009. This was also organized by SEWA. Both studies worked with the

**TPB** Madhya Pradesh is a state in central India with over 72 million inhabitants. The capital city of Bhopal gained attention within the environmental movement in 1984 because of the devastating gas disaster that happened there. That was the worst chemical catastrophe in history. Thousands of people died from direct impacts.

**SD** Oh, right. That was a big tragedy. Many people died. The pilot took place in Indore district, which is about 200 km from Bhopal. I was sure that there would never be a Universal Basic Income | UBI policy in India. The thought of just handing out money to the people is not acceptable culturally! The regular arguments against a Basic Income were: »It's not feasible!« »Can people handle it responsibly?« »Are you not encouraging laziness?« »The people will spend it all on booze, they'll waste it, they won't work anymore and unemployment will rise!« Some feminists also feared that women will quit the labour market and would be forced back into traditional roles. But the point is, the welfare system in India is so faulty by design, and so much money just leaked away because of corruption. So, we thought, okay, let's give it a try! Back then, we called it »unconditional cash transfer« and thought of it as a sort of bypass, which funnelled money directly to the people, because we simply couldn't trust the existing welfare system. Later, we became more philosophical and more political.

**TPB** When was that?

**SD** From 2011 to 2013 we conducted a very large study in nine villages. In rural households, there is always a severe scarcity of cash. This made money lenders to charge very high interest rates, driving 60 to 70 percent of households hopelessly into debt. When you suddenly inject money into such a system, extreme changes happen that put all the regular arguments against UBI to rest.

**TPB** Funds for the project came from UNICEF. How did you evaluate the project?

**SD** As an economist, Guy and our other co-authors concentrated on the quantitative part, and, as a sociologist, I took over the qualitative part. That meant really living in the villages and seeing what happened in the households. Will the men really take all the money away and drink and beat their wives (laughing)? For me, personally, this was a life-changing experience. We actually stayed in the village for two years and learned so much about the people, their feelings and their village life. We learned how Basic Income changed the

same hypotheses: a direct transfer of funds leads to behavioral change that results in better living conditions. Key positive effects are seen regarding the health and nutrition of children. Three surveys took place at the beginning, middle and end of the project. These showed improvements in direct relation to the distribution of Basic Income. For instance, in the participating villages, more money was spent on eggs, meat, fish and medicine. In 68% of the families, children's school performance improved, and attendance tripled. Savings also tripled in some cases, and the employment rate was doubled.

<https://monde-diplomatique.de/artikel/1490584>

village and its individuals, also the children and the elderly. I realised by way of this experience that all the arguments against Basic Income stem from the middle class prejudices, and a skewed perception of the working class.

**TPB** What were the criteria for distributing the Basic Income?

**SD** We made clear that this was an experiment, and we gave the money to everyone – to the rich and the poor, without differentiating. We wanted to avoid ethical and practical problems associated with targeting.

**TPB** The most important thing was that Basic Income was given to each individual not to the household.

**SD** Absolutely. Everyone received 300 rupees a month, which meant 2,100 rupees for a family of seven. The cost of sowing the fields was 4,000 to 5,000 rupees. It had always been that people became dependent on money lenders, who would lend them 5,000 rupees and then charge 3,000 in interest. At first the villagers couldn't even believe that they could raise enough for themselves by saving these 300 rupees per month. The second clear effect was that they began to farm uncultivated land.

Without the Basic Income, no one could risk cultivating more land because loan for the seeds would have to be paid back with interest. There was too much fear of losing everything. During the period they received Basic Income, agricultural production increased significantly, because the people were free to purchase seeds and fertiliser at the right time in the crop cycle.

Many farmers and their children had suffered from illness and nutritional deficiency. With Basic Income, they could buy necessary food items like vegetables, fish, eggs, lentils or oil at any time – the things that they could not produce themselves. Most of the elderly went straight to the local private doctor with their Basic Income, in order to get injections for their joint pains. They said they could move around without pain for two weeks after just one shot. It is not that this cash alone led to radical changes. But, when people are already on the brink of doing something, the money gives them the key impetus to take the next logical step. Therefore, one of the results of the pilot was a significant improvement in people's health. And these small changes put together, in a cumulative way, has resulted in a big shift.

There is an episode regarding the collective trade that developed out of this, which is really almost a parable. Many young people in the villages between 18 and 21 didn't know exactly what to do with the money. They also knew that they were accountable to their families about what they did with the money. After about three to four months, in one village, which has a large pond, a dozen young men got together to buy fish and learn fish-rearing. In the first year they didn't turn a profit, though. From the second year on, they were earning money, selling half of the fish in the village and bringing the

other half to the market. They invested all their Basic Income that was lying in the bank. Suddenly, they had discovered the potential of cooperative business. In the village, three new stores also opened.

**TPB** Were they receiving the 300 rupees during this whole time?

**SD** In eight villages, they received Rs.200 for one year and Rs.300 for another six months. In the tribal village, they received Rs.300 for one full year. Four years later, we went back to the tribal village to study the long-term effects. During the time frame of the project, livestock had almost doubled in all villages. Afterward, the numbers stayed so high even though the people continued to sell animals. Today, many people have goats because the investment in a goat is like having your money on a bank account. You can always sell it again for cash.

**TPB** It's the same with cows in Brazil.

**SD** This all had a huge effect on the lives of the people. It gave them more control over their own lives, as well as much more freedom to make their own decisions. Some started new businesses, and non-productive assets were made productive. The people who bought buffaloes and cows begun producing manure or dung cakes used for cooking to sell at the market. This effect strongly convinced me. After five years of being a full-time advocate of universal Basic Income, we founded India-Network for Basic Income in 2014, in short INBI. Since then, we regularly participate in BIEN actions. Our members are authors, journalists, researchers, university lecturers as well as a number of ordinary concerned citizens.

**TPB** As I already told you, Adrienne Goehler links the topic of Basic Income with sustainability. She is more than astonished by the fact that this connection is not considered – neither in the discourse around sustainability, nor that of Basic Income. She views this connection as mandatory.

**SD** So, she's looking into this necessary intersection?

**TPB** Exactly. It's about the social realities, which simply do not allow for leading a sustainable lifestyle, because it's only a matter of survival and subsistence. Shouldn't that be made a subject of discussion? Among the UNO's 17 SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals, some clearly call for the elimination of social inequality and hunger as a standard of sustainability. That's why one of Adrienne's questions for you is: Why do we barely see a connection being drawn between Basic Income and sustainability?

**SD** I'm going to talk at a large conference in Taiwan about how the UBI in Asia relates to the next generation's future. There, I'll approach the subject of sustainability in terms of the ideology of growth. This currently dominates our culture – actually our entire perception of the purpose of life. The obsession with growth is driving humans, nature and the economies into a major crisis, which I have divided into three levels: The ecological crisis, which we all know. Second, the moral crisis, which consists of mixing up life's purpose with our

growth-centric, individual lives. And third is the socio-economic crisis, which can be seen in the increasing precariousness of living conditions across the globe. This crisis is directly connected to emergence of all these macho leaders, like Trump, Putin and Bolsonaro, because the precariat are most susceptible to their form of populism. People are afraid of an uncertain future, and rightfully so. The accumulation of this large class of people living in uncertainty leads to a crisis of the whole relationship between the state and the citizen. When a nation no longer gives security to its citizens, we have a crisis of legitimacy. I will not say, though, that a Basic Income will solve all these problems. But, above all, Basic Income creates a secure basis for every person, from which he or she can enter the labour market. In addition to that, to reach the goal of sustainability, the other two dimensions are needed. We need to stop the ecological crisis and dissolve the moral crisis. For both of these aims, we definitely need to reduce consumption. That's how I connect sustainability with Basic Income.

**TPB** It's a very logical connection. In your opinion, what needs to happen so that the advocates of Basic Income and the representatives of the sustainability movement enter into dialogue with one another?

**SD** I am certain that we will see a convergence in the next decade – that feminist, grassroots, ecological and universal Basic Income movements will come together. They agree on so many things, and they share a holistic perspective. We only need a kind of philosophical umbrella, more platforms and partnerships to bring them all together. That isn't happening yet, is also due to the fact that there is strong resistance against the idea of Basic Income. Especially in countries like Germany, where the strong social democratic tradition works to uphold outmoded utopias of society.

**TPB** Do you mean the importance of gainful employment?

**SD** They still follow the old axiom and ignore the people who need to live from informal work and the people living precariously. They act like it would be possible for everyone to have good jobs and a good life, which is total nonsense in my opinion. We need to radically rethink our living and working situations. Today's technology replaces human hands and, in the future, machines will get better at performing more tasks. Moreover, they'll work more predictably. This is both a threat and an opportunity. It is an opportunity because we will no longer have to do all the jobs, which David Graeber lists in his great book, »Bullshit Jobs«. Steven Hawking always had the vision that today's technology could enable all of humanity to lead a good life if the owners of these technologies would allow for a fair distribution of wealth. He added that he did not see this happening in his lifetime, though. Who is going to grab the steering wheel, so that everyone can profit from the new technologies, and so that the divide between the super rich and the masses of the poor can be reconciled?



**TPB** In order to improve living conditions for everyone.

**SD** Exactly. It's about a better life for everyone. And, that is possible. If technology can create prosperity, we should let it. Then busses and trucks should drive around without drivers, accomplish tasks and deliver economic prosperity to all. That's totally fine. Let's do other things and become better and more politically active members of society. That way, we'll definitely create a better society. This is why all of these movements must work together and demand that everyone has access to technology. We should also command to reclaim the commons.

**TPB** The debate on UBI touches upon very fundamental questions.

**SD** Right, for example the commons. Are we aware of the fact that something like »common goods«<sup>52</sup> even exists? Do we even know what public inheritance is? That we, as human beings, are the proprietors of our country's land and natural resources? And that the government is only its custodian? We've forfeited our rights. When do we want to reclaim them?

**TPB** What do you see as science and research's role in all of this?

**SD** We need to transform the practice of scientific discourse, our research and the tradition of scientific objectivity, also known as value neutrality. We need to take sides. If sustainability is the goal of your research, you need to take a position that opposes marching civilization into collapse. If we don't want to reach that brink of collapse as a civilization, we need to be politically motivated. Not in the sense of political parties, but in the sense of aligning ourselves with goals like sustainability, security and better and more humane ways of coexisting and organising our society.

And, we need to cooperate more with the most diverse partners in our research – with partners who exercise their societal influence. We can't say that we hate politicians or that religion is opium for the masses, because then we remain a small, exclusive group that only sits in universities and research institutes, each siloed in their narrow scientific fields. Here is the economist. There is the sociologist. That's why I talk about the need for taking a holistic perspective, considering the fact that we are at the tipping point of the ecological crisis. We need to be more self-reflective. What and how we can contribute? Whom can we support by doing their groundwork? Of course we need to fulfil all the daily tasks of a researcher, but we also have a lot of homework and a lot of soul searching to do. Because, at the end of the day, I want to know: what is my role as an intellectual? As a scientist? How and where can I contribute? What

<sup>52</sup> The term common goods, also known as the commons, illustrates that we are all equal and that our rights to common resources (e.g. water, air, natural resources) are justified by our human existence. This contradicts the view of humans as *homo oeconomicus*.

Silke Helfrich in <https://www.bpb.de/apuz/33201/gemeinguetter>

is my role in society? My role as a citizen? It's about these fundamental questions.

**TPB** Where do you locate BIEN's work within this context? Do they bring the religious and political thinkers together?

**SD** We actually need many broad coalitions there too, because even BIEN consists mainly of academics, who are active at different universities and have written key books on the topic. But, in the past ten years, the idea has practically exploded, and it's wonderful how these are being taken up. In India, politics has in fact surpassed the scientific community. Elected people's representatives are standing up and saying: ›Now we want to explore the UBI‹. Or: ›We will provide farmers with universal basic income‹. However, this is also a symptom of the various crises. But that is a very big subject for discussion.

**TPB** Do you think that Indian politics truly takes up the ideas coming from the research context? Aren't these more like campaign promises?

**SD** The interesting thing about India, and for that matter much of the world's countries, is that evidence-based politics is a new phenomenon. For example, looking back at slavery, no one conducted pilot studies, (laughing) saying: ›Let's see whether these enslaved people will use their freedom well or if they will become menaces to society‹. You see, this was inconceivable. It's only today that we speak of evidence. The point is, sometimes the evidence and the discussions around Basic Income are symbolic. This forces the government to closely examine the existing social system. Not every statement is a political statement. But, when you speak about Universal Basic Income, it's politically charged. You are asking: What's the economic basis for subsistence, and why should people have this? And, what have we done in the country for all these years that has led to people lacking this basic economic security? This opens up a great deal of political questions. Immediately following our study, the government published a document stating that they would consider UBI. In fact, in the financial year 2016-17, UBI was a topic of the Economic Survey, which is a document produced by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India to review all aspects of the Indian economy<sup>53</sup>.

**TPB** From the federal government?

**SD** Yes. In the Economic Survey, there was an entire 45-page chapter on the question: Should we intensively analyse UBI? The government had a look through the focal lens of efficient administration. In this country, there is a public system for the distribution of grain, which costs about 30 billion dollars a year. However, only 60% of

53 <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2017-2018/es2016-17/echap09.pdf>



this actually reaches the people, because 40 percent are the so-called transmission losses.

**TPB** The food grains just disappear, magically.

**SD** Yes. If we rather give the people money instead of material subsidies, it simply goes directly to their hands. There won't be any transmission losses. The government is interested in aspects like these. About seven years ago our government decided that oil companies should no longer be subsidized to keep prices of basic necessities like cooking gas low. Instead, cash subsidies should go directly to people. That worked very well, and saved a lot of money for the government and forced the companies to become more efficient. So the government has found this direct cash transfers very attractive. And they began to talk about universal Basic Income from this perspective. But, I must say, that's something completely different. They are addressing the issues related to governance, not social justice or people's rights for that matter. In the same document, the government argues: We can't pay 1.3 billion people a Basic Income because that would be very expensive. Now if the government decides to give to everyone, and if that amount ends up being a very small, insignificant amount, say, a 100 rupees per person, that would be useless. So, they then speculated: Suppose we give only to women?« Well, that would reduce the total bill by half! In the government's document there were other suggestions, and solid data was presented proving that the current welfare system is fraught with many serious problems, and that the welfare money or goods do not reach people who need it most. I must really appreciate them for opening Pandora's box.

**TPB** But it is also a real success if the government recognizes and addresses serious problems within the welfare system, don't you think?

**SD** Absolutely! The Minister of Finance from Kashmir reacted immediately, saying he had calculated everything, and if the federal government would grant him the freedom to do so, he'd establish UBI in his province. He said he'd do away with all existing, unutilized and wasteful subsidies and provide everyone with a Basic Income. In other parts of the country also, they said the same. Major discussions were started: Why are they distributing saris? Why are bicycles distributed? The government is so fixated on material aid.

**TPB** So, would you say that the UBI is primarily a means of initiating new ideas and demonstrating new mindsets? Or it is currently the best way to eliminate poverty?

**SD** It really is both. At the end of the day, everyone in the government is interested in investing public funds in the most effective way, which is of course their job. But, when the discussion turns to how this should happen, so many cultural and social questions come up. But let's look at a small state like Sikkim with a population of 600,000, which borders on Bhutan, China and Nepal. Now recently in the ear-

ly 2019, one political party has proposed a Universal Basic Income in its election manifesto. I did not expect that it can happen so fast, but that's how it is in India sometimes.

**TPB** So, Universal Basic Income is a realistic utopia, which lends itself to many transformative processes.

**SD** It's a very practical utopia! (laughs) That is why I always laugh about objections that claim that UBI isn't feasible. As long as we just continue doing the obvious, we will keep reproducing the same system that led us into this crisis. Real transformation means that we must talk about utopias. What we need are lots of utopias and not just one. And, Universal Basic Income opens up the horizon for this.

**TPB** To come back to Sikkim for a minute: am I right in assuming that the state profits from the coal industry?

**SD** I believe it has good revenue from the hydroelectric power stations.

**TPB** I have a question, which every nation asks itself – for instance even Norway, where their wonderful pension system is funded by the oil industry. Often, huge, environmentally detrimental industries provide revenue, which is used for social purposes. But shouldn't both systems be more consistent with one another?

**SD** Now, it's like the selling of indulgences in the Middle Ages. You commit a sin, but when you pay a penalty – a tax – you are absolved. That is not an ethically acceptable way. We need to phase out the fossil-based fuels. Some people say we should tax the rich more so that we can give a Basic Income to all. But there is also another way to finance Basic Income other than introducing new taxes. For example, we could reclaim the commons and yield dividends. What are the commons? Who owns them? How are we managing them now? We haven't even really begun this whole discussion yet. We must open these questions.

**TPB** In Germany, for instance, the state earns a lot by supplying weapons to war zones. When we open up this can of worms, it's necessary to start talking about a lot of things, and this is what we should do. But it shouldn't keep us from thinking about what we want to do with the available money.

I would like to talk about the idea of Livelihood or subsistence, which you introduced earlier. The German translation is »Auskommen«. Adrienne suggests speaking about Livelihood instead of income, because this term is much more open and sounds more like »a basis for subsistence, which makes anything possible« than »income«.

**SD** Yes, that takes us in an interesting direction. The world will definitely look different in 10, 20 years because we would have reached more advanced stages of decoupling of income from wage and paid work. To some extent, terms used today, like »full-time employment«, will completely lose their meaning. We need to extend beyond our current understanding of income arising from one job. For example, Basic Income can provide for our Livelihood, and then we

can work toward other goals above and beyond that. This would be a completely different economic model. But there are other interesting concepts, which could play a role. For instance, in Switzerland, Gerhard Müller is working on a kind of »time money« approach. If I work for two hours in your garden, for example, I earn two hours, which I can use later when I'm old.

**TPB** Doesn't that exist in Japan?

**SD** Yes, to some extent, but it's not related to another economic system. It is integrated into the capitalist system as a kind of savings model. But it's dealing with time as currency within a community, which uses time to calculate care-based work. Imagine an entire economy without a conventional currency; for instance, a local and a primary currency to protect against economic crises and to become more autonomous. This was another of our points: autonomy. Which emancipatory potential does UBI present, and what types of coexistence does it support? For example, you could say: No, I don't want to search for a job for the next ten years. I want to live on my Basic Income and write this great philosophical treatise, which has been haunting me for the past ten years. What would be wrong with that? Having the choice to do so is a sign of a great society.

**TPB** Yeah, that would be a new freedom of decision.

**SD** With that, we are talking about different paradigms and other societies, in which money plays another role. A society, which doesn't fully control our lives, like it does today. Today we have groups that talk about money as a common good. Why do we view money as something created by the government? Value is something that we create together. The government only prints the money. We need to question economic models and critically observe what implications these have for our coexistence. In the past, we had the barter system. There, money played no role, and social relations were supported as well as relations between communities. Today, no one wants to be dependent or owe anything to anyone else. But we can decentralize the currency system and put power into the hands of small groups with the help of blockchain technology, for example.

**TPB** In Berlin there are already some initiatives, which have removed themselves from the money system and developed barter systems, for instance. This definitely holds potential. But another question: Is there a connection between the Universal Basic Income movement in India and the project »Give Directly« in Kenya?

**SD** »Give Directly« is the initiative of two people from the U.S.A. who share the conviction that conventional development aid does not work. Via their organization, people in some Kenyan villages receive a Basic Income for about a 12-year period. They started Give Directly because they felt that the 300 billion dollars that goes out of the US in the name of development aid does not always reach where it should. Instead, their approach is to provide the money directly to people and allow them to decide how to use it. Paul Neuhaus, one

of the founders, teaches economics at the University of California, San Diego.

**TPB** And the money comes from donations?

**SD** Yes. Google gave them a large sum, and so did both the owner of Ebay and Chris Hughes, the co-funder of Facebook. Now they are expanding the project on to Uganda and Malawi, and they want to establish an office here in India, too.

**TPB** Adrienne said that the World Bank should obviously also make these observations and not just enterprises with clearly economic intentions.

**SD** Yes, that's true. At the end of the day, the World Bank is the big player in the poverty discussion. They have worked with simulated models and will also publish a book<sup>54</sup> on Universal Basic Income. UNICEF also endorses UBI and supported our study with a million dollars. We want to introduce a new paradigm into the discourse on developmental aid. For this, we are in discussion and cooperation with all these interested parties. Do you know what Jesus said when the people asked him why he bothers with prostitutes, drunkards and loan sharks? He said: I came for them, not for you, (laughing). So, we look at everyone to see their approach, what we can learn from it and how we can influence them.

**TPB** One final question on Adrienne's thesis »sustainability needs deceleration needs Basic Income | Livelihood«. What do you think of this?

**SD** I agree wholeheartedly. I've talked with you about the three crises. The second is a moral crisis, which we are all experiencing: What is life's purpose? Can we find it by speeding up and consuming more and more? Shouldn't we have a limit on our consumption? »To own and consume as much as possible« can't be the central meaning of our life. We need a moral transformation that leads us away from the growth paradigm. We can see the degree to which this fatally shapes our world, by looking to Angela Merkel as an example. A friend of mine knew her many years ago during her time as Environmental Minister. Back then she said: In Germany we have 84 different kinds of mineral water in the supermarket. Some brands are even imported from New Zealand. Do we really need this when we have the best drinking water here? What good is this craze for consuming purest water and the biggest car? So, you see, we have reached such ridiculous levels of consumerism. We badly need a moral and world-view transformation.

I believe that Basic Income can give security and remove pressure, and, through this it could contribute to the much-needed moral transformation. The more insecure you are, the more you want. In order to break out of this negative spiral, we need to decelerate. That is why I consider a sustainability triangle, so to speak, made

54 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/32677>

up of the ecologic, the social and the moral. We must achieve transformation on all of these fronts. I cannot say that Universal Basic Income will take care of sustainability. But it can be the foundation for a better society. And that is also our motto: With Basic Income, a better world is possible.

**verschaffte Zufriedenheit, nicht Jobs** [derStandard.at Helsinki](#) Das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen wirkt sich positiv auf die Gesundheit von Erwerbslosen aus, beschleunigt aber nicht deren ... **Was nach der Leistungsgesellschaft kommt** [SPIEGEL ONLINE](#) Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen und wahre Gleichstellung: Deutschland könnte auf der Schwelle zu einem neuen Zusammenleben stehen. **»Nicht fauler als die Vergleichsgruppe«** [Badische Zeitung](#) In vielen Staaten, auch in der Bundesrepublik, ist seit vielen Jahren eine Debatte über das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen im Gange. [Hamburger Abendblatt](#) Danach wird zugestanden, dass die Idee vom bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen an gesellschaftlicher Bedeutung gewinnt und sozial vertretbar ... **Grundeinkommen macht nicht fleißig, aber auch nicht faul, vor allem aber gesund und zufrieden** Schwäbische Demonstration für bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen in Berlin: Positiver Effekt des Experiments in Finnland auf Gesundheit und Psyche nachweisbar ... **Finnische Forscher: Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen gut für Gesundheit** [APA Science Helsinki](#) Das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen wirkt sich positiv auf die Gesundheit von Arbeitslosen aus, beschleunigt aber nicht deren ... **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen macht Menschen glücklicher** [Aktuelle-nachrichten-online.eu](#) Ein Grundeinkommen steigert laut einer Studie das Wohlbefinden der Empfänger, führt allerdings nicht zu mehr Beschäftigung. Zu diesem vorläufigen ... **Finland's Universal Basic Income Had a Surprise Effect on People's Beliefs** [Inverse](#) The findings, shared in the Helsinki-based House of the Estates Friday morning, cover one of the most ambitious basic income experiments ever ... **Universal basic income in India is a tantalisingly close prospect** [Financial Times](#) A flurry of announcements, most recently by India's opposition Congress party, holds out the tantalising prospect that something like a universal basic ... **Universal Basic Income may be a way to break cycle of violence** [Chicago Sun-Times](#) Universal Basic Income (UBI) is the latest trendy proposal to lift people over the poverty line. Finland just ended its two-year UBI trial in January, with ... **Chicago Proposes Universal Basic Income** [Newsmax](#) A pilot would reach 1,000 Chicagoans with \$1,000 a month, the proposal reads Guaranteed income can have powerful effects: significant reductions .. **Plan to pay 1000 residents \$1000 a month—no strings attached—pitched by panel** [Chicago Sun-Times](#) The cornerstone is the »guaranteed income pilot« that would »help us learn how government can operate and bring programs like this to scale,« the ... **10.04.19 Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen: Jeder zweite Deutsche hätte gerne Geld vom Staat** [FOCUS Online](#) Rund 50 Prozent der Deutschen träumen vom bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen – also staatlichen Geldgeschenken ohne jede Gegenleistung. **Jeder zweite Deutsche befürwortet bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen** [SPIEGEL ONLINE](#) Grundeinkommen? Die Generation Z findet es toll [DIE WELT](#) 45 bis 52 Prozent befürworten bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen [wallstreet-online](#) Der verblüffende Ausgang des finnischen Experiments [DIE WELT](#) Ganz aufgegeben haben die Forscher die Hoffnung noch nicht, doch noch ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen zu testen,

**Time  
of nature**

is contextual  
is interdependent  
is being and becoming  
is duration, succession & cycle  
is birth and death, growth and ageing  
is all of past & future gathered up in the present  
is rhythmic repetition with variation: invariability is death  
is re/production, regeneration and repair/healing  
is temporality, timing, tempo, intensity  
is internalised memory & history  
is finite & transcendent  
is multi-layered  
is creative  
is life

**Time  
of Work**

is paid for  
is calculated  
is tightly structured  
is allocated a monetary value  
is tied to speed which equals efficiency  
is reaching its speeding up limits with digitalisation  
is turning into a scarce resource with globalised distribution  
is marked by uncertainties coupled with insecurities  
is typified by pervasive precariousness  
is turning fluid & unstructured  
is becoming unplanable  
is losing its value  
is stress

**Time  
of basic  
Incomes**

Is process  
Is dependable  
Is opening potential  
Is enabling planning & projecting  
Is freeing the spirit to seek true vocation  
Is providing solid foundations to secure existence  
is expanding temporality beyond pure present orientation  
is all of past and future gathered up in the present  
is allowing for enlarged reach of concern  
is encompassing others beyond now  
is opening gift of future  
is sustainable  
is bliss



**Maheba Goedeke Tort | MGT** campaigner for ›mein Grundeinkommen | my Basic Income‹<sup>55</sup> in discussion with **Hartmut Rosa | HR** sociologist and political scientist, author of ›Beschleunigung | Acceleration‹<sup>56</sup> (Why do we feel like we have less and less time, even though we are constantly saving it?) and ›Resonanz | Resonance‹<sup>57</sup> (What does life look like beyond the rat race, what characterize a good life and how do we reach this goal as a society?!). He calls an Unconditional Basic Income | UBI a suggestion for a solution. **blogpost 16.01.19**

**MGT In your latest work, ›Resonanz – Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung‹, you write about the good life. Is it even possible to find a uniform definition of what exactly the good life is?**

**HR** Yes, but it is a difficult question. I needed almost 900 pages to reach it! (laughs) Let me try to summarize. I believe that we can measure quality of life on the basis of the way we relate to the world. It is a relationship question: how do we relate to one another? But also: how do we relate to ourselves? And what kind of relationship do we have with the world and the things in it? This is why the subtitle of the book is ›Sociology of the Relationship to the World‹. There are many different forms of entering into relationships. Given the current situation, we are living in an aggressive relationship. We have to

constantly arrange things and reach goals – I call it expanding empires. Compulsion to exist  
In contrast, a good life makes it possible to enter into a state of resonance with others. Resonance is a certain kind of being related to things, which I call ›listening and answering‹. I let myself be touched by something. It takes hold of me. In the next moment I experience myself as being effectively connected. That is extremely important. People want what they do to also leave a trace and effect the world. When we experience something, we always transform ourselves as well. Only then do we feel alive. This is why I believe that a good life is only one that allows for this kind of interplay: a life in which we have the possibility to enter into resonance in social contacts, in counter-contacts and in relation to life in general.

**MGT And what exactly does a Unconditional Basic Income have to do with the good life?**

**HR** We need an intermediate step here. A prerequisite for the ability to resonate is a certain form of being free of fear. Because, if I am afraid – by the way, also when I am under time pressure – then I can't enter into relationships of resonance, or open up to them. You can see it clearly under time pressure: if I have to be at the train station in ten minutes because my train is leaving, then I can't resonate with

55 Non-profit association, which unconditionally grants Basic Income for one year in the annual amount of 12,000 euros. By June 2020, almost 200,000 people had contributed to making 627 Basic Incomes possible. <https://www.mein-grundeinkommen.de>

56 Beschleunigung und Entfremdung, Berlin 2013

57 Resonanz – Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung, Berlin 2016



you, for example in the form of an interesting conversation. But in the case of fear, it's also clear: if I'm afraid, I close off to the world and can't, for example, enjoy good music that comes from somewhere unexpected. I believe that today's society is characterized by a permanent drive to enhancement/cumulation. This is systemically anchored, because economic growth, acceleration and innovation need to be achieved by us, and this is translated in our lives as a form of competitive pressure and compulsion to exist. We feel like we are hanging on to the side of a mountain, constantly sliding, and if we don't manage to climb back to the top, then we fall into the abyss – and this abyss is endless. It's something like a societal death. The current social system enables us to avoid starvation, but it takes our place in the world away from us. It takes away our feeling of a legitimate belonging to the world and to society. But it is not only those who truly live from Hartz IV<sup>58</sup> who battle with the fear of societal death, but everyone else as well, since they could also fall to this level. This is why I believe that an UBI creates existential security for the whole of society. It pacifies existence, restores peace to our being in the world, so that it is even becomes possible to enter into resonance again – with ourselves, with the world, with nature.

**MGT** How do you imagine a society that is liberated from existential fear looks like? What could happen here?

**HR** It isn't the case that we would then be completely free of existential fear. We could still get sick. We would still have to deal with terrible fears in all things related to love, and in many other things as well. However, we wouldn't have to worry about our economic survival. And now comes the interesting question, which is also constantly being discussed: will people then just simply be lazy? Maybe they will all just sit in front of the TV with a beer? My answer is: the phenomenon, people getting so frustrated that they end up sitting in front of a TV with a beer – was created by Hartz IV. Because it devalued the people and their time. If you communicate to people that they are actually superfluous beings, then you take away their ability to be actively, creatively and innovatively connected to the world and society. People like to put in an effort. They also like to be creative. It belongs to us as beings. And this is why I think that such a society, in which the question of existence no longer needs to be posed, will not be inert or even lazy, but will access all possible forms of resonance sources and resonance relationships. However, will we no longer be forced – neither in production, nor in consumption – to concentrate on growth in panic.

**MGT** Thank you for the conversation.

58 Hartz IV: Unemployment benefit with high restriction and the sheer opposite of unconditional (Adrienne Goehler)

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# Living Working Experimenting

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This paper focuses exclusively on the psychological aspects of the guaranteed income, its value, its risks, and the human problems it raises. The most important reason for the acceptance of the concept is that it might drastically enhance the freedom of the individual.

( ...) The principle prevailing throughout most of human history in the past and present (in capitalism as well as in the Soviet Union) is: »He who does not work shall not eat.« This threat forced man not only to act in accordance with what was demanded of him, but also to think and to feel in such a way that he would not even be tempted to act differently.

( ...) A guaranteed income, which becomes possible in the era of economic abundance, could for the first time free man from the threat of starvation, and thus make him truly free and independent from any economic threat. Nobody would have to accept conditions of work merely because he otherwise would be afraid of starving- a talented or ambitious man or woman could learn new skills to prepare himself or herself for a different kind of occupation. A woman could leave her husband, an adolescent his family. People would learn to be no longer afraid, if they did not have to fear hunger. (This holds true, of course, only if there is also no political threat that inhibits man's free thought, speech, and action.)

Guaranteed income would not only establish freedom as a reality rather than a slogan, it would also establish a principle deeply rooted in Western religious and humanist tradition: man has the right to live, regardless! This right to live, to have food, shelter, medical care, education, etc., is an intrinsic human right that cannot be restricted by any condition, not even the one that he must be socially »useful«. The shift from a psychology of scarcity to that of abundance is one of the most important steps in human development. A psychology of scarcity produces anxiety, envy, egotism (to be seen most drastically in peasant cultures all over the world). A psychology of abundance produces initiative, faith in life' solidarity.

A further effect of a guaranteed income, coupled with greatly diminished working hours for all, would be that the spiritual and religious problems of human existence would become real and imperative. Until now man has been occupied with work (or has been too tired after work) to be

too seriously concerned with such problems as ›What is the meaning of life?‹ ›What do I believe in?‹ ›What are my values?‹ ›Who am I?‹ etc. If he ceases to be mainly occupied by work, he will either be free to confront these problems seriously, or he will become half mad from direct or compensated boredom.

( ...) The full effect of the principle of the guaranteed income is to be expected only in conjunction with: (1.) a change in habits of consumption, the transformation of homo consumers into the productive, active man (in Spinoza's sense); (2.) the creation of a new spiritual attitude, that of humanism (in theistic or nontheistic forms); and (3.) a renaissance of truly democratic methods (for instance, a new Lower House by the integration and summation of decisions arrived at by hundreds of thousands of face-to-face groups, active participation of all members working in any kind of enterprise, in management etc.).<sup>59</sup>

In sum, together with economic research in the field of the guaranteed income, other research must be undertaken: psychological, philosophical, religious, educational. The great step of a guaranteed income will, in my opinion, succeed only if it is accompanied by changes in other spheres. It must not be forgotten that the guaranteed income can succeed only if we stop spending 10 percent of our total resources on economically useless and dangerous armaments; if we can halt the spread of senseless violence by systematic help to the underdeveloped countries, and if we find methods to arrest the population explosion. Without such changes, no plan for the future will succeed, because there will be no future.<sup>60</sup>

**Erich Fromm**

59 Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*, New York 1955

60 Erich Fromm *The Psychological Aspects of the Guaranteed Income*, originally appeared in R. Theobald, *The Guaranteed Income* New York: 1966. Reprint in: E. Fromm, *On Disobedience and Other Essays*, New York 1981 Copyright © 1966 Erich Fromm; Copyright © 1981 and 2011 Literary Estate of Erich Fromm, Tübingen

## What enables people to act ecologically? It is really quite mandatory for Basic Income to come into play

**Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn** professor of economics, private lecturer and German Parliamentary Representative of Alliance 90/The Greens. A long-time advocate for the introduction of a citizens' insurance scheme and an Unconditional Basic Income | UBI. He developed the concept of a Green Guaranteed Pension for the Green Party's parliamentary group

**AG** How long have you been a member of the Bundestag?

**Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn | WSK** Since 2008.

**AG** And how long have you been dealing with universal basic income | UBI?

**WSK** Since the time I began to think politically. So, around the beginning of the 1980s. I'm a working-class kid and grew up living with the social and ecological problems at the edge of the Ruhr Region. That's also why I joined the Greens back then. I have no idea what the trigger was – whether I was inspired by something I'd read, or the other way around. Maybe the idea was in my head, and I found the right texts and realized: Yes, that's it! In the early 1980s, there were already various anthologies on basic income. ›Befreiung von falscher Arbeit | Emancipation from false labor‹ was one book by Thomas Schmid. It is actually because of this that I studied economics – so that I could understand and analyze UBI. What are its economic effects? How should the welfare state be structured so that a basic income is possible? Then, there was a special edition of the socialist magazine ›Widersprüche<sup>61</sup> | Contradictions‹. But there was very little discussion of the ecological aspects of the Basic Income – the aspect that interests you most.

61 [www.widersprueche-zeitschrift.de/IMG/pdf/widersprueche\\_102.pdf](http://www.widersprueche-zeitschrift.de/IMG/pdf/widersprueche_102.pdf)

**AG** And, in your mind, you'd combined Basic Income and sustainability from early on?

**WSK** No, only since becoming a Member of Parliament. I've become more and more aware of the urgency of ecological issues. Academically, I had focused on the social issue. A few years back, I came across a book that deals with the socio-ecological question: ›Die ökosoziale Frage | The eco-social question‹.<sup>62</sup> Strictly speaking, however, Opielka's main focus is on social policy rather than ecology. In the 1980s, he had already founded the ›Institute for Social Ecology | ISÖ‹, which currently carries out the scientific coordination for the Future Lab in Schleswig-Holstein, where Basic Income is a key topic, among others. In 2007, we both prepared assessments of the former Governor of Thuringia Dieter Althaus' proposal for a citizens' income.<sup>63</sup> Aside from that, we were both involved in founding the Basic Income Network. In 2013, Opielka and I conceived a project that aimed to bring stakeholders from the social and ecological spheres together. The background to that was our observation of how separately the ecological and the social systems are treated in science, in the public consciousness, and in politics. Although the triangle model for sustainability consists of the three pillars – the ecological, the social and the economic – it would be important to consider the role a UBI could play in that. But then I returned to the Bundestag shortly after that and abandoned the project.

**AG** As an image and a concept I find the term ›pillars of sustainability‹ highly problematic. Pillars cannot approach each other; they don't change, move or become permeable. We definitely need to refer to the different dimensions, and this can happen via the cultural dimension. However, aside from the occasional radio talk on eco-friendliness, this dimension usually gets neglected. And the aesthetic dimension along with it, although this is the sum of all our sensory perceptions.

**WSK** I see the increasing importance of making these connections, although I am an economist, first and foremost. With this understanding, I say that the economy needs to change completely so that it becomes sustainable. The post-growth debate is central to this. But when the economy is no longer reliant upon growth, the question of social security arises immediately. ›How do you get people to act ecologically?‹ And here the Basic Income inevitably comes into play. Because if we want to prevent negative effects, it's simply not enough to produce less of the same. We need to get beyond the logic of growth.

62 Michael Opielka. *Die ökosoziale Frage. Alternativen zum Sozialstaat*. Fischer 1985

63 The solidarity citizen's benefit. Financial and socio-political analysis of a reform concept. Expert opinion for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. *Das Solidarische Bürgergeld. Finanz- und sozialpolitische Analyse eines Reformkonzepts. Gutachten für die Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*. In: Borchard, Michael (ed.) *Das Solidarische Bürgergeld – Analysen einer Reformidee*. Lucius & Lucius Stuttgart 2007

**AG** And UBI can leverage this?

**WSK** Eliminating the pressure for growth does not mean a general departure from growth. There is also growth in nature, after all. A basic income qualifies the pressure for growth, because everyone has a stable basis.

**AG** Hmm, the growth of ideas and creativity wouldn't hurt, though.

**WSK** The deciding factor is having a basis, from which entrepreneurial people can act without the pressure to produce or consume some junk just to survive. They need the possibility to think freely and ask themselves: what is it that I actually want? To get out of the hamster wheel, decelerate, and have the courage to say, »I don't need to be employed full-time for 45 years. I can work less at times or not at all.«

**AG** Famous forward thinkers like the young Marx had a different way of living and working. He sketched out a society in which the individual should be able to experience his various abilities and needs.

**WSK** The same is true of the evangelical social ethicist, Franz Segbers. His connection to Basic Income arises from the creation story. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. With this he justified the need for idleness. Artists aren't the only people who need creative phases, but this isn't accepted for »normal« people.

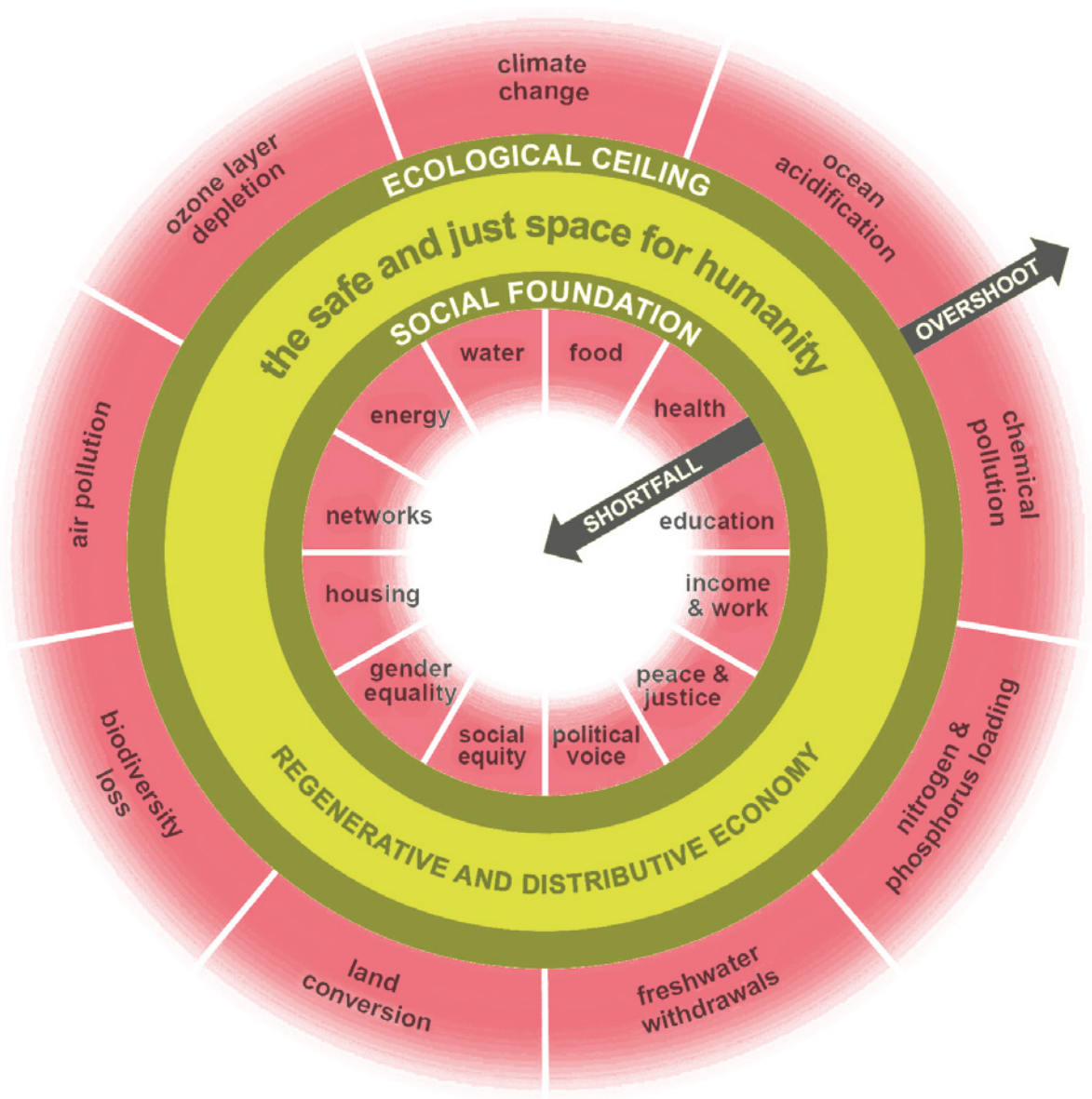
**AG** How do you differentiate between normal people and artists?

**WSK** It was actually a Joseph Beuys event which gave me the initial impulse to join the Greens. There, I got to know his »every man is an artist« thesis.

**AG** But Beuys qualified that by saying that every man is a social artist, in the sense that everyone has the faculty of creative power, both at the individual and political level.

**WSK** But for this, everyone needs creative phases and pauses in life and in their work. It's good for work and enhances quality of life. Basic Income can be leveraged against acceleration. It allows for a link between social sustainability and ecology. A sustainable economy must guarantee two things. It needs to create a social foundation in order to provide everyone with at least the basic necessities. At the same time, the limitations of the planet cannot be exceeded. Kate Raworth calls this »Doughnut Economics,« because it can be represented as two circles that look like a donut. The inner ring describes the social foundations and basic necessities, and the outer ring the planet's ecological limits. A sustainable economy can only exist between these two rings. Basic Income is the best way to provide for basic needs and, at the same time, it's a means of countering the pressures for growth. In this way, it's a countermeasure to prevent us exceeding ecological limits.





Doughnut economy

**AG** Are those your associations with the triangular relationship of sustainability, deceleration and Basic Income | Livelihood?

**WSK** Yes. We need an economy that respects the planet's limits to growth and is socially sustainable, where sustained social participation is guaranteed for all people. The free market is neither social nor ecological. Both aspects require political rules and social and ecological guidelines and guardrails. Basic income works in both directions. It provides a social basis for the economy. At the same time, it reduces the existential fears and demands for growth that lead to an economy that exploits nature and exceeds the ecological boundaries, as is the case today. While today it's a question of what profits an action will yield, Basic Income could lead to a more conscious and decelerated way of dealing with the economy. It would prompt us to ask ourselves: Why am I doing this? What consequences do my actions have for myself, for nature, for other people?

**AG** I've found a short formula for that: the UBI allows a shift from ›must and should‹ to ›can and want‹. In order to find out what you can and want to do, it's necessary to sit back and look at things from a distance. I imagine that this alone would have a decelerating effect. With regard to your ideas on Basic Income as a means of social reform, what is the role of ›Work 4.0‹?

**WSK** It's an important debate, but it's actually nothing new. We were already talking about the future of work in the 1980s.

**AG** Except that back then, the big CEOs weren't joining the debate about future work, and Amazon, Google, Facebook and Apple weren't directing the global economy.

**WSK** Work is accelerating rapidly. A Basic Income would have been needed much earlier, but now there is a new line of reasoning among some business people, including some in the Basic Income scene: the robots are taking our jobs. In fact, I don't share this view, but work will certainly change radically, because we are moving away from the typical dependent employment relationship. Many salaried jobs will disappear, but some new ones will also come into being. There will also be more self-employed work, more freelancers, and autonomous work. Today, there are many people who no longer work under permanent contracts, but rather on a project basis, which increasingly leads to breaks between jobs. Several studies assume that this ›self-employment‹ can easily turn into ›self-exploitation‹. But this doesn't have to be the case: a Basic Income could be the basis for different ways of working, both temporally and qualitatively.

**AG** Working as a researcher also increasingly means navigating your way from one temporary contract to the next, with the dazzling perspective of being trapped in eternal academic precarity.

**WSK** These transitions require a financial basis, because this precarious life will capture every possible societal group. However, I don't think

that this is necessarily a bad thing. I don't want to do the same job for my entire life, and I imagine that others feel the same way. Only, these days, this is tied to significant societal insecurity. Through social security, exploitation and precarity can be turned into increased freedom and self-determination. Work 4.0 leads to an increase in these transitions between different jobs. One needs phases of continuing education and creative pauses. To make this possible, we need a Basic Income or at least something that provides a safety net in these phases. I think of UBI in several steps, and I am certain that Work 4.0 is leading to a reappraisal of social security and structures that allow for variety. The needs within society are becoming more diverse, as are our résumés. That's why I'm also a supporter of a citizens' insurance scheme for everyone – for those in employment and the self-employed. The principle is similar to Basic Income: everyone pays for everyone. Everyone gets a Basic income, and everyone pays into social security in order to have additional health and retirement insurance for the most diverse of life situations and developments. Political steps need to be taken in this direction.

**AG** So everyone would pay into the social security according to his or her paid income, over and above the Basic Income?

**WSK** Yes, exactly, because most people will likely not live from Basic Income alone. Most want to have a bit more, with the exception of certain phases. And, in those times when somebody earns additional income, he or she pays into social security. When we earn, it's necessary that we pay into social security for those, who, at times, have no additional earnings from work or capital income. In this way, the retirement phase will be covered. This is how the citizens' insurance scheme works in Switzerland. This, in combination with Basic Income, ensures that people are covered in retirement, including health insurance. This is how I envision the social security of the future.

**AG** To some extent, your position on citizens' insurance contradicts that of the Basic Income activists. Particularly, your suggestion that 500 euros could be a possible starting point, which could then be further examined according to people's needs and depending on rental costs. What I find most critical about your considerations, however, is the fact that means testing and arbitrary allocation are retained, which means that it is in no way unconditional or universal.

**WSK** Important Basic Income activists like the Attac working group ›Genug für Alle | enough for all‹ or Michael Opielka consider citizens' insurance as part of the programme. I don't agree with ideas about a Basic Income that do away with social security altogether. Almost no one wants that. I can say the following about my idea of a partial Basic Income of 500 euros: again, I'm searching for paths toward basic income. I think the principle ›everyone is entitled to a minimum‹ could be implemented first, even if this doesn't corre-

spond to the minimum subsistence level. One could at least start with what the state considers to be the minimum: the standard rate for the Hartz IV unemployment benefit. Not everyone receives this, although, in theory, everyone is entitled to it. The Federal Constitutional Court regularly refers to the basic right to a secure livelihood. Additionally, there is a new, interesting suggestion from economist and political consultant Alexander Spermann. He proposes changing income tax exemptions into a general payment – ‘basic payments’ similar to the child benefit allocated to families. The amount allocated would be equivalent to the Hartz IV unemployment payment. For those who pay taxes, nothing would change financially, but everyone else would receive a standard ‘basic payment.’

**AG** Who is entitled to this money?

**WSK** These basic payments would be allocated to all adults, irrespective of income. So, it's very similar to the child benefit for all children. Those who live or work permanently in Germany would receive the money. Income taxes would be adjusted so that nothing would change for middle- and upper-class income groups. Due to the fact that everyone receives it, many of the gaps in today's social security net could be closed.

**AG** How high is the Hartz IV unemployment benefit at present? An allowance for rent also comes on top of that these days too, right?

**WSK** 416 euros for daily costs excluding housing costs. The amount is calculated too low and should be significantly higher – at least 500 euros. Some welfare organisations are calling for up to 570 euros, excluding housing costs, as the scale that should serve as a basis for everyone. Housing allowances would be guaranteed according to needs and differentiated according to region and family type. But, everyone would have these 500 euros as a minimum basis to build upon.

**AG** It is not possible in this country to secure a dignified, decent livelihood with around 500 euros per month. This amount of money does not allow for social, societal or cultural participation. I also shudder at the thought that, again, the payment of this money is dependent upon needs, which a government official either recognizes or does not recognize. For me, the Basic Income is inseparable from a notion of freedom, which is only possible from a certain sum of money upward. In the book that I wrote with Götz Werner in 2010, we presumed 1,000 euros. I'm sticking with this until further notice.

**WSK** But, when you presume 1,000 euros and then deduct housing costs, you're also at 500 to 600 euros. We arrive at a similar scale.

**AG** 1000 euros cash would nevertheless give me greater freedom of choice; the option to reduce my housing costs based on my secured livelihood. When I know that my monthly livelihood is covered unconditionally, I can more easily share a flat or studio space. With Hartz IV benefits, it's totally impossible to rent a studio, because

you're supposed to get back into the jobs market, which isn't available to artists.

**WSK** What is also important about the 500 euros: is that it's not based on your means. I recently spoke with an artist about the artists' social security, | Künstlersozialkasse | KSK. He said that most people insured there end up with the basic provision in their old age, so on the poverty line. KSK examines your assets, and very often they force people to move out of their studio when they can no longer afford the rent. And this is what happens to artists, the very people who often continue working well beyond the retirement age.

**AG** They can't even stop working to earn money, because they would starve otherwise.

**WSK** For this, they need workspaces, which they are not allowed to occupy according to current regulations. Even if they were cheap, they'd need to move out! It would be a major step to leave this craziness behind us and to guarantee a minimum subsistence level of 500 to 600 euros plus housing costs. Of course, there are pros and cons regarding the question of whether housing costs should be included in Basic Income as a fixed cost. For me, the following is important: 500 euros is easier to finance than 1,000 euros, and it's easier to implement within the political process. And, it works against the fears that a Basic income is going to replace the entire welfare state. With 500 euros, it's clear that the welfare state will not be replaced. Instead, it's just a pedestal for other social benefits to sit on top of.

**AG** But you still continue to have the whole bureaucratic machinery.

**WSK** When I consider the business circle in support of Basic Income, more than few of them are toying with the thought idea of handing people a Basic Income and letting them fend for themselves. Pensions would be done away with. Some are even requesting mandatory private health insurance. This gives me a stomachache. This is not my idea of a welfare state. For this reason, too, it makes a lot of sense to go step by step. Basic Income grows up from the bottom into the social security system; it does not replace it. But just practically speaking, there won't be a big bang. There won't be any ›Starting on 1.1.2021 we're introducing a Basic Income of 1,000 euros for everyone.‹ The political process always consists of small steps, more or less. And, such a step could be a basic payment of 500 euros for everyone.

**AG** Good. But you would strive for a payment of 1,000 euros or more, which provides a living wage and makes it possible to take part in the cultural and social aspects of life, right?

**WSK** Social and cultural participation is indispensable. Like I said, 500-600 euros plus housing costs puts us at 1,000 euros.

**AG** Ok, then we'll just agree to differ. Now another question for you as a Green Party politician: How do you explain the fact that sustainability is part of the Greens' DNA, and that a Basic Income was also a

demand made in the party's first manifesto, but no connections are made between these policy areas in the party's current programs or parliamentary work?

**WSK** Even for me, this took quite a long time. Both in politics and in our society, ecology and social issues are completely separated. The welfare organisations have yet to get to grips with ecological issues. One exception is the project ›Alliance for a decent livelihood.<sup>64</sup> This project dealt with basic provision rather than Basic Income, but at least several environmental groups and ecological non-profit organizations were involved. It is becoming more and more important to consider both topics within the same context and to act accordingly. The concept of sustainability is actually a good bridge for this. Now, as a socially-oriented politician, I'm also a representative in the Bundestag's Sustainability Committee, which examines each law to check whether it's sustainable. The Red-Green Coalition introduced the committee back then at the suggestion of the Green Party. But it seems to me that the social aspect of sustainability has not received enough attention yet.

**AG** The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals link social and ecological issues inextricably. Why are you guys lagging behind?

**WSK** These goals are an attempt to combine social and ecological issues in a catalogue of goals at the global scale. Although the goals are largely thought of as disconnected, there is a clear acknowledgement that sustainability is not just about economic and ecological sustainability, but also about the question: can we also manage to create a socially sustainable world? Can we achieve a world without poverty?

**AG** I'll return again to the point that, unlike other parties, green politics has from its very beginnings been characterised and, in my opinion, defined by the view of the world as integrated and holistic rather than the sum of individual persons and perspectives. That needs to be established as a general political approach, not least in order to counter the predominant ›divide-and-conquer‹ mentality.

**WSK** There is some movement in that direction thanks to both new chairpersons, Annalena Baerbock and Robert Habeck. They draw a strong connection between ecological and social issues.

**AG** It's about time, isn't it? Because if the Green Party doesn't have this on its political agenda, who's else will? Empathy is limited to and felt at the individual scale. Therefore, the organisation must ensure the possibility of acting empathetically in the interest of society, at the broader scale, and in abstract contexts. In the case of knowledge, sustainability and climate, it's always about the global level. How do the Greens connect development policies and Basic Income match?

Adrienne Goehler

64 <https://www.menschenwuerdiges-existenzminimum.org>

**WSK** There's been quite a bit of movement happening for some time. There have been model projects in the development policy context for a while now, which operate under the label of »Social Cash Transfers« and allocate money directly to people rather than supporting classic things like well drilling. In fact, these model projects have, in most cases, been more successful than classical approaches. This was seen, for example, when the Basic Income project was introduced in Otjivero, Namibia, financed by churches and labour unions.

**AG** Namibia's national AIDS Initiative is a similar success story. Isn't it interesting that the unions here, in Germany and I guess in most European countries, are predominantly and massively opposed to Basic Income? And there, the unions take it for granted that the people just need money so that they can go to work.

**WSK** That is exactly my logic, my approach: people need the Basic Income, in order to work. Not the other way around. One isn't paid for working; one receives money in order to be able to work. As a parliamentary representative, I don't receive an amount of money for the service I provide. Rather, I receive money so that I'm well and able to do my job as a parliamentary representative.

**AG** You're not paid based on your efforts.

**WSK** (grins) That's it. And, we all work anyway – Basic Income notwithstanding. To come back to development policy, it's not unlikely that one of the emerging nations will introduce a Basic Income in the near future. Because, in the Global South, the debates don't get mired in the issue ›But, we've already got a social system, so why do we need a Basic Income?‹ If there's no social security system at all, then you've got the chance to build one up. Five Catholic associations in Germany have developed a pension scheme, which they present in the form of building blocks. The bottom-most building block stands for a basic pension for everyone. Then, there's an income-based insurance on top of that, and a company pension and private pension as the cherry on top. I'd go further than that, with a Basic Income as the base, then a citizens' insurance and maybe another add-on. Take Namibia, for example. A wealthy country with an unbelievable amount of poverty. With a modest Basic Income like in Otjivero, where people were given 10 euros in the period from 2008 to 2010, poverty could be kept in check. Returning to my thesis one more time: in a country with such crazy inequality and without a social security system, it would be an obvious option. The same goes for China. The country is unbelievably wealthy and still has extreme poverty. About ten years ago, I was invited there by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the China Academy of Social Science to report on social security. The researchers and also some politicians were very interested in the idea of a Basic Income. Unfortunately, they decided in favor of a social security system, so against Basic Income.



**AG** For me, the fundamental question is how Basic Income payments could be linked to conventional development aid, which has confusingly been redubbed »economic cooperation«. Might Basic Income even gradually replace conventional development aid? Namibia is a good example, because no other country receives so much per capita in development aid from the Federal Republic of Germany.

**WSK** Oh, really? I didn't even know that.

**AG** Probably with the intention of making sure that the Herero people's memories of German atrocities are forgotten, to whatever extent possible. When I took part in a conference organised by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Windhoek in 2010, the German minister for Development at the time, Mr Niebel, was invited. Of course, he had no time to meet with Bishop Kameeta, who wanted to report to him on Otjivero, because he had to open a German cement plant!

**WSK** A very typical example.

**AG** Namibia is also so interesting because everything is so manageable. In 2017, Namibia had over 2.5 million inhabitants. From the German development aid<sup>65</sup> at that time, you could contribute 2.45 euros per month to a Basic Income for every Namibian person.

**WSK** Interesting idea.

**AG** This is something the Greens could pick up on and develop further, right? Now, let's return to the ecological side of our conversation again. How can you explain the fact that there is no pertinent scientific sustainability publication on Basic Income, although everyone knows that it's hard to live a sustainable lifestyle in poverty?

**WSK** I want to add something beforehand: regarding the previous question of whether 500 euros isn't too little here. What does the example of Otjivero tell us? In Otjivero, the amount allocated was only 10 euros, which was also beneath the poverty line in Namibia. Despite this, it had an absolutely positive effect, which had to do with the fact that it was unconditional. That's why I believe that an Unconditional Basic Income | UBI of 500 euros would also have an enormous effect for us. I can't bear to hear any more people saying »We do have a Basic Income, it's just not unconditional!« Philippe Van Parijs<sup>66</sup> wrote one of the many texts that I read in the 1980s. He

Adrienne Goehler

<sup>65</sup> Germany spent 73.5 million euros in 2017 in Namibia; [www.namibiana.de/namibia-information/pressemeldungen/artikel/deutschland-schenkt-namibia-735-millionen-euro-2017.html](http://www.namibiana.de/namibia-information/pressemeldungen/artikel/deutschland-schenkt-namibia-735-millionen-euro-2017.html). The average population is three people per square kilometres in an area that is more than double the size of Germany. Over 300,000 of these people live in the capital city of Windhoek. Namibia is immensely wealthy in raw materials, and, simultaneously, has an unemployment rate of 51%. Diamonds, gold and zinc, as well as important uranium deposits are completely under the control of foreign corporations, which only provide work for about 3% of the population. Namibia holds the questionable record for the highest income disparity in the world. 30% of children under five years old are malnourished and 21% of the population is HIV-positive, primarily in the age group 15-49. 1000 Euro für jeden. »1,000 euros for everyone«, Götz Werner, Adrienne Goehler, Berlin 2010

<sup>66</sup> Philippe van Parijs (Belgian philosopher and economist). Ein Grundeinkommen für alle? Geschichte und Zukunft eines radikalen Vorschlags 2005. And »Freiheit ist ein mächtiger Produktionsfaktor!«, brand eins online, Vorträge, BIEN newsletter, etc.



already said back then that the UBI amount could be increased. I just wanted to make this connection. But, in fact, I can think of hardly any publications that connect sustainability and basic income. There's a new book by Michael Opielka,<sup>67</sup> ›Soziale Nachhaltigkeit | social sustainability‹. It's a small volume, just over 100 pages, in which he refers to the Pope, among others.

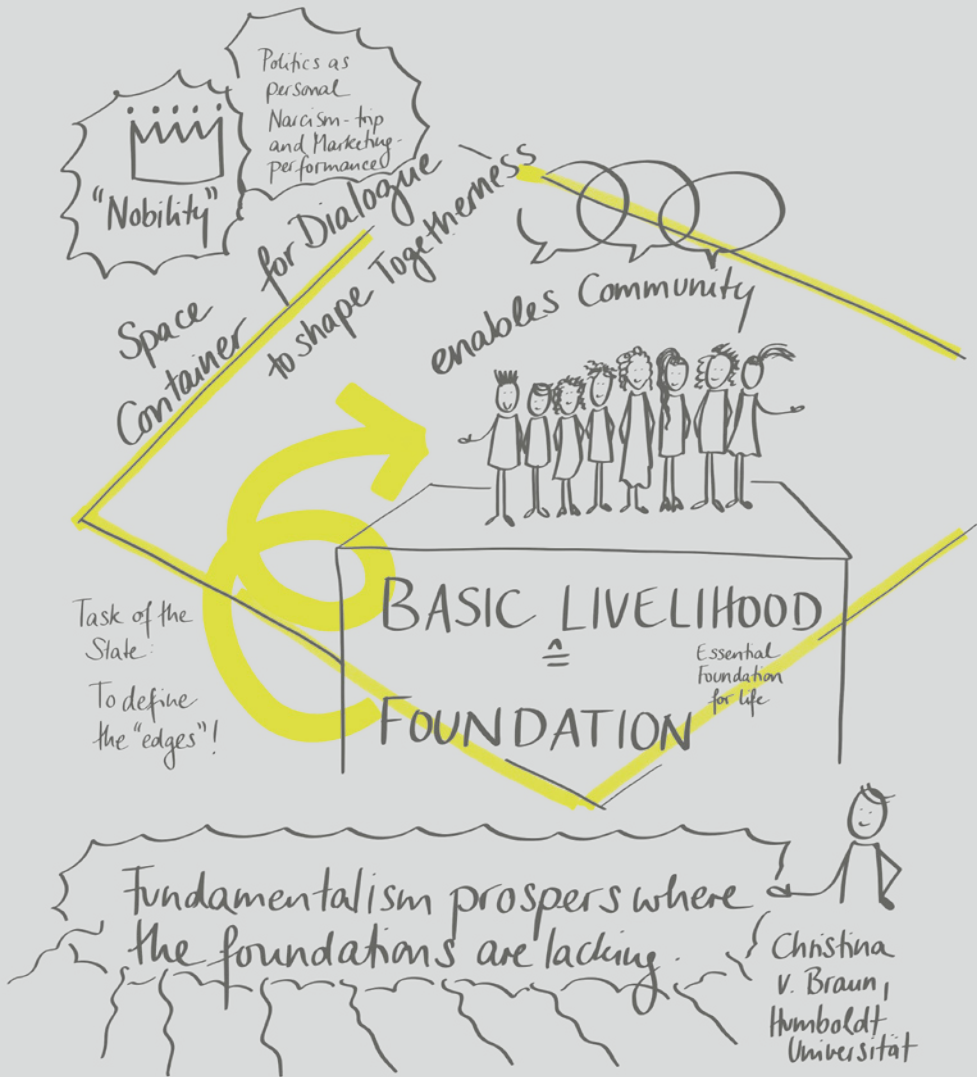
**AG** Well, then nothing else can go wrong!

**WSK** Based on this book, there was a conference at the IASS on social sustainability. Little by little, sustainability scientists are taking cognizance of the topic, I'm sure about that. Post-growth concepts and Basic Income have already been linked to one another. Take Stefan Lessenich, a sociologist at the Chair of Ulrich Beck. He's been an advocate of Basic Income for a long time. He conducted a research project on post growth society and recently published the book ›Neben uns die Sintflut | Next to us the deluge‹ about the externalisation society. It is implicitly about sustainability in that he makes the point that our lifestyles require externalised social and ecological costs. We live, not at the expense of the future, but at the expense of the people living today? In developing countries. Primarily, it's us who are causing carbon emissions, but they suffer the effects of climate change the most. We extract uranium; they sit on top of the contamination. It's the same with social questions: we buy clothes at KIK for 5 euros, sewn by children and women in Bangladesh under disastrous conditions. It just can't go on like that.

**AG** What role could and should the Green Party play to ensure that the links between sustainability, Basic Income | Livelihood and deceleration are reflected in different directions and thus change the discourse on sustainability, Basic Income and development policy?

**WSK** In order to prevent ecological disaster, we need a fundamental change. And we need it at a time, when we are also faced with the challenges of digitization and demographics, and the additional, pivotal changes that go with them. For this reason, we can only accomplish the necessary shift toward a sustainable economy if we connect it with increased social security. Basic Income as the basis of a new social security is a central component here.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Opielka. Soziale Nachhaltigkeit. Auf dem Weg zur Internalisierungsgesellschaft. Gesellschaft | Social sustainability. On the way to the internalized society. Oekom München 2017





Strategic Illustration Sabine Soeder CoCreativeFlow.com

# Sometimes I dream ...

**Marie-Louise Zeller** in the final sprint to climate physicist, passionate swing dancer and biker

... of me in 10 and 30 years, of a society, in which we will live tomorrow, in which I live. I dream of a good life, of prosperity in the sense of well-being. I dream of the end of the climate crisis. The end of deforestation of the rainforest, of the end of the biodiversity crisis, the end of the melting ice. I imagine the world, in which we, in which I, live sustainably. I dream of no longer feeling that I am living at the expense of others as well as a feeling of confidence for my children and the following generations. I imagine car-free cities, filled with package-free stores, repair-cafes, and of community-supported agriculture. I dream of my next bike tour through Europe, imagining the housing project, in which I want to live, with a bike- and wood workshop and big garden, perhaps a café with homemade cakes and jam for more encounters and exchange and more dance: more of just being instead of always being on the run.

... of having time. Time for slow travel, for projects and big actions, for the garden and local markets, for encounters, for commitment, for dancing, for baking and cooking. Time to get started for a good life with our selves, others and those still to come, with nature and the world. Decelerating, that's what dancing and cycling achieve. Decelerating means taking the time to listen and care. Time to enjoy and to be present, to raise awareness and to be aware. Time for dreams and visions. Time to organize and to exchange and to struggle for the best solution. For demonstrating and interfering. Time for questions of »well-being«. But here is the 40-hour week, the faultless CV without fallow periods, the negative image of idleness and the metronomic beat of our society, which seems relentlessly to be accelerating. We therefore need time to fight against this routine, for a way out of the tunnel, for a time of boredom and creativity.

... to get by. People need to get by. Get on with themselves and others. Sustainable life not only needs time, it also needs an income to get by. Money for the true price of things, which also enables others to lead a good life. It allows to ask ourselves, where and how a product was produced, at the expense of whom or what and how it got to us. Money enables us to not think about money and the thinking about the where and how of the product. A Basic Income creates the base, the breath and view on what is important for wellbeing. It broadens the narrowed view, away

from the focus on earning money and survival by any means in a capitalist society.

**I work** on the question, why the climate changes so fast. Trying to understand, to make mechanisms visible, creating an imagery of this complex system.

**I dance swing.** Above all that's fun, swing means exuberance, freedom. It is a balance to the brazen, a way into feeling and into music, into communication with the dance partner. It is the feeling and the moment that counts; it stands in contrast to the planning and to-do-lists. And the positive in contrast to the depressing knowledge about our immobility in the climate crisis. It creates a room for a conscious togetherness.

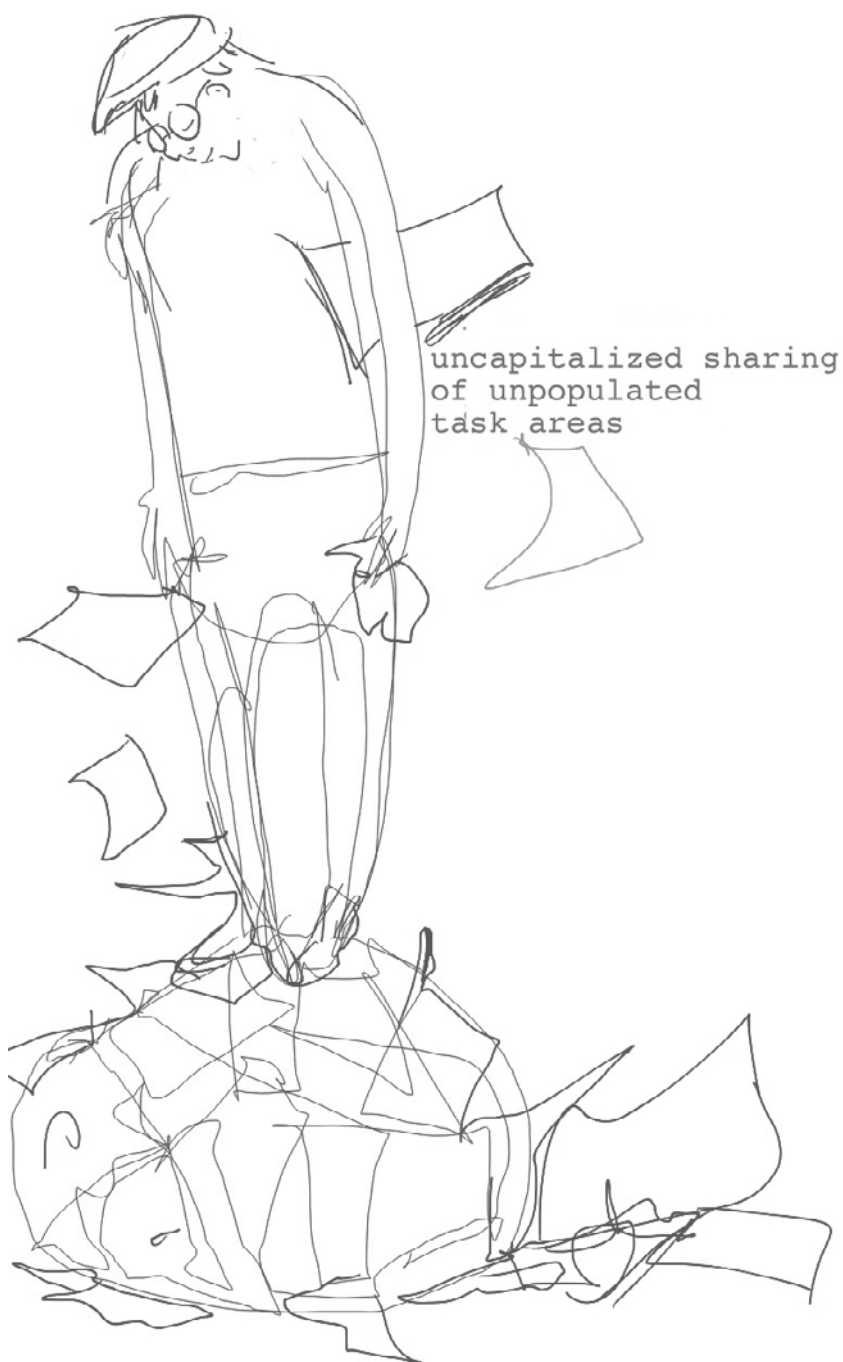
**I bike.** Far, to be outside and on the move. To move forward. It gives energy. Like dancing and being outside. Energy, which we need for dreaming, for organizing, for a change. Tackle energy for bending the CO<sub>2</sub> curves, the curves of sea level rise, of coral death, the deforestation of the rain forest, the flown kilometers, for bending the curves of the overheating. Energy to join forces, to be loud and inconvenient, so that the ones in power, are going to use their power to bend the curves, right now.

**... of what is possible.** We need this energy and time for the undeniable climate crisis. Neither a pessimistic attitude, which due to the size and the complexity of the problem is so easy to take, nor a too optimistic attitude, who relies on technical progress and on others, on a »will be fine«. Both prevent action.

No, we need time and energy for a closer look, to see the need for and the possibility of a change. The possibility of rethinking, the possibility of a turn, yes maybe a revolution, in so many areas. And that takes dreaming, it takes a story, a vision. An idea of a turn, of the overcoming of old structures, that no longer serve the values, for which they were created in the first place. And a story about the passion for the future. Then when we are able to tell this story, we might be able to overcome the fear of change.

**That's what I dream of.**

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## How would life be like if every human had enough to cover their basic needs, just because they existed?<sup>68</sup>

**Julio Linares** economic anthropologist, activist, anarchist, Basic Income Earth Network, Guatemala

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All the Power to All the People

**Black Panthers**

I'm now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

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Times of crisis are moments of trouble. As Donna Haraway brightly argues, we have to ›stay with the trouble‹<sup>69</sup>. This means staying with the present moment, with the awkward chaos, and feel how the system pierces us in all its dimensions as it comes crumbling down. Only through these reflections can we start to cocreate the world around us in a different way. Only by understanding the present moment can we hope to weave together the emergent liberatory imaginations of the world and materialize them into practical political and economic alternatives. In what follows, we put forward a proposal for a Planetary Basic Income | PBI, to be issued to all human beings on this Earth.

### **The Impermanent Present**

This present trouble is a moment that requires our utmost mindful attention and critical thought. The severe problems communities all over the world face are something that can only be confronted by actualizing our deep interdependence to one another, to our environments and the planet as a whole. This is a moment to question the status quo and the categories that keep us separated, as atoms, from each other. The Crown Virus

68 <https://www.laborislove.se/2020/03/30/proposal-for-a-planetary-basic-income>

69 Donna Haraway. *Staying with the Trouble*, Duke University Press, 2016



(english for the latin word Corona or the COVID-19 virus) has no borders, so why should we?

The God of the State aims at permanency in an impermanent world. The state of permanency is like a stone: hard and unyielding, avoiding change in its borders at all cost. It is easier for them to control than to let go and observe things as they are. But the permanent state of normalcy is an illusion. Governments all over the world fear impermanence because impermanence means inevitable change. But change is not evil. It's just change. Impermanence is the emergence of constantly evolving difference, the reshaping of cracks and edges into beautiful unexpected forms. Impermanence is adaptation. In the impermanent present, we must be like water.

### **Imagine**

Imagine if all human beings had an equal share of the planet's wealth. What if all of the accumulated capital on Earth was redistributed back to people equally across all existing borders in the form of a Basic Income?

### **Imagine**

How would life be like if every human had enough to cover their basic needs, just because they existed?

We should be careful of false binaries. Neither the liberal nor the authoritarian forms of the State God are places where people can live. In fact, we would like to argue that part of the solution to our current economic, social and ecological perils begins by organizing both our minds and bodies outside the boundaries of the State God. Only then will we be able to care for one another in unexpected and unimaginable ways. In a world full of injustice, we need to invoke compassion, love and care for all that is around us. This will only become easier as the belief (credo) in our fragile and violent system, also known as capitalism, begins to vanish.

### **Sharing our Common Promises**

Money is a set of promises we make to one another. The promise of our work. The promise of the future. The promise of our value. When these promises vanish, what are we left with?

We have been living as if in a dream, craving infinite growth in a finite planet. However, this does not reflect the dream of billions of human beings, but only of those who are in power. We must therefore fight the power.

We need a new social contract; the freedom to change social relations at a scale never before seen in human history. We need to do away with the rotten promises of the past and make them mutually anew. To open what was enclosed.

Unconditional Love Redistribution Values Compassion Confederation Local Care.

We need a new set of common promises that we can share on an equal standing, regardless of gender, skin color, nationality or religion.

A common share of the planet's resources, one that breaks across all current political divides, issued by the people and for the people in the form

of a truly Universal Income to all living humans. One that transforms our understanding and practice of politics altogether.

### **The Magic Money Tree**

But where will the money come from? According to the Bank of England, there is such a thing as a magic money tree:

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In the modern economy, most money takes the form of bank deposits. But how those bank deposits are created is often misunderstood: the principal way is through commercial-banks making loans. Whenever a bank makes a loan, it simultaneously creates a matching deposit in the borrower's bank account, thereby creating new money.

**Bank of England –  
Money creation in the Modern Economy<sup>70</sup>**

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What if we could all issue our own promises to one another? At no interest, unconditionally and without the expectation to pay it back to the bank. What if money was democratic? Where people can decide how much is enough, a money commons issued by all and for all. Banks are among the ones responsible for the crisis anyways. When the Planetary Basic Income | PIB happens, banks will be a thing of the past. What are we waiting for?

<sup>70</sup> Mcleay et al Money creation in the modern economy. Bank of England, 2014

Idee gekommen, das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen zu erproben? Ich las am College Martin Luther Kings Text Where ... **Kalenderblatt 2019: 5. Juni Süddeutsche.de** 2016 – In einer Volksabstimmung lehnen die Schweizer ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen von 2500 Franken im Monat ab. Im Gegenzug sollten ... **Die großzügigsten Milliardäre der Welt Stuttgarter Nachrichten** Er hält ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen für alle Menschen für notwendig. 6. Ronald O. Perelman (76): Der US-Großinvestor machte sein ... **Welche Partei bei der Europawahl in Herford ihre Stimmen verfünffacht hat Neue Westfälische** Derweil konnte das BGE (Bündnis Grundeinkommen) , das sich von München aus allein für ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen einsetzt, ... **Arbeit ist da Süddeutsche.de** Andere, etwa Siemens-Chef Joe Kaeser, forderten ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, um auf diese Weise die Opfer der Digitalisierung ... **Auch Migrolino plant Shops ohne Personal 20 Minuten** Falls es tatsächlich mal so sein sollte, dass alles automatisiert ist, wäre ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen vielleicht tatsächlich eine Überlegung ... **»Für die Sozialdemokratie ist die Lage sehr bedrohlich« Mannheimer Morgen** Offensichtlich mögen die Wähler es nicht, wenn ein Teil der SPD nach links will, also bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen sowie Verstaatlichungen ... **Wer hat das Zeug zum Grünen-MP? Kieler Nachrichten** Den ehemaligen Parteichef Arfst Wagner, starker Fürsprecher für ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, servierte sie sang- und klanglos ab. **Gregor Gysi sieht die Groko vor dem Aus Lübeck – HL-live.de** Ebenso warnte er die Gewerkschaftler vor Fallstricken, die bei der Forderung nach einem bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen entstehen würden. **Das verkannte Jobwunder Basler Zeitung** Andere forderten ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, um die Opfer der Digitalisierung aufzufangen. Es ist anders gekommen. Roboter vernichten ... **Die Zukunft des Sozialstaates (4) Die Revolution Wirtschaftliche Freiheit** Manche träumen wieder einmal den schönen Traum eines bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens. Die Renaissance der Idee einer negativen ... **Verhindert ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Prostitution? Gratis in Berlin** Die Ansichten zu Prostitution gehen auseinander. Prostitution ist Menschenverachtung. Dass Menschen sogar den eigenen Körper vermieten müssen ... **BGE – Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Aktive Arbeitslose** Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt – B.I.E.N. Austria ... Runder Tisch bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Austria – RTGA. **Wohnzimmerkonzert mit dem Weltweiten Netzwerk für ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Startnext** Kennst du das Weltweite Netzwerk für ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen? Nein? Dann wird es höchste Zeit, dass ihr euch bei einem ... **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen einfach erklärt themanwiththehat.de** Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen einfach erklärt ... Home » Viral videos » Political » Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen einfach erklärt ... **Hartz 4 ist Sklaverei Her Mit Dem Bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen – Notebook TeePublic** Shop Hartz 4 ist Sklaverei her mit dem bedingungslosen Grundeinkommen hartz 4 ist sklaverei her mit dem bedingungslosen grundeinkommen ... **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Leserbriefe** Ein allgemeiner Anspruch – vom Säugling bis zum Greis – auf ein staatliches Einkommen führt zu einer Spaltung der Gesellschaft, zu einer .. **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen Serendeputy** Related Docs for Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen: Sie säen nicht und ernten nicht und der Staat ernährt sie doch ... **Solidarisches Grundeinkommen Politik** Ähnliche Artikel. Nahles lehnt bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ab »Die SPD steht für ein Recht auf Arbeit – und nicht für bezahltes Nichtstun«, sagte ... **05.06.–12.06.2019 Why Universal Basic Income Is a Bad Idea Project Syndicate** One should always be wary of simple solutions to complex problems, and universal basic income is no exception. The fact that this answer to ... **Rebrand Universal Basic Income? Why Its Biggest Advocates Say It's Time – Inverse Rep. Rashida Tlaib introduces closest plan in Congress to universal basic income Washington Post** The revision means Tlaib's plan is the closest Congress has seen to a »universal basic income,« or the idea that every American should get a check **Why ›Universal Basic Services‹ is no alternative to Basic Income Open Democracy** It's time for advocates of ›Universal Basic Services‹ to stop juxtaposing the idea of more and better public services with giving people basic income We don't just need a Universal Basic Income, we need a Universal Basic Services System. Here's ... – Evolve Politics **New book by Louise Haagh: The case for Universal Basic**

# GRUNDAUSKOMMEN FÖRDER

persönlicher Besitz oberhalb des Grundauskommen ist möglich. Wo liegt die Obergrenze des sorgenfreien Besitzes. Kann ein Gemeinwesen es zulassen das 58 Milliarden 80% des jährlichen Welteinkommens besitzen?

- Grund<sup>Aus</sup>kommen versucht einen Standard zu wahren: z.B. die persönlichen Fähigkeiten in einem disziplinären Rahmen zu entwickeln.

**FREIHEIT VON der Leibeigenschaft d.h. von der Bezahlung von MIETE GAS STROM**

**GRUNDAUSKOMMEN dient nicht der Förderung von COUCH POTATOES, REICHSBÜRGERN INTERNET JUNKIES...**

etwas Pathos: Grundauskommen fördert die Pflege von Grund+Boden und Bewirtschaftungen bester kulinarischer Lebensmittel sodass Billigprodukte keine Abnehmer mehr finden

- Grundauskommen kann zu in sich ruhenden autarken, lokalen Gemeinschaften führen

**den Aufbau eines digitalen Netzwerks frei von der Tyrannei von Meinungsmachern - Monopölisten**

# NACHHALTIGKEIT

## Schritt von Quantität → zu QUALITÄT

Z.B. wir brauchen Kühlschrank  
LAPTOP die Lebenslang hatten

- Förderung von Reparatur Plattformen zur Wiederverwendung von vorprogrammierten defekten Geräten
- verpflichtend: Land wird genutzt zum Anbau kulinarischer Produkte höchster Güte.  
Fleisch = Gold
- Nebeneffekt der Nachhaltigkeit: lokaler Nahrungsmitteltausch  
keine Transporte  
Tausch schafft gesellschaftliche Solidarität.
- gefährliche Frage: Wieviel Flugkilometer stehen jedem Erdenbewohner jährlich zu?  
Sind Blockheizkraftwerke nachhaltig?  
.....

denn es haben, wenn einer der  
Sonne nicht traut und von der  
Mutterlands Erde das Rauschen nicht  
liebt, unheimisch diesen die Todestöchter  
— HÖLDERLIN —

# ENTSCHEIDUNG ↓ führer

- Wer aus dem Schlauch der { Wachstums von Staat/Industrie Krankheit die Luft abzulassen Wissenschaft sollte als Erstes Zinsent/Inflation abschaffen
- Damit der <sup>im</sup> Ofen der Schulden das ewige Feuer brennt muss immer mehr Arbeit aufgebracht werden weil der Ofen der Schulden exponentiell wächst. Da immer mehr Arbeit ~~erfunden~~ erfunden werden muss, werden immer mehr Produkte/ Dienstleistungen einer Gemeinschaft auferlegt.
- **Nebengedanke:** der Selbstzerstörungsmechanismus, der in aktuellen Produkten eingebaut ist, sodass sie nur für kurze Dauer funktionstüchtig bleiben ist notwendig um den Ofen der Schulden (Zins/Zinsezins) am Brennen zu halten
- **Frage:** WIE HOCH IST DIE JÄHRLICHE SUMME AN ZINS+ZINSEZINS ZAH- LUNGEN DER SCHULDEN AN DIE GLÄUBIGER (ist zu recherchieren im Netz)
- Wir sind 24 Stunden dem Sperr- fächer an Informationen ausgesetzt sodass wir die Dinge/Atmosphären nicht wahrnehmen die DIREKT vor uns liegen.

zu einem Stillstand der uns bekannten industriellen Entwicklung, die nutzlose Produkte an Konsumenten weiterreicht

## Livelihood

personal property above and beyond a Basic Livelihood is possible. What is the upper limit of carefree property? Can a community allow billionaires to own 80% of the annual world income? • Basic Livelihood tries to maintain a standard, like developing personal skills in a disciplinary framework • Freedom from enslavement, i.e. from paying rent, gas, electricity • A Livelihood does not serve to support couch-potatoes, so-called sovereign citizens, internet junkies ... • Some pathos: a Livelihood would support efforts to improve farming landscapes and promote the cultivation of better foods, so that discount foodstuffs would no longer find buyers. It would foster self-sufficient, local communities • Build a digital network free from the tyranny of opinion makers and monopolists

## Sustainability

The step from quantity to quality – We need • refrigerators and laptops that last a lifetime • repair platforms to overcome planned obsolescence • Obligatory: use land to grow food of the highest quality. Meat = Gold • Side effect of sustainability: local food exchanges, no food transport, exchange creates social solidarity • Dangerous questions: How many air miles should each inhabitant of our planet be entitled to each year? Are combined heat and power stations sustainable? ... • For if one does not trust the sun and does not love the sounds of the earth, the gods of death will get a hold – Hölderlin

## Deceleration

Whoever wants to let the air out of the tube of the growth disease of state | industry | science should first abolish all interest and compound interest • In order for the eternal fire to burn in the furnace of debt, more and more work has to be done, because the furnace of debt is growing exponentially. As more and more work has to be invented, more and more products | services are imposed on the community • Side note: the self-destruction mechanism built into current products to keep them working for a short period of time is necessary to keep the debt furnace (interest | compound interest) burning • Question: What is the annual sum of interest and compound interest payments of the debt to the creditors? (to be researched online) • We are exposed to the fires of information 24 hours a day, so that we do not perceive the things | atmospheres directly in front of us. • ... brings to a standstill the industrial development we now know, which passes on useless products to consumers

**Income** [Basic Income News](#) In this compelling book, Louise Haagh, one of the world's leading experts on basic income, argues that Universal Basic Income is essential to freedom **Why should governments give cash-handouts before providing free, quality public services to all?** [Social Europe](#) Universal Basic Income without quality public services is a neoliberal ... From tech billionaires to socialist leaders, Universal Basic Income has caught **The right-wing case for basic income** [Big Think](#) We've all heard of it: basic income, the freedom dividend, the income .... The guaranteed income was set as equal to the poverty threshold and **Is Universal Basic Income Coming? (infographic)** [Digital Information World](#) Universal basic income is one possible solution, and the idea has been ... Thomas Moore called for a universal basic income in Utopia, wondering **CEO promotes potential of universal basic income at TEDxWindsor** [Windsor Star](#) Marinescu said a universal basic income can provide people with more options — choices on whether to leave a domestic situation or a toxic work **Liverpool close to launching a Universal Basic Income for people in the city** [Liverpool Echo](#) The ECHO reported last month how the UK is thought to be on 'the brink' of testing out a new Universal Basic Income for everyone, which could **Universal Basic Income: A Debate or Conundrum?** [Mainstream](#) In recent times, there has been quite a hue and cry about the implementation of the universal basic income(UBI). In short, it has meant an unilateral **The experiment of a universal basic income** [Grand Valley](#) [Lanthorn](#) She proposes half of the money be used for infrastructure, and the other half be used to implement a universal basic income for a small population of ... **Tech can help uncover the basics of basic income** [Breakingviews](#) Seed-capital guru Y Combinator is the latest to study the pros and cons of giving people a guaranteed monthly stipend. Its project is bigger, longer and ... **Can UBI Survive Financialization?** [Project Syndicate](#) If a universal basic income is used primarily to service debt and secure new loans, it cannot fulfill its promise as a revolutionary pathway to freedom ... **Racial Wealth Gap in US: What Can Fix It?** [The Globe Post](#) Baby bonds, universal basic income, student loan forgiveness and a federal jobs guarantee are four of the proposed solutions to this issue. Many of ... **Random Man Runs for President** [Washington Post](#) In April 2018, he published a book titled, »The War on Normal People: The Truth About America's Disappearing Jobs and Why Universal Basic Income ... **ity commission candidate proposes cannabis tax be used to support communities** [Grand Valley](#) [Lanthorn](#) »We want to target this pilot, universal basic income program to communities hardest hit by the War on Drugs,« Lutz said. The candidate described the ... **The Senate, the Senate Democrats running for president are selling plans to transform America** [The Economist](#) Andrew Yang, an entrepreneur with a large online following, has made a universal basic income his defining issue. Actually accomplishing any of ... **Dem Hopeful Andrew Yang Slams Amazon in Viral Maher Clip** [CCN Mar-kets](#) He discussed his Universal Basic Income (UBI) plan in detail, suggesting that big tech companies including Amazon could foot the bill. The clip is ... **An industrial policy for good jobs** [Social Europe](#) Likewise, investments in education, universal basic income and social wealth funds seek to strengthen workforce endowments, without ensuring that ... **Canada's food guide is easy to follow if you're wealthy or middle class** [The Conversation CA](#) Food insecurity exists when people lack access to sufficient, safe and nutritious ... annual income for senior citizens, or even a universal basic income. **Hincker: The conservative's case for a high minimum wage** [Roanoke Times](#) Unlike the zany notion advanced by the current crop of democratic socialists for a universal basic income, whether or not one works, a wage subsidy ... **Summer CS Forums: Social security and automation; Richard Murphy on a Green New Deal for...** [CommonSpace](#) In this forum, CommonSpace will explore three increasingly popular universal solutions to the age of AI and robots: a universal basic income, where **55% Of Women Prefer Socialism To Capitalism. Here's Why They're Wrong.** [The Federalist](#) The irony of the idea that receiving a universal basic income check will help women is that, in most plans, to qualify for one, you can't be working. **Jeremy Corbyn's Four-Day Week Is Not Such a Bad Idea** [Yahoo News](#) ... energy and water industries, changing the remit of the Bank of England to include a productivity target, and introducing a universal basic income. **What Indians want from their finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman** [Livemint](#) ... everything from broad-based tax breaks and disinvestment in public sector undertakings to universal basic income. The ideas have come in through ... **Dan Crenshaw Says Rashida Tlaib's »Deeply Immoral« Cash Giveaway Plan Is A Basic...** [The Daily Caller](#) Alaska has a universal basic income (UBI policy) that distributes unconditional cash payments of \$2,000 to each resident of the state. In a study by the ... **The climate in WashingtonClimate change will be a big issue in the Democratic contest** [The Economist](#) The second is that it includes a gratuitous list of progressive measures—including a federal jobs guarantee, a universal basic income, and universal ... **The US Economy's Strange Decade** [Project Syndicate](#) Populist proposals from both ends of the political spectrum, such as calls for protectionism or a universal basic income, are unlikely to do the trick. **The Common Weal Policy Podcast– Episode #11** [CommonSpace](#) Amongst the options discussed in the paper are the prospect of a Job Guarantee Scheme, a Universal Basic Income and a Negative Income Tax. **Lenore Zann announces »next step« into federal politics at Bible Hill party** [TheChronicle-Herald.ca](#) She is also backing a universal basic income to lift people out of poverty, which was briefly trialed in Ontario before the Progressive Conservative **Andrew Yang** [WFTV Orlando](#) Andrew Yang, 44, is an entrepreneur who has generated buzz with his signature proposal for universal basic income to give every American \$1,000 a .. **Eye on Augusta: Death with Dignity, Internet Privacy, Plastic Bags, UBI & More!** [FreePress Online](#) The Maine House and Senate voted last week to establish a committee to study the feasibility of creating a universal basic income system in which all ... **Fed Running Out of Time and Conventional Weapons** [Kitco News](#) That is why before too long, we will have to deal with the unconventional weapons of Universal Basic Income, Helicopter Money, and Negative .. **Where 2020 Democrats stand on abortion** [PBS NewsHour](#) He



## On the arts and sciences

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# Artistic Interventions in a Global State of Emergency

**Amelie Deuflhard** theater producer, general manager, artistic director of Kampnagel<sup>71</sup>, Hamburg

We are living in a world that is continually accelerating. »Higher, faster, further« is the inherent credo of capitalism. Internalized from a young age, specifically in the Western world, it seems difficult to even think of deceleration.

The climate crisis renders the need to quickly start working on deceleration most visible: storms of a previously unknown dimension, catastrophic floods, warming of the world's oceans and the climate, rising sea levels, reversal of the Gulf Stream, pollution of the oceans and land, global warming ... they all endanger survival on our planet. Stunningly, it needed a global youth movement to enhance the outreach of the scientific climate community – and to increase pressure on business and governments to act. Other crisis symptoms are perpetuated economic inequality between the global North and the global South in the trajectory of colonialism – closely entangled with current migration and refugee flows. Global capitalism, however, produces not only rising economic inequality between but also within regions. Increasing youth unemployment, gentrification of inner cities via foreign real estate investments, precariousness of work – these are symptomatic examples, which even shape the richest countries of the global North.

It seems the time has come to stop and reflect. Sustainability, deceleration and Unconditional Basic Income | Livelihood point to an entangled crisis of the ecological, the economic and the social. These concepts cannot only be considered as a critique but also as instructions for a new approach to the global crisis. How do these central social questions resonate from an artistic perspective? How do artists act as critical protagonists in the crisis of capitalism? How can artists, curators and art institutions intervene in global questions? How can they approach these questions artistically in their own projects? How can they build ties with scientific and activist communities? How do they manage to reach out to a larger audience to increase pressure on politics? Driven by current crisis phenomena, many

<sup>71</sup> Kampnagel is Germany's biggest independent production venue for the performing arts. It is based at a former mechanical engineering factory in Hamburg.

artists work on forms of intervention: from explicitly political art to formal aesthetic experiments, discursive formats, activist interventions in current debates, the development of forms of participation, the establishment of transdisciplinary and international networks all the way to speculatively heterotopic installations on concrete societal or life models.

### **Bruno Latour and the connection between science and art**

The French philosopher Bruno Latour, who has been working intensely on the issues of sustainability and climate change, places climate change at the center of his approach in his »Terrestrial Manifesto« and derives other large political clusters from it – such as social inequality, migration and populism. Latour assumes that the resources our planet provides will no longer suffice for all people. Humans have changed nature, with extensive and destructive consequences. Many of the privileged and wealthy, who have understood this climate-induced shortage, are withdrawing from solidarity with other world citizens and rather promote sealing off nation states with walls. America First. The narrative of progress, projecting a world that is linearly moving towards an ever better, wealthier and more solidary future, has imploded, and had long faced a crisis of legitimacy. Latour calls for political action and a positive re-evaluation of the local, which has long been associated with »backwardness«. Nature, which humans had claimed to dominate since modernity, has become a powerful political protagonist – a subject over which we no longer have control. Latour demands an eco-socialism in which the multiple voices of plants, animals, objects, oceans, glaciers are not only recognized but also resonate within the broader social dialogue. With his speculative philosophical approach, Latour lays out a critique of the Anthropocene, which is inherently linked to the art scene. In his view, the theater in particular is a central ally for both his theory and his practice. For many years now, he has been working with the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers in Paris and developed numerous projects with the director Philippe Quesne and the architecture-interventionists »Raumlabor Berlin«, primarily on the subject of climate change. In his project »Théâtre de Négociation«, he is proposing a political, diplomatic, scientific and social experiment.

He simulated a scientific conference on climate change with 200 international students arguing that prior conferences failed due to a crisis of representation. Following Latour, neither the oceans, glaciers or seas nor the different communities of affected people have previously been represented. Since the question of forms of representation is a core question in theater, it is natural for Latour to translate his issues and considerations into the theatrical realm.

Latour's demand that we radically rethink our relationship to nature is repeated in many artistic works that negotiate a different relationship to animals, plants and things. His vision for sustainable thinking and acting brings about a paradigm shift in the relationship between man and nature since modernity; it is not just a thought experiment, but also an interesting action experiment.

The conclusions that Latour draws based on his philosophy of nature, largely correspond with the demands of the climate researcher Hans Joachim Schellnhuber to immediately introduce measures to stop climate change: replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources, ending the uninhibited exploitation of land, and seeking new ways of keeping livestock. Only under these conditions we will be able to restore the equilibrium with natural cycles.

**Joseph Beuys –  
pioneer of deceleration via artistic intervention**

In 1983, Joseph Beuys was invited to Hamburg by the cultural senator of the time, Helga Schuchardt, to take part in the competition »Stadt – Natur – Skulptur | City – Nature – Sculpture«. Beuys commented on this invitation saying: »...one should show him the largest ecological problem zone in Hamburg, since he has nothing less in mind than turning the city into an ecological Gesamtkunstwerk – this is where he wants to begin.«<sup>72</sup> Beuys chose the Hamburg dredging fields | Spülfelder in the harbor area. Every year, approximately 2.5 million cubic meters of highly contaminated sand and sludge from the River Elbe were deposited there. By spraying earth mixed with seeds onto the surface, Beuys wanted to initiate a revitalization of the dead plot. The plants were supposed to bind toxic substances and at least delay their infiltration into the groundwater. The death zone was meant to become an art zone, just as the dredging fields were to become a memorial against environmental destruction via an artistic action. Beuys: »I'm not a gardener. I wanted to initiate a new Bauhaus in Hamburg, to stimulate an entirely new concept of art in this city ... to promote reflection on the future of society.«<sup>73</sup> The project attracted enormous media attention, was attacked by the media and politics, and was ultimately rejected by the Hamburg Senate in 1984 after a veto from the mayor, Klaus von Dohnanyi.

With this visionary work, »Gesamtkunstwerk Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 83/84,« Joseph Beuys has inscribed himself onto the memories of many Hamburg citizens. A project that was never carried out, yet its radical and universal approach became a landmark in art and ecology. The global and universal critique of the exploitation of nature was locally interpreted as a critique of the port industries and the Hamburg Senate – a provincial perspective that led to the project's prohibition but also a case of art censorship pointing to the power of artistic intervention in political, social and ecological debates. The harshness of the debate, but also the defamatory tone it assumed, is not unlike present-day pronouncements by the AfD<sup>74</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Silvia Gauss: Joseph Beuys. Gesamtkunstwerk Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg 1983/84, Wangen 1995

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> »Alternative für Deutschland« a right-wing populist, in parts right-wing extremist, political party in Germany with a nationwide share of votes of about 10 percent | August 2020

in which artists are often labeled as extreme leftists, terrorists, criminals or embezzlers of public monies.

Beuys was a pioneer. In the last ten years, issues such as sustainability and deceleration have been raised more often in artistic works, in both content and form. In the performing arts, formats such as documentary theater were invented that concretely pursue an artistic, political agenda. The Rimini Protokoll collective and the director Milo Rau are only two particularly successful protagonists of this form. In a documentary approach, or in the form of re-enactments, they work on subjects such as climate change, migration, genocide, globalization, digitalization and many others. Research and artistic inquiry are the foundations for these works.

### **Rimini Protokoll – experts in daily life**

Rimini Protokoll works with amateurs for their plays, integrating them as ›experts in daily life‹ into a highly professional theatrical arrangement. For the world climate conference at Schauspielhaus Hamburg,<sup>75</sup> the group created a setting in which all audience members were placed in an international climate conference as delegation members. They were thus playfully placed in the situation to negotiate not only political and economic decisions related to climate change but also ethical ones. The special aspect of this intervention is the participation of an audience of non-experts, who actively take up the issue of climate change over the course of many hours while simultaneously receiving a practical insight into international conferences.

### **Milo Rau – theatrical instruments of a new artistic responsibility**

The Swiss theater maker Milo Rau has repeatedly reworked historic situations, for example the Rwandan genocide, both scenically and in media. In the process, he has created legal and parliamentary organs by theatrical means, which came to their own findings and resolutions in accordance with other systems of ethical rules. For example, in 2015, he staged a tribunal in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Berlin, respectively. The ›Congo Tribunal‹ is a stage spectacle with victims, perpetrators, witnesses and analysts of the violent crimes that were committed in Congo in the course of the exploitation of its rich natural resources. This is how Milo Rau puts human rights violations onto the agenda. He describes economic, ecological and war-related entanglements precisely using the example of the globally traded raw materials coltan and cobalt. Rau terms such projects ›University of Life‹ – a university in which questions of ethics and responsibility are an essential part. Rau's missionary attitude of wanting to change the world often draws huge media attention, but sometimes also criticism.

<sup>75</sup> The Deutsche Schauspielhaus Hamburg is Germany's largest theatre with 1200 seats

### **Monika Gintersdorfer – discourse interventions**

In contrast to Rau, director Monika Gintersdorfer, who has been working on post-colonial discourses with performers from Europe and Africa for the last 20 years, does not believe that a direct mobilization with theater performances can work. Her aim is rather to generate critical discourses with the help of performances. Theaters might make their resources, spaces and equipment available, plan formats and facilitate alliances. However – and this applies especially to publicly funded city theaters – there is a humanistic and universal discourse tradition that now, given that numerous theaters are latching onto the migration question, can lead to a veiling of power relationships. For Gintersdorfer, addressing migration can't be a discourse of victims. Terms such as migrant, refugee, sans papier or asylum seeker are defined by Europeans. The terms used by Ivorians are anti-concepts to the dominant discourse about ›migration problems.‹ As soon as an Ivorian has arrived in Europe, he is a Benguist – as opposed to a Locau who stayed at home. Someone who makes the trip to Europe is also called an Aventurier. He is not a romantic figure, but rather someone who has to come up with work or money. The terms Aventurier or Benguist say nothing about whether someone has valid papers. What is decisive is that someone has arrived in Europe in order to take on the struggle.

### **Migrantpolitan – process instead of project**

In December 2014, the »Ecofavela Lampedusa Nord« was founded at Kampnagel by the architect group Baltic Raw in order to provide winter quarters for six refugees of the Lampedusa Group. They were in a performative environment, connected to Kampnagel artists and neighbors, and involved in many artistic and handicraft activities. It was a model for small-scale living, embedded in a diverse environment. Inclusion instead of exclusion.

Since the summer of 2015, the project has been transformed into the »Migrantpolitan« – a place self-administered by refugees and Hamburg artists. It is a laboratory and meeting place for new formats of cooperative working, living and celebrating. It is a place that transcends the categories of ›refugees‹ and ›local,‹ where its protagonists shape cosmopolitan visions together.

It is a project that accepts migration as normal in a globalized world and raises post-colonial issues as a matter of course – with a program that reveals the causes of flight, perceives immigration as an enrichment, and practices participation, diversity and solidarity within an institution.

Art institutions have the potential to advance collaborative and critical thought and practice and to link art with broader social and political contexts. In so doing, they can stimulate learning processes for a larger public. Art institutions can connect global and local developments and promote network building between local and international artists. They can strengthen voices that are otherwise unheard, and thereby enhance

transfers of knowledge, for example between migrated and local protagonists. They can be advocates for diversity and practice serious political engagement. Art venues should be designed as maximally public and open places for a diverse society.

### **New protagonists**

The outlined works demonstrate how major political issues can be brought into the theater using very different approaches. These projects do not work with actors or classical theater material. They bring new protagonists on stage: scientists, performers from other backgrounds, experts from different fields. They create other discourses and, in the best case, a larger public that is not just made up of classic theater audiences but rather of protagonists from the communities themselves. Art can create alternative models for a different life together, design utopian scenarios, and trigger impulses for change. The freedom of art is an essential part of democracies worldwide. Accordingly, art is also typically one of the first targets of dictatorships and autocracies.

### **Deceleration of artistic structures**

There are more and more artists who explicitly want to withdraw themselves from acceleration and from the market. The desire for deceleration has been inscribed on the theater or choreographic works of conceptual artists in particular. A theater maker like Christoph Marthaler works in a resistant, very slow form set in local contexts, which the classic theater business had long withdrawn from. In the meantime, this is precisely what has turned Marthaler into an undisputed star of the theater landscape.

In the north of France, choreographer Jan Ritsema founded a new kind of residency center called Performing Arts Forum | PAF that is not meant to operate according to market principles. Ritsema understands the PAF as an organism, a place that is constantly being created, as a temporary autonomous zone. He has invested a great deal in this project, but he does not expect any »return on investment.« Research, development, collaboration, exchange, sharing and solidarity are at the center of this project. In Hamburg, the Cultural Senator has initiated one-year grants for artists with refugee experience, which are not dependent on a work visa. In Berlin, the ›Round Table for Dance‹ has recommended implementing a grant program for dancers that supports the invisible activities that they perform such as training, research and studio practice. Here, new, unconventional, sustainable and transgressive paths in support policies are being tested, which could have a model character and be read as pilot projects for Basic Income | Livelihood.

### **Unconditional Basic Income from the artists' perspective**

According to the German ›Artists' Social Security Fund‹ | KSK,<sup>76</sup> performance artists earn on average less than 12,000 EUR annually. They work creatively, intrinsically motivated, and in precarious conditions. They are often very well networked, work in collaborative contexts and, despite their low income, often act in solidarity. Fear for one's existence is a constant companion. The pressure is enormous: one project has to follow another in order to secure one's subsistence for the coming months. And in between there are teaching jobs, advisory jobs, journalistic work, workshops, work in schools or residential homes. Artists' retirement situations are even more precarious than their current living conditions; in case of illness, all income is lost. No wonder all artists that I asked connect guaranteed Basic Income to deceleration and sustainability. Deceleration is also mentioned because the stress of securing subsistence income ends.

An Unconditional Basic Income | UBI could have an enormous effect on artists: more time for creative work, more time for lengthy research, artistic research, and continual work on specific subjects. Since the time spent on artistic work, which is a lifelong process, is obviously not defined as work time, an UBI would be an exit from this paradoxical situation.

Regardless of funding bodies' preferences, there would be time for projects that address – whether in content or form – issues of sustainability and climate change, deceleration, the exploitation of raw materials, globalization, migration and refugee movements – works that critically question events in world politics, raise sensitive local and global questions, and facilitate intercultural understanding.

### **Interdisciplinary cooperation and knowledge networks**

In order to generate the space and time for the development of innovative tools at the social interfaces between art, science and other social areas, new project formats and general conditions have to be created. Interdisciplinary projects are needed – cooperative projects between science, art, politics and social and educational institutions – that are structured in a way that is analogous to major research projects. And this needs time, which is simply unavailable in monocausal contexts. Expanded approaches to research and broad alliances are needed to create a larger space of resonance for the crisis. To realize this, a newly targeted fund directed towards multi-year projects is essential.

Without interdisciplinary cooperation, we cannot confront complex global questions. We have to stop climate change and restructure the economy in a sustainable manner. The major societal debates should not only take place in parliaments and cultural institutions, but also in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, administrations, businesses, banks or legal firms. We need to communicate and share knowledge, we need to popularize and spread complexity. And here, art – and art institutions – can play an important role.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.kuenstlersozialkasse.de>



We have to give space to new ideas and experiments, develop new strategies in order to bridge different social fields, to eliminate or liquefy limits and barriers – also in people's minds. Artists have the capacity to develop projects that can stimulate processes of fundamental social change. This will not succeed if it is left to politics, science or existing organizations.

How in the hell could a man enjoy being awakened at 6:30 a.m. by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, piss, brush teeth, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so?

Charles Bukowski, *Factotum*, 1975



Swaantje Güntzel. Seestück II | Hamburger Kunsthalle Diasac, 80x120 cm



Foto: Henriette Pogoda, Copyright © Swaantje Güntzel | VG Bild-Kunst Bonn 2020

## What the imagination can do. Considering Basic Income from a feminist perspective

**Cornelia Hinterschuster** social scientist, theatre consultant, moves professionally between art, culture and politics

**Svenja Paulsen** studied social and cultural sciences, freelance editor, curator and exhibition guide, works for an art magazine

Before we put our thoughts on Basic Income and sustainability to paper, we had countless conversations with friends, colleagues, and other allies. These excited ramblings about unsatisfactory working days often included consternated admissions of our own exhaustion. Sometimes, we mentioned the struggles we encountered in the first months after having a baby, or the ways in which our relationship ideals left us feeling disappointed. Sometimes, the conversations provided us with needed encouragement to hand in resignations or apply for a new job, or otherwise offered great foundational ideas for a new self-image. We have long identified and examined the problems of our work lives, both in an internal monologue and with those close to us. Indeed, we've described and compared them extensively, holding out the prospect – at least, theoretically – for a different state of affairs one day.

But there is also the non-theoretical world around us. In very real terms, as we write this, Brexit continues to smolder in the British Parliament and, of course, across the media. Meanwhile, right-wing radicalism continues to rise, women are still protesting for the right to have an abortion, and global leaders deny climate change. As we catapult into the post-truth era, democracy's legitimacy problem has become ever more apparent.

We are among those who, after completing our studies in the humanities, chose to work in cultural institutions. Despite our years of real-world experience, we have stuck to the idea that our political convictions should be reflected in our work – which is why, at least in part, we're still not working for Zalando in their new Berlin East Side Gallery super space. Instead, we maintain an idealistic hope which, admittedly, is at times a precarious path to tread: nevertheless, perhaps now more than ever, we consider it an imperative journey to make.

Processes of negotiation like this one – and others related to payment, visibility, hierarchies, recognition, and so on – are omnipresent in many work situations. Often, this involves working as if there was no personal life to speak of: no children, no other needs. And yet, at the same time, we each continue to strive to be available and reliable for others in our personal lives, as if there was no wage work competing for our energies. The complexity of this duality is illustrated by the current debate about the so-called »mental load«, that is to say, the responsibility for those invisible activities which are hardly valued and discussed (if at all), but which take up many hours of the day and a large part of our mental capacity.

It is not just the time and resources we invest in recovering from the effects of wage work, or the traditional housework and care work that command our attentions. There are also the supposed »little things«, like arranging doctor's appointments, remembering to buy birthday presents, keeping in touch with friends and relatives, planning childcare, or trying to fit a yoga class into an otherwise full day. In short, when taken together, these are the very things which establish and maintain the necessary safeguarding structures for ourselves and others. As with traditional wage work, these activities also make one feel tired and overworked, but from them there is no respite. There is no lobby or union, no annual leave from them, no holiday premium or overtime pay. These demands require one's capacities, which are consequently lacking elsewhere.

Is it possible for an individual to be employed (and preferably work self-determinedly) while also raising children, organizing the household, caring for relatives and friends, remaining calm as well as physically and mentally healthy, and also politically active?

To negotiate such questions, we have sought to join forces with others in self-chosen collectives beyond the boundaries of our wage work. In these groups, we organize workshops on the subject of self-care and try to interpret our »girl talk« politically. We fantasize about the feminist workspace and other spaces of solidarity, which could offer an alternative to the more commercially connectable feminism we often see in the cultural and corporate landscapes of Berlin and elsewhere; one which is arguably over-represented by influencers, all-female marketing agencies, and female business angels networks. Why? Because although these groups champion the placement of women into positions traditionally held by men, they often contribute little to challenging dominant ruling structures. Through our discourse we have arrived at an uncomfortable truth: even feminist content can underpin capitalist structures, which itself perpetuates this cycle of exhaustion.

This madness – which is at once both personal and structural – is a powerful one, without question. Maybe that's why it's so easy to look at approaches to social redistribution or transformation from the perspective of our personal need. What would you do with a Basic Income of one thousand euros, paid to you by the state each month? Someone well-off may dismiss the idea and say »I wouldn't need it«, whereas the business



lobby would argue that such an initiative could never be realistically financed. Conversely, we must consider the answers of the proponents, examples of which can be widely read, for example, on the platform »Mein Grundeinkommen« | My Basic Income. There, individuals can win a Basic Income of 1,000 euros per month for one year, financed by crowdfunding. Answers put forward often revolve around those pathologies of work omnipresent in today's neoliberal capitalism. Respondents claim that with the Basic Income, they would only work part-time, take time off, volunteer, have more time for one's children or relationship, or be able to afford institutional care for one's ageing relatives. And we would chime in: Oh, a lot more comes to mind, especially the establishment of our own work institutions. Are those who endorse having a Basic Income in their own lives simply those who cannot either by choice or circumstance make it on their own? Do they lack some individual impetus? Is it decadent to think about a Basic Income in light of our own privileges? As mentioned above, we talk a lot about our exhaustion and the fear of getting stuck. How much capitalism is justifiable? We know that we are privileged in many ways and, admittedly, remain undecided as to how much security we want in the form of insurance and protection. Not everyone needs a state-funded Basic Income in order to be able to afford pursuing a dream job, time for the children or caring for relatives or volunteering, with enough money left over for regional products or a summer vacation.

And yet, a Basic Income is not merely a concession to all those who do not seem to obtain their goals with wage labor. Rather, it is the recognition of the complexity of social life and Livelihood, as well as the individual claim to effect change: to work and live according to your own preferences. After all, what this really boils down to is rethinking the role of work in one's own life, in society, and globally and imagining the structural effects of a Basic Income with careful regard to the future.

Speaking of the future: 2019 was dominated by climate discourses. The Fridays for Future movement stirred up the political landscape around the world, supported by enthusiasm, commitment and the political emergence of an overwhelming number of newly engaged citizens. The »Green New Deal«, which was subsequently a matter of hot debate in the USA, illustrates the complexity of social life in the face of the need to reduce of carbon emissions. Compellingly, the Green New Deal prioritizes the creation of new jobs and thus, creates a nexus between global climate goals on the one hand, and well-being and economic independence on the other. But instead of viewing these movements as long-term investments – in this case in the future of our planet – they are unfairly discredited as naive, impossible to realize, and fiscally irresponsible. Two of the movements' strongest supporters happen to be young women: Greta Thunberg and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. They are similarly dismissed on personal grounds, and bombarded with criticisms regarding economic profits or the extent to which such ambitions would strain the public budget.

As air traffic continues to grow, the German federal government put forward a so-called climate package which is hardly worthy of the name. Here and elsewhere climate policy remains subject to the same priorities which underlie all individual and entrepreneurial activity in neoliberal systems: efficiency and profit maximization. We know this logic simply cannot be sustained in the face of finite natural resources, or indeed finite individual physical forces. Sustainability – be it individually as a form of maintaining human resources, or as an urgent and global environmental policy goal – requires a deceleration. It requires the conviction that it is possible to re-think society as well as a visionary enthusiasm for the future, even if such ideals are initially dismissed as »utopias« with no master plan for profit. Ultimately, the question centers on how ambitious we are. How confidently do we formulate our demands, and when will we finally encounter a system which is ready for restructuring and experiments? And then where do we start?

One suggestion is to extend the concept of work beyond the sphere of gainful employment. To return to perspectives that originate in the 1970s, including those feminist discourses which have since been strengthened again and again in left-wing debates, but have had as of yet little resounding effect. To consider Basic Income.

Svenja Paulsen

More than just a »wage«, Basic Income also seeks to allow other ways of working, namely those in which we organize ourselves and reconsider how we act in our professions. In a space bolstered by the support of Basic Income, a critical attitude towards traditional work structures gains resonance. Gradually, we imagine that new reference systems will emerge for one's own work. Diffuse criticism, which manifests itself in demands for »working differently«, »more time«, »better care«, »sustainable consumption« etc. can thus become concrete, critical practice, where expressions of basic human needs manifest as policy. From this point of view, it is also about respect for our physical and emotional resources and the recognition of our political nature. At each turn we maintain in our mind's eye the zenith of shaping this new reality ourselves, without the need to abandon economic activities. At present, without the support of Basic Income, such a leap would present an immediate risk of poverty.

Government circles repeatedly emphasize the »importance of proper gainful employment for the cohesion of our society«<sup>77</sup>. This reveals an enormous ignorance regarding the destructive patterns of capitalist exploitation, and suggests that dependence on wage labor produces the common good in a society. Such a position likewise fails to mention that certain groups are systematically excluded from regular wage labor anyway, not

<sup>77</sup> Speech by the Federal Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Hubertus Heil, on the 2019 Budget Law before the German Bundestag on 23 November 2018 in Berlin. Retrieved 30.03.2019, from <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/rede-des-bundesministers-fuer-arbeit-und-soziales-hubertus-heil--1554434>

least through asylum legislation. Most problematic, in our view, is the fact that such a discourse reduces work to the area of publicly visible activities which are remunerated by monthly income, thereby excluding a large part of the work performed in a society. In particular, the unpaid but essential tasks of everyday life. Above all these include reproductive and care work, which is still performed mostly by women<sup>78</sup>, but also volunteer work, self-care, and unpaid work in independent spaces, or on alternative models of solidary coexistence. This not only represents a real risk of poverty, but also endangers the solidarity established among colleagues, couples, or whole generations.

As we each attempt to navigate between paid wage work and unpaid care, there is also something to be said for the struggle for recognition. If societal cohesion is to be narrowly defined by conventional gainful employment, we can expect nothing more than a hierarchy of the employed over the non-employed, which both threatens and limits various unpaid endeavors.

At present, unpaid work is not only an integral aspect of our lived reality, but also something which is intrinsically accepted as a social norm. The populist approach of the current moment would have us believe that welfare state funds are a crutch for those who have lost their way, who refuse to work anyway, and who, in measures such as Hartz IV, for example, smell a social free ride for a relaxed life. Curiously, however, no man has thus far been considered a social parasite for refusing to take parental leave. Arguably, the obligation to work therefore concerns only the area of gainful employment. What would happen to our understanding of ›gainful‹ if there were an obligation to perform care work? Or a requirement for universal political engagement?

Perhaps the following statement offers some sound reasoning: if work can be conceptualized without compensation, and is quite naturally performed unpaid in any event, a Basic Income by way of a monthly allowance may be posited detached from the obligation to do certain forms of work. From this perspective, it is less a matter of an Unconditional Basic Income, but rather a fundamental recognition that a Livelihood is needed to contribute to and implement what appears to be socially necessary. This is nothing less than a cultural shift, coupled with the long-overdue establishment of a novel and expanded concept of work that goes beyond categories such as »order« or »refusal«.

We don't want another political debate that demands conformity with traditional patriarchal structures. We don't want to be constrained within a system of adaptation and competition, in which only strength, determination, ambition, and assertiveness count and are rewarded with a monthly salary. Over and over again, we see those who hold out receiving a bonus at the

<sup>78</sup> In 2017, the so-called gender care gap in Germany was 50 percent, i.e. women performed one and a half times as much care work as men: Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 21.06.2017. Second Equality Report of the Federal Government. Retrieved 30.03.2019, from <https://www.gleichstellungsbericht.de/zweiter-gleichstellungsbericht.pdf>



end of the year, while those who fall behind fail to get their fixed-term contracts extended. Ultimately, we champion the open recognition of inability, human weakness, fatigue, exhaustion, overstress, and struggle – these are basic human conditions, as well as serial and inevitable psychological and physical effects of neo-liberal capitalism, and its eternal wheel.

Of course, historically ingrained structures will not be abolished simply by a fixed monthly payment, nor by any single policy trick for that matter. But the idea of a Basic Income – linked to the social security system, and not as a replacement for it – could set us on a different course. With this shift in perspective, human needs would take priority over self-exploitative performance; and a social utopia, over mere reaction.

Ultimately, this also depends on what heights our imagination is capable of reaching. Were the reference system to change and be based less upon competition, sanctions and exclusion, social cohesion might change accordingly. The rise of conservative right-wing agendas with divisive policies would be countered by a left-wing social policy response: an approach based on solidarity, with a bonus for all, regardless of circumstance.

Reframing monthly Basic Income as a feminist endeavor requires the application of feminist perspectives on power, work and social relations, while reflecting upon the history of feminist demands in society and politics. We must collectively recognize an expanded definition of work which encompasses the importance of care and other acts of solidarity which, despite not being monetized per se, nevertheless keep society going. We must likewise acknowledge the autonomy of the individual without losing sight of our simultaneous dependence on others.

From this point of view, there are many parallels between feminist thought and Unconditional Basic Income more generally. Neither feminism nor a Basic Income can be dismissed as concepts which concern only a weak or otherwise unimportant minority segment of society. And surprisingly, the objections to both also share frequent commonalities. Whereas feminists' objectives are often accused of being diametrically opposed to the interests of men, Basic Income is assumed to be in conflict with the normative and economic value of work.

In both cases, therefore, we argue for the framing of these concepts in larger contexts. It goes without saying that feminism is not directed ›against‹ those who identify as men, nor is a Basic Income to be considered ›against‹ the meaningful role of work. Rather, both movements have the potential to address complex intricacies of human existence, ranging from group-specific struggles, material and natural constraints, to the redrawing or even eradication of dividing lines. Perhaps most promising is the call within each concept to think in terms of a whole, instead of a hierarchical high and low.

Undoubtedly, our initial perceptions of the surrounding world begin within our own private microcosm. Nevertheless, we still have at least an inkling that there are also systemic settings beyond our immediate purview, and that changes to basic principles could in turn radically alter what we call ›the private‹. Such a perspective on basic Livelihood focuses on structural

questions, and recognizes that the private is always political. Our framework imagines a reality beyond the individual implication of a lucky »lottery winner«<sup>79</sup> who could finally afford the long-awaited cruise thanks to their newly »awarded« Basic Income.

Instead of propagating an immediate societal change, the opportunity lies precisely in giving room to the idea that other perspectives can be legitimized in institutional terms by changing the lenses through which we view them. This change of perspective also offers an opportunity to remove the consistency of work patterns shaped by patriarchy, and to allow new forms of solidarity to emerge. More generally, we seek to stimulate a different way of framing work relations, namely as all forms of relations that connect us socially with others.

We do not place this moment for social solidarity against the backdrop of gainful employment, but rather in the acknowledgement that we are all related to each other. What is needed is a sharpened acuity that we are a society of mutual care: we must harbor a genuine concern for ourselves and for each other, for the environment, and for the future – even if perhaps only at second glance.

It is widely accepted that those who cannot care for themselves cannot care for others, nor for the environment. The question of Basic Income is therefore also fundamentally a question of how we appreciate and recognize human capacities and resources – how and in whatever way they are (and wish to be) invested. A sustainable society – one that intrinsically (re) constitutes itself in the long term, and is able to create physical and mental well-being for all – demands a change of perspective and reasoning. It is neither »I« nor »you« who should have a thousand euros, but everyone. And it is not »them«, but we, who have the power to grant it to each other.

<sup>79</sup> Butterwegge, C. 11.12.2017. »The Basic Income is not egalitarian, but elitist«. Retrieved 30.03.2019, from <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/bedingungsloses-grundeinkommen-das-grundeinkommen-ist-nicht-egalitaer-sondern-elitaer-1.3702230>

also said reproductive care includes increasing access to birth control and .... and become pregnant« through his plan for universal basic income. **How to debate universal basic income** [Crooked Timber](#) Daron Acemoglu has a piece at Project Syndicate arguing that basic income is a bad policy. His argument, in a nutshell, is that a truly universal basic . **Universal Basic Income for everybody.** [Bitcoin Forum](#) IPU – International Payment Unit is Universal Basic Income for everybody. IPU token based on Earths blockchain. The UBI payments will be made **Rashida Tlaib rolls out Universal Basic Income/UBI Bill : BasicIncome** [Reddit](#) What is Basic Income? »A Basic Income is an income unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement« . **Can Universal Basic Income Help Fix Inequality?** [INFOtainment News](#) In a 2018 poll, nearly half of all Americans supported the idea of a universal basic income (UBI) – where did this idea come from and what would it ... **Response to Caroline West's »From Company Town to Post-Industrial: Inquiry on the... Lat-eral** **ABSTRACT** This reply critically analyzes the concept of »solidarity« in Caroline West's account of the role that a Universal Basic Income (UBI) could ... **The Finnish Basic Income Experiment: Preliminary Results** [LGIU](#) Universal basic income is a universal and unconditional cash transfer from the state to all its citizens. 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Universal basic income (UBI) is an idea to distribute a certain amount of income, such as one thousand dollar a month, ... **Bipartisan Congressional Group Wants Trump Admin to Boost Blockchain** [Blockonomi \(blog\)](#) ... season thanks to his maverick positions on subjects like universal basic income and cryptocurrencies, the latter of which Yang wants more clarity on. **Israel denies digital Shekel any time soon** [Cryptopolitan](#) Ribon did mention that cryptocurrencies could support the country at enforcing a national monetary policy for universal basic income, but could also ... **Changing my Mind about AI, Universal** ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ins Gespräch gebracht, damit diejenigen, die durch neue Technologien überflüssig werden, nicht ... **Eine Expertin für künftige Krisen** [Tages-Anzeiger Online](#) Höhere Steuern für die Reichsten und vielleicht sogar Grundeinkommen – das fordert der Internationale Währungsfonds in ... **»Wenn Sie Ihren Beruf einem Siebenjährigen nicht erklären können, dann ist es kein Beruf«** [SPIEGEL ONLINE](#) Ich denke, ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen wäre ein Anfang. Aber sicher noch nicht das Ende. **26.12.2018 Universal Basic Income versus Jobs Guarantee– Which Serves Workers Better?** [The Century Foundation](#) A universal basic income (UBI), also known as basic income or unconditional basic income, is the idea that government should regularly provide ... **UBI - Universal Basic Income...Good or Bad?** [Financial Samurai](#) Is UBI a good or bad idea? I see the cost of enabling such scheme as an obvious barrier with up to 27% ..cost but in the meantime could .. illuminating conversation with Lori Ospina, Director of the Stockton Economic ... **Talking University Basic Income** [Goldman School of Public Policy Part 2 of 3](#) Learn about the practical side of UBI in this illuminating conversation with Lori Ospina (MPP '16), Director of the Stockton Economic ... **Universal Basic Income – Utopia or Dystopia?** [Radio AF](#) The discussion about universal basic income does not only take place between right- and left-wing parties. It very often occurs within traditional ... **Santa Claus & the Free Gift of Universal Basic Income** [Player FM](#) The free gift is called »Universal Basic Income« and I think it's a bad idea. Tune into my podcast to find out why. Want the transcript? Check it out at ... **Wegen KI: US-Präsidentschaftskandidat fordert Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen** [VRODO](#) Der Seriengründer und Unternehmer Andrew Yang startete diesen Februar ins Rennen um die Nominierung als US-Präsidentschaftskandidat 2020. **Hartz-IV-Empfänger: »Die meisten sind an ihren Problemen selbst schuld«** [HuffPost Deutschland](#) Er selbst habe nie ernsthafte Probleme mit dem Jobcenter gehabt,

# Do, what moves you!

## Three loose thoughts

**Anna-Sophie Brüning** conductor, violinist, works within and outside the traditional music and theatre business, crossing borders between styles and disciplines, in search of a new fundamental tone

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I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself,  
not the life others expected of me  
I wish I hadn't worked so hard  
I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings  
I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends  
I wish that I had let myself be happier

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📖 Australian author Bronnie Ware had collected in her book countless conversations with dying people during her time as a palliative nurse. Most of them had not honored even a half of their dreams, and almost every male patient regretted having missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship, instead having spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence. What does it need, to experience what Bronnie Ware describes as power of choice and the sacredness of time? Besides many reasons why people are not living their full potential, the constant running after jobs and income is clearly obstacle number one for many people to think of what is really important to them. For those who deeply connect with the surrounding reality, who affiliate what eyes see, ears hear and hearts feel Basic Income would very obviously be a necessary but not sufficient condition to start moving in the right direction. A foundation to turn our attention to all other fields, that really deserve our full attention, for education, planet, health ... Simply everything that gives people meaning and belonging. This became painfully clear through Corona. The virus has sharpened questions and made positions obvious that were slightly covered before. The crisis had only made them visible.



↘ In music, ›Corona<sup>80</sup> has marked a pause for centuries. ›Pausam generalem‹. General pause, nobody plays. Our freezing as musicians has lasted for months. Here and there a small balcony concert, otherwise only the great and equally helpless efforts to save the intimate touch of live music through the net.

Now we begin to understand that we have to invent something new. The music-stand-marriages, in which two musicians share a music stand for a whole lifetime are divorced. The orchestras, used to be squeezed in tight orchestra pits are expanding physically in the room, everyone sits for her | his own, has more responsibility, gets visible as an individual. Listening and hearing is completely different and connection has to be discovered in a challenging new way.

Looking at the regrets of the dying, more space for the inner capacity to self-defined artistic work would be the desirable. Basic income would be the tool.

The virus that we need to spread now must be infected by courage, curiosity and confidence, hopefully love as well. It is highly contagious and produces physically and mentally health.

↘ A while ago I was asked to hold a workshop with potential future leaders, to tear down the walls between art and economy. »What do you want me to do with them?«, I asked. »Do, what moves you. Share with us, what is of interest and inspiration for you as an artist at this very moment of your life.

Never in my life I had received such a strange assignment, such confidence in my professional work. No orchestra, no theater, literally nobody has given me this emotional experience. Now I had to find out, what really moves me!

To empower the question what really moves us take a deep dive, we need time and basic income since answers do not come by order. It does not need more than courage, curiosity and confidence to experience the joy and liberation of its impact. Let's start.

<sup>80</sup> Corona, Coronata in old musical Italian means a general fermata, where everybody stops, when everything comes to a halt. ›Pausam generalem‹. Composer and musicologist Johann Gottfried Walther, 1732 and [www.steinberg.net](http://www.steinberg.net)

# One step on the way to an alternative economy? Critical reflections on Unconditional Basic Income from the perspective of ›Vorsorgen-des Wirtschaften‹ | precautionary economic practice<sup>81</sup> and the subsistence approach in six theses<sup>82</sup>

Andrea Baier Adelheid Biesecker Daniela Gottschlich

In the face of a variety of social and ecological crises, the great current challenge for the countries of the Global North is to transform the old system into a new, less crisis-prone, precautionary, subsistence-oriented economy: an economy in which the foundations of human and natural productivity are maintained and renewed; in other words, an economy that also creates the conditions for a good life for future generations. What can this economy look like? How could the current destructive character of the economy be overcome in the future? In connection with this task we question the unconditional Basic Income | UBI with regard to its transformative potential.

## Questions

- Can the UBI help on the way to the new kind of economy described above?
- What could facilitate the UBI's challenge of the symbolic order underlying the gendered division of labour and promote the dissolution of hierarchical gender constructions?

81 We stick to the German term ›Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften‹ because there is no accurate English translation. ›Vorsorgend‹ tends to be translated as ›precautionary‹. The latter has, however, very different connotations given that precautionary also translates as ›vorsichtig‹, emphasising caution and missing the aspect of caring (for people, nature and the future) that is contained in the German term.

82 Extract from Baier, A., Biesecker, A., and Gottschlich, D.: Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen allein reicht nicht. Kritische Reflexion aus der Perspektive Vorsorgenden Wirtschaftens und des Subsistenzansatzes. In: Blaschke, R., Praetorius, I., and Schrupp, A. (eds): Das Bedingungslose Grundeinkommen. Feministische und postpatriachale Perspektiven. Bielefeld: Ulrike Helmer Verlag 2016

➤ Is the UBI an appropriate measure to strengthen individual and social subsistence orientations?

➤ **Thesis 1: On the capitalist economy**

Modern capitalist economies are characterized by a structural division between productive and reproductive processes and practices, between economy and non-economy, between culture and nature, between male and female. Only markets are encompassed in the meaning of economy; only gainful employment counts as work. Two central productivities are excluded: unpaid work, which is mainly assigned to women as care work, and the productivity of nature. Both are regarded as non-economics, as worthless. Yet they are integral to everyday economic practice. Importantly, they serve to enhance capital value without being valued themselves. Both are therefore exploited excessively and carelessly – by a capitalist market economy that is concerned with making profits and not with satisfying needs. The manifold social and ecological crises we are experiencing today are the result of this aforementioned structural separation. They are thus a core expression of the central crisis: an economy that excludes the reproductive system.

➤ **Thesis 2:**

**Precautionary economic practice | Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften**

An economic system is only sustainable if the economic processes are not just concerned with satisfying the needs of people living today, but also with maintaining and renewing the productivity of paid and unpaid work and nature. This also requires a new economic rationale, one that encompasses preserving and renewing as part of its design. The concept of precautionary economic practice follows this maxim. It combines three new principles of economic action: precaution, orientation towards what is necessary for a good life, and cooperation.<sup>83</sup> It is based on the new category of (re)productivity, which encompasses all productivities of work and nature and thus counteracts the tendency to separate these arenas. It is necessary to move from aftercare to prevention, from profit and growth targets to the good life, from competition to cooperation, from separation to mediation. How can a UBI promote this transformation process?

First, it makes individuals independent of socially and ecologically harmful gainful employment and allows them to devote themselves to 'reproductive' activities, to caring for themselves and others as well as nature. In this respect, it undermines the segregating structure of the economy. However, this requires more than just money. People need space and resources to develop the ability to shape their own lives and engage in practices of care.

A UBI alone is therefore not enough – it must be embedded in other strategies in order to open up new possibilities for people.

➤ **Thesis 3: The work concept**

83 Cf. Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften (eds.): Wege Vorsorgenden Wirtschaftens, Marburg: Metropolis 2013



With regard to the separation and devaluation of so-called reproductive work, an UBI can provide social security and independence to those who perform unpaid care work. It could also help to shape transitions between the different time structures of gainful employment and unpaid work, while also questioning the dominance of gainful employment's time form over that of unpaid work. However, a UBI does not yet call into question the time regime within gainful employment and care work organised according to market logics. Good care and thus a good life for both the care-taker and the care-giver are often impossible under the given conditions. In a precautionary work concept, all the working hours that make up the whole of the work performed must be considered – also in cooperation with nature. The lived times of people and non-human nature thus move to the centre. This means that a precautionary working time concept mediates between the time requirements and time qualities of the most varied activities of both human and ecological regeneration processes. In order to establish a life-sustaining work concept that resolves these time conflicts, does justice to the complexity of the diversity of time, and leads us to a sustainable timescape,<sup>84</sup> we need a variety of quantitative and qualitative transformation measures. A radical reduction of working hours and a UBI can be helpful in this context – not least for a new distribution of responsibilities for care work between the sexes, but also between the different individual-family and collective-societal levels.

#### 📌 Thesis 4: On gender relations

The question of whether and how a UBI could also change hierarchical gender relations at the symbolic level points to the need to transform the prevailing understanding of freedom, self-determination and autonomy: Freedom must always apply to all people in all phases of life. Precautionary concepts of work, and also of society, must address people in their vulnerability and dependence as an inseparable part of self-determination. Concepts such as precautionary autonomy and freedom not from care, but for a caring activity, could be starting points for this reconceptualization. Only in connection with such a concept of freedom could an UBI contribute to the transformation towards a caring society. Here too, therefore, the following applies: UBI alone is not enough.

#### 📌 Thesis 5: On subsistence economy

Seen from a subsistence perspective, it is even more important to ask what possibilities people have to shape their own living conditions and what access they have to resources in order to be able to provide themselves with the basic necessities of daily life. Do they have access to common goods? What is the state of their environment? Is the air clean, the water good? Are they in charge of their social relations? An UBI could possibly be a medium for the development of subsistence

84 Adam, Barbara: Sustainability through a temporal lens: Time, future, process. In: Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaftens (ed): Wege Vorsorgenden Wirtschaftens. Marburg: Metropolis 2013



logics and practices – for example, if infrastructures for more subsistence were put in place parallel to the UBI. Whether this would be the case is ultimately a question to be decided empirically, not theoretically. In order to use the UBI as an instrument of transformation, it would have to be embedded in a corresponding subsistence strategy, so that attitudes to subsistence would be gradually transformed. From the subsistence perspective, too, the following applies: UBI is not enough.

## 🔴 Thesis 6: Conclusion

### **A transformation of the economic system in its entirety**

As visionary designs, sustainable and precautionary concepts applied to economic and working life reflect the possible and necessary activities for a good life. At their core they eliminate existing separations between paid and unpaid work, between productive and reproductive relations and processes, and between nature and society, as well as instituting an orientation towards subsistence. The aim is the transformation of the economic system in its entirety. Connected with this is always the question of which transformation strategies would be the most appropriate. While some stress potential pitfalls and others the emancipatory potential of UBI, we believe that it is multiple strategies which make socio-ecological transformations possible. Multiple strategies create more space for joint reflection, debate and experimentation on what activities a sustainable society needs. For the UBI to become one of a number of meaningful transformation strategies, a different political culture is needed: above all, one that champions a different concept of freedom and autonomy, which is no longer at odds with the caring self in the social and ecological context.

## Livelihood could mean the shift from being driven to [simply] being

**Christian Felber** initiator of the Economy for the Common Good, co-founder of Attac Austria, contemporary dance-performer, university teacher, swimmer of lakes and rivers regardless of weather and season, Vienna

**AG** »An economy for the common good establishes an ethical economic model: the welfare of humanity and the environment will become the primary objective of the economy« is one of your teachings. Based on values that promote the common good, you understand this model as a »lever of change on an economic, political and social level.«<sup>85</sup> And, as an educated psychologist and sociologist, you are currently writing a book on the deconstruction of economics as the homo oeconomicus leading science.

**Christian Felber | CF** The economic sciences should be embedded in a rainbow of overriding sciences that address the actual goals and values of a dignified life. Currently, economics says of itself that it deals with the efficient management of limited resources. But what are the objectives? One objective is the realization of values. Thus ethics. One objective is sustainability. Thus ecology. One objective is the success of relationships. Thus psychology, social psychology and neurobiology. One objective is holistic understanding in the context of systems theory. Another is gender equality. Thus gender studies. One objective is also democracy. Thus, democracy theory and political science. This is all a normative superstructure; the discipline of economics should be at its service.

**AG** One does not get the impression that the economic sciences today understand themselves as serving a greater purpose; instead, they rather self-confidently assume that they keep the economy running and thus life in general. »It's the economy, stupid!«<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.ecogood.org/de/>

<sup>86</sup> Election campaign slogan, Bill Clinton US presidential elections, 1992

**CF** It needs to be pushed off its throne, because it is precisely this hubris and sense of superiority that is currently a huge problem. Originally, economics emerged from philosophy. Adam Smith, the most famous and respected economist of all time, was a moral philosopher; in his age, there were no individual economic sciences yet. Why should we need them now? I believe that we should return them to the broader field of philosophy, and more concretely moral philosophy, also ethics. Ethics is the mother of economic sciences. Even Aristotle, as a philosopher, contemplated economics stringently and concisely. And that suffices. We don't need any more than that. And we also don't need mathematics to legitimize economics as an independent discipline.

**AG** What is your problem with mathematics?

**CF** I don't have anything against mathematics per se. Math is a wonderful tool for specific goals, and generally for natural sciences. Among other things, John Schellnhuber says that existing economic models reduce a far, far more complex reality to just very few variables. And then something rather ridiculous like the homo oeconomicus results. Whereby Schellnhuber also says that it is not a fundamentally absurd endeavor to represent the complex, chaotic, erratic and systemic world in math. But I'm afraid that these models would then be so complex that a maximum of three people could understand them and then actually speak about markets so that it would resemble reality. Consequently, the intent to translate social phenomena – like complex human interactions or markets – in a precise mathematic language makes no sense. Economics is a social science and needs different methods.

I would downgrade mathematics within economics and consider it one method of many. Others are interviews, case studies or the deconstruction of concepts. Generally, more critical thinking is required, systemic thinking. Thinking in terms of values and goals, since economics is »eminently a moral science«, as Keynes put it concisely.

**AG** In what category do you place the following disparity: in the Federal Republic of Germany in 2013, 56 billion paid working hours contrasted with 96 billion unpaid hours?

**CF** This demonstrates a limited concept of utility. In mainstream economic science, something is only useful if you can express it in monetary categories.

**AG** The other is, in the Marxist sense, the creation of labor to produce value?

**CF** Reproduction as the foundation for production. It is a classical feminist perspective, whereby without reproduction no production can take place. If Adam Smith's mother hadn't fed him, then he couldn't have had a single idea. I like the reversal of the terms. What we call reproductive work can also be seen as the production of life: the greatest blind spot of economics.

- AG** Production of life, reproduction as well as nursing don't speak to me as terms for this important type of work. In order to describe its societal and individual relevance, I find the term »caring«, which has entered into new German vocabulary, more complete.
- CF** Caring makes reference to a life that is already there. But it's about both: the production of life and caring for life and beings.
- AG** What effect would the deconstruction of economic sciences that you formulated have on the market? Götz Werner, who is promoting a Universal Basic Income as an entrepreneur, says: only when we have introduced it can we start even talking about the market!
- CF** First we have to ask ourselves: do markets have to exist? If so, then the next question is: what role do they play in the overall concept of economic activities? And what should they look like? None of these questions are being posed right now; instead, it is imperative: economy is equal to markets. Markets function in a specific way. And as an economist, we can only attempt to understand these mechanisms. That is actually the most revealing, but also most common accusation from mainstream economists when I speak to them about alternatives to the current shape of the economy. They don't admit that markets are already shaped now; instead, they believe that they are natural phenomena. They believe that markets work according to natural laws, which science then »discovers«. That's why they talk about the laws of the market. These are not metaphors that address political or democratic decisions, but rather metaphors that quite clearly refer to natural laws and natural powers. And economists understand the market and are market whisperers. But this kind of market understanding is a huge illusion: markets are man-made and function according to their political design; quasi-physicist market whisperers constitute a huge danger in policy advice and economic education.
- AG** To confront precisely this type of thinking, you have become a broadcast seed spreader of an economy for the common good. How do you change the dynamics?
- CF** Maybe we should return to the original question: should there be markets at all? First you have to ask: what else is there? I would say that there are five economic forms. The first is self-sufficiency or subsistence. The second is the gift economy. That means, we produce with a division of labor and what we don't produce on our own is given to us. And we give away what we produce. The third form is »commoning«: a cultural practice without the logics of markets and states. The fourth form is the market economy. Conditional exchange, so to speak, whether with or without money. And the fifth form is the planned economy, in which total production and total consumption is planned for a collective; its »light« version are public goods and services. In my understanding, these are the five essential economic typologies. And from a neutral perspective we ask: what amount do we want from each type?

**AG** So, you are betting on a mix?

**CF** Most definitely.

**AG** And where do you place the idea of a Basic Income?

**CF** I see it as a cross-cutting element that is present in all five forms and eases them. Although we don't need it in a planned economy, since it would already be an integral aspect there.

**AG** Are you thinking of a planned economy that works without money?

**CF** Yes; I don't think it makes sense to design a planned economy. You are obliged to contribute a certain amount. And you have the right to consume a certain contingent. As a ›currency‹, what is most necessary is time, not money. That is my understanding of a planned economy.

**AG** Which is fundamentally different to planned economies as we have known them.

**CF** The different forms of real existing socialism were just meant as preliminary steps to a true communism. There, I would have been required to work three, four or five hours a day and could then, in accordance with my needs, receive everything I required.

In contrast to old-school planned economies, in a decentralized and participative planned economy needs are registered decentrally, and production is planned decentrally as well. There would indeed be an integrated system of planning, but the information system would be established decentrally in the internet. This means that precisely what Hayek warned of – that a central authority can never determine all needs – is nonsense in the digital age: everyone can introduce their production input as well as their orders individually in a central system. Technological development has long since overtaken Hayek's analysis.

In contrast, the ideology of the market inherently includes its own specter: in the end, the »invisible hand« of Adam Smith or the »auctioneer« of Leon Walras, which steer market behavior in these models as a last instance, are a kind of central planning authority. Hayek assumes that the sum of all offers and sum of all demands have to be coordinated by a fantasized central market planning authority, and that in a market economy, the market itself is this »coordination mechanism«. But since it doesn't exist in reality, but instead an uncoordinated – and often chaotic – clash of supply and demand takes place in which only a part of the offers is sold, the other part remains unsold. Vice versa, only a part of the demand is satisfied, the other isn't.

**AG** Like it is today?

**CF** Yes. It is actually pretty chaotic and rather inefficient. For example, a third or more of produced food is thrown away. It would be far more intelligent to join the advantages of a planned economy with the advantages of a market economy. But because they are perceived as a dichotomy, no one comes up with the idea to even consider such a connection.

- AG** Could you walk us through an example from your model of the five forms?
- CF** I played this out on the computer once: it combines all five economic types. The hardware of your laptop or tablet is needed in such numbers that efficiency via volume makes sense, an 'economy of scale'. That means, not a small company but rather a large corporation produces a tablet. But since large corporations are very powerful, it is a social company – as we know it from real-existing socialism. It produces the hardware. The software is shareware, so in everyone's hands. We produce it in our free time, and it is thus part of the complex gift economy.
- AG** So, we never get back what we invest here, but we still simply contribute to the further development of a system, right?
- CF** We receive no equivalent exchange value from the same exchange partner. But from a systemic perspective, we all contribute, and all are given gifts – all stand with one leg in the gift economy. Some program software. Others work as psychotherapists, make honey or something else that they like producing and find meaningful. You create something and give the product or service. That is a gift economy. Depending on the level of organization, you can also call it business freed from the logic of exchange or commoning.
- AG** We are far from that now. Software producers are making a lot of money with this, even though many people are programming open-source software now, which is accessible to all for free.
- CF** I am now describing an ideal situation. Hardware producers are also currently profit-oriented joint-stock companies. This would then be a company run by the society; for example, a cooperative. Then there is electricity. Electricity could be a public good. This means that although there could be private inputs, the actual power grid would be a public infrastructure.
- AG** What really puzzles me is why we don't increase the acceptance of wind energy by letting those people who live next to windmills source their electricity from them. For free, as a compensation for their disadvantages. I am convinced that acceptance would be far higher. Could the power supply also be a part of the gift economy?
- CF** I don't see that in the case of electricity. Electricity could either be organized as a public good, in state-owned power plants or in the form of an economy for the common good and thus in accordance with a market economy. In this, they could be many small, private companies that produce while abiding by certain rules such as the ban on fossil fuels, energy limited in its amount and/or with an obligatory common good balance sheet. Input fees would be regulated. And the profits would, for example, have to be reinvested. However, it would be a market economy – whereby the production of hardware would also be a market economy, even though it would take place as a social enterprise. But we would not prohibit there also being a second social enterprise; otherwise you would give one

of the social enterprises a monopoly – then it would be a state-operated business.

**AG** No, no. It needs freedom of choice, which in principle is best provided by the market economy.

**CF** Exactly. Theoretically, we could have competition between one thousand cooperatives. What makes it a bit complicated is the fact that we are now mixing different economic typologies with different forms of ownership. Now we have hardware production via a market economy, but with social enterprises. And software production via a gift economy or commons. A power supply then via a market economy, but according to the rules of an economy of the common good and certainly with private companies. For example, these could be citizens' energy cooperatives or also municipal energy cooperatives. These would then be public companies but organized decentrally in the hands of various municipalities. In total, there could be a very colorful mix of different legal forms on the energy market.

**AG** You don't see a contradiction between private businesses and the economy of the common good? There just have to be certain rules?

**CF** Not fundamental ones. Today, in many parts of the economy, it is a real-existing contradiction, but not a theoretical or principal one. And now it starts to get exciting: internet access. It is the indispensable part of the whole. It is a public good. And I would make that a monopoly, a public monopoly, so that we don't have to spend hundreds of hours of our lives registering with internet providers and logging into fragmented net principalities with senseless passwords. There would just be one internet, freely accessible to everybody.

**AG** If major companies are too powerful and thus need to be transformed into social enterprises how would you evaluate Amazon, one of today's largest employers? Should it also be nationalized? Socialized? Become a public good?

**CF** Like any other company, Amazon would have to abide by a maximum size limit and create a balance of the common good. This would demonstrate what effect an online bookstore would have on the carbon footprint. It could be that the business model is just not ecologically ›viable‹; that would be the end of online shipping. In addition, I would also be for the limitation of subsidies being transferred from completely different business segments. If Amazon has so much money that Jeff Bezos can try his hand at space flight, we should either be thinking about prices or wages at Amazon – the balance of the common good. Besides, there would be no billionaires in a negative feedback loop economy. A public good would only make sense in ›natural monopolies‹, e.g., when it would be most efficient to just have one online book shop. But in the case of bookstores, it makes sense that there are many private ones.

**AG** And how is our data handled?

- CF** To assure data protection and the right to privacy, the state internet monopolist would be subject to special accountability and transparency, namely an additional audit. This is conceivable, and a public authority can't just develop a secret department that undermines this. If the parliament would insist on regular accountability, then I imagine it to be rather difficult for a government or even a secret service to take over this public authority.
- AG** Now we are entering into a special field. But we were just discussing your model. I would be interested to hear how you're going to weave in a Basic Income | Livelihood.
- CF** We need it in a market economy so that we can afford those things that have a market price. If the gift economy could completely supply us with what we need, then we wouldn't need it anymore. And we wouldn't need it in a pure subsistence economy or a pure planned economy either. But as long as we combine a gift economy and subsistence with a market economy, then we will. I believe that a guaranteed Basic Income | Livelihood is married to the market economy. We need it for when elements of our basic primary care are organized according to market principles. In other words: now.
- AG** So, you would consider it as a transitional possibility? Because your ideal is the pure economy of the common good, which doesn't require any markets?
- CF** Let me put it this way: if we come to the conclusion that markets should be a part of our economic reality, then there are always two possible inferences. First, markets always require a Basic Income, then it would also be a long-term solution. Second possibility: we shape markets towards an economy of the common good, so that they produce such an abundance in an interplay with other economic sectors – public goods, gift economy, subsistence economy – so that there is enough for everyone. Then you can also think about the alternative, that an Unconditional Basic Income isn't necessary. It certainly wouldn't be required with today's urgency and necessity. However, it could still be the better option to combine a fully functional economy of the common good with a Basic Income | Livelihood; one would have to look at this and consider it from a practical perspective.
- AG** To a different aspect of our present situation: almost everyone I know suffers from the feeling of not having enough time and thus not being fulfilled in a comprehensive way. This is a phenomenon of our times. A Basic Income | Livelihood would also be important to me in response to this, since I clearly associate the possibilities of greater autonomy in our approach to time with it.
- CF** We might be far less susceptible to blackmail. Capitalism always blackmails you, if you don't make your labor available to it. It can force us to do almost anything, because otherwise we wouldn't have a Livelihood.



Two things are needed from my perspective. On the one hand, Basic Income, guaranteeing you a Livelihood, so that you can say ›no‹ but still have enough to survive. And on the other hand, capitalism needs to be transformed towards a more need-based economy, so that much of what is produced now is no longer desired or needed – or is prohibited from being produced. Simply because we produce far too much at present.

**AG** We have too much of everything. Even, as I occasionally say to the complete horror of artists, too much art as well. Because there is no Livelihood connected to artistic thought, just to the delivery of products. Sustainability is something else.

**CF** Artists are also under pressure to produce, to perform, to deliver.

**AG** And they suffer from incredible production pressure.

**CF** It would be a great relief to finally just be able to concentrate on creativity, especially for artists.

**AG** Even if they could invest more in connecting to society. But I am in no way propagating a Basic Income for artists – if a Basic Income is introduced, then for everyone.

**CF** Sure, all humans are equal :-)

**AG** Final question: On the interaction between Basic Income | Livelihood and sustainability. What is your short formula for this?

**CF** The marriage of a Basic Income with ecological human rights. These would grant each person a certain level of ›ecological purchasing power‹. This aggregated ecological purchasing power of humanity always remains within planetary limits. That would also be a strong alliance between sustainability and freedom, since the same ecological rights and obligations would apply to all people – not only independently of how smart, beautiful or healthy they are, but also independently of the degree of their financial purchasing power.

# Commoning engenders Livelihood and Sustainability

**Silke Helfrich** author, theoretician and commons activist

In the past few years, I have come to appreciate a wonderful Old English word: commoning. Writings from English archives bear witness to its use over the course of centuries. We don't know exactly how customary it actually was, since the culture of daily life has never been comprehensively documented. But daily life and culture are precisely the issues at hand. The question is and has always been: what do we consider normal and common, what do we take for granted?

Commoning means bringing diversity into alignment. It means working together without constantly doing everything together. Yet, it is more than a ritualized Saturday work session. Commoning isn't exclusively oriented toward efficiency or toward a result. It includes what we cannot directly grasp, the »immaterial common properties | immaterielle Gemeintümer«, as Johannes Heimrath calls them. It is a place where relationships are being nourished and kept alive! Commoning takes time, it decelerates, but it also creates a cohesion in many directions, often in the background or underground. No more – but also no less.

Commoning creates spaces of commonality and simultaneously regulates the access to and management of things: water and land, living space and books, bicycles and cars, knowledge and data, software and hardware, without the expectations of absolute disposition that today appear normal to us. Instead, »the idea of absolute disposal is abandoned.«<sup>87</sup> Whoever tends or maintains something regarded as shared wealth, doesn't just treat it as an object, but stewards it. That's quite a difference and it reminds me of James Rebanks, the shepherd and author who studied at Oxford and returned from there to his place with a millennia-old history of commoning: the oft-described and romanticized Lake District in northwest England. Rebanks bemoans the absence of »common« people, commoners, and their way of life in such romantizations.

I don't know how it is for you, but I associate shepherding – and, indeed, minding anything – with deceleration – unless the sheep are lambing or hoof-trimming is the order of the day (that was my father's occupation). I

<sup>87</sup> Johannes Heimrath: Gemeinschaften, in <https://oya-online.de/article/read/973-gemeinschaften.html>

associate minding things with the rhythm of life and not with the rattling of cogs, with a style of life that remains in relationships: to nature and others, to past and future generations. I'd almost forgotten what that means. Rebanks describes it like this: »I wake up every day and think: this is wonderful! I am doing something that people already did here 4,000 years ago.«<sup>88</sup> And this is also why he brought the people of the Lake District and their collective production back into literature. His book made it to number one on England's bestseller list.

Commoning is like minding things in a comprehensive sense. That is why it's good that the word is resurfacing – as in the *Atlas of Commoning: Places of Collective Production*.<sup>89</sup> Because commons provisioning directly satisfies needs (food, software or living space can be created in a money-lite way), it serves to create a Basic Livelihood that makes people more independent of monetary income. Those who create, use and administer the lived environment through collective production will not be vulnerable to overheated housing markets. At the same time – and in the best case – a feeling of belonging sets in, a feeling of not-being separated. If this happens, we'll have fewer identity battles to wage, and we'll need to buy less. Isn't the relationship between commoning and sustainability obvious?

88 James Rebanks: *The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District*, Allen Lane 2015. Titel Thesen Temperamente, about James Rebanks. Mein Leben als Schäfer. <https://www.youtube.com>

89 <https://www.archplus.net/home/archiv/ausgabe>

**How do we relate with nature?  
 How do we relate with one  
 another?  
 How do we relate to ourselves?  
 How can I be happy without  
 chasing after profit margins?**

**Hans Joachim ›John‹ Schellnhuber** founded the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research | PIK in 1992 and ran the institute until his retirement in 2008. He remains affiliated with PIK now as Director Emeritus. Schellnhuber has been a longstanding member of the German Advisory Council on Global Change | WBGU and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change | IPCC. He has published more than 250 scientific articles and over 50 books as an author, co-author, editor

### Conversation Part 1

**AG** This conversation is about your associations with the triangular relationship I posited between sustainability, deceleration and Basic Income, which in my opinion is terribly neglected both in the sustainability discourse and among the advocates of the Unconditional Basic Income. | UBI.

**John Schellnhuber | JSch** My thoughts on that? The categories are very different and therefore constitute a challenge. Sustainability is all that is good that we dream of for the future of our planet. To a certain extent, deceleration is a vision of how one could arrive at sustainability, and the Unconditional Basic Income could be the basic principle according to which social participation is organized once we have arrived at this state. All three terms are extremely significant. But let me counter these terms with my own categories. For

me, sustainability primarily means entering into not completely but rather partly closed cycles. We always have movement. Life consists of a permanent metabolic cycle, but it is a semi-open system whose flows are in a kind of steady state. One takes in resources from outside the system; for example, air to breathe or light. And so one must also dispose of something.

For me, the overarching vision would be: everything that I put into the system is, in principle, inexhaustible. And everything that I release from the system is naturally degradable and is fed back into, and stored in, the matrix on which human civilization is based.

For example, the system does not expand in relation to the use of resources. It actually has to shrink. If we think purely in economic terms, it is a circular economy, and there is an equilibrium among natural resources, above all with the ecosystem – for instance with biodiversity. But that would mean that I am also in an equilibrium with my own human expectations and desires.

Can I only imagine the good life as a dynamically expansive process that can only be achieved by continuous striving ...?

**AG** ... ever bigger, faster, higher, further?

**JSch** ... exactly, to achieve a stable state of mind? Or might I also exist in a cyclical system of craving, desire, and satisfaction, in which satisfaction is not only imaginable through permanent expansion? How can I satisfy human desire, for example the desire for satisfaction and recognition, in a way other than through meritocracy, i.e. through measuring achievement and merit? These desires are, after all, part of the human experience from childhood through to old age. How can I bring my mental well-being and my cultural determination into a kind of harmonious state? Many philosophers have considered this, but I don't think we have a good answer yet. I believe it to be incontrovertible that deceleration is absolutely necessary for this end. Unfortunately, that brings us to a dilemma: namely the fact that precisely when it comes to the problem of climate we have to accelerate in order to slow down – this is a paradox to say the least.

**AG** I'll boldly claim that this paradox could at least be mitigated through the establishment of a Basic Income | Livelihood since this would also offer a more free and independent relation to time.

**JSch** I'm just getting to that. The Basic Income is above all important to me because we can foresee that we will no longer have traditional work for wages as we know it. This has to do not only with digitization, but also with questions about the social distribution of what is available, be that nature, other resources, or other products. These are more likely to be the aspects by which one defines oneself in the future, rather than by one's function in the social process of the division of labor, which has developed over the course of history. In the future, it will be more about our sheer existence as citizens in

the world. This gives a person a right to whatever the world has to offer.

**AG** On this topic, the philosopher Rudolf zur Lippe asked: »What unites all people? Nobody has ever been asked if he wants to be in the world.«

**JSch** (laughs) Exactly.

**AG** From this, Rudolf zur Lippe derives the obligation of the world community to take care of everyone: Livelihood as a human right.

**JSch** That's how I see it too. And if we were to really enter a system of cycles in which we could use digitization to create a sufficiently large supply to feed, clothe, and house ourselves sensibly, then it would be everyone's birthright initially to have the same access. Whoever wants more can do more.

**AG** A Basic Income is not, after all, a work ban.

**JSch** Rather, it's precisely just a Basic Income.

**AG** Which I now prefer to call a Livelihood.

**JSch** That definitely sounds better, more agreeable. I just want to emphasize that in the context of the whole sustainability debate – which mixes up the transitions as much as the goals – we have to come to a clear vision: How do we relate to nature? How do we relate to one another? How do we relate to ourselves? How can I be happy without chasing after profit margins? If we are to develop a necessary idea of what non-expansive human happiness might look like in a non-expansive happy society, then we also need to know: what are the constitutive economic or institutional elements? In my opinion, Basic Income | Livelihood is an essential part of this.

In thinking about deceleration, the choreography for entering this state is important. After all, we unfortunately have already forced massive disruptions to the system, with climate change constituting the largest of these disruptions. In this regard, too, we are faced with the paradox of possibly having to develop an expansive economy in order to achieve shrinkage. For example, we may have to trigger an industrial revolution through electromobility, renewable energies, and other forms of agriculture in order to counteract the traditional acceleration with a counter-acceleration. This is analogous to the way one can confront noise with counter-noise and be left without noise. Perhaps we would have to undertake a counter-acceleration in order finally to be able to enter a state of equilibrium. I am now thinking in draft form.

**AG** Well that fits; we have to venture into the unknown after all. As Albert Einstein told us, »one can never solve problems with the same way of thinking that created them.« We therefore need a profound paradigm shift, especially if we seriously want to implement the Sustainable Development Goals | SDGs of the United Nations.

**JSch** Which I still find too far-reaching.

**AG** At the same time, those goals really do address poverty and hunger very clearly for the first time; they speak of livelihood, of ›bien être‹

or ›buen vivir‹ and thus provide a frame of reference for a changed way of thinking and hopefully also of acting.

**JSch** Yes. But who can distill an image of the good life for humanity from these 17 goals and indicators? What makes us happy? I need clean water so that I don't get sick. But what actually makes life worth living? Philosophers have tried to answer this little question for thousands of years, but it is a question that must be posed again and again given that we have been acting delusionally for 250 years when it comes to fossil fuels. We happened upon this immense geological treasure, which suddenly unleashed all productive power and triggered the big bang of the industrial revolution. Something that could never have been achieved via a slave economy. Marx thought this was really great. And since then we have actually been in a state of delusion in which we persuade ourselves that we are only happy, successful and spiritually stable if we live according to this maxim of ›more and more.‹ This is a thoroughly colonialist or imperialist operation, which finds expression in a totally false narrative, according to which we Europeans would like to content ourselves with having less, but the South-Asians, the Chinese, and others would not go along with it.

**AG** All the others who ›want our kind of prosperity‹.

**JSch** After all, it took two centuries to brainwash them into the happiness maxims of unrestrained capitalism. To this end, we overran and converted a whole set of cultural systems, and now that they have finally caught on and have subscribed to the ideology of the Industrial Revolution, we are outraged: terrible, how can they? It is ultimately a double betrayal of these cultures. For if one looks at the cultural history of mankind, starting 10,000 years ago, we see that cyclical economies dominated in general. The societies that lost their equilibrium due to the original sin (the discovery of coal as coagulated solar energy that overshadowed everything else) had been well balanced societies. Only through this expansion has a surrogate for happiness become possible. And this takes me back to my book<sup>90</sup>: we have become prisoners of carbon.

**AG** Now, you're saying very clearly: if we don't want to risk self-incineration, we need significantly discernable exits and transfers, in multiple senses. If people had a Basic Income | Livelihood then perhaps they would not flee to the cities and subsequently leave entire rural areas to agribusiness, but would instead be able to settle again. I recently had the dubious pleasure of discussing Basic Income with a proponent of the social democracy, which left me extremely depressed. Because to deny that artificial intelligence will change wage labor qualitatively and quantitatively to a significant degree is to be blind to reality.

<sup>90</sup> Hans Joachim Schellnhuber. Self-incineration: The Fatal Triangulated Relationship among Climate, Humans and Carbon. Bertelsmann, 2015

**JSch** Because they believe that artificial intelligence | AI, creates more jobs than it destroys? A very pious hope!

**AG** Since Jeremy Rifkin we have known that since the 1990s the economy recovers regularly without increasing employment. »Jobless recovery« or »jobless growth« is the technical term for this. Moreover, not everyone who loses their job can be retrained to become a digital talent.

**JSch** No. That won't work.

**AG** We might, however, need all of these »released« people for the great transformation towards a more just, decarbonized, resource-saving way of life for all people and for the planet. I am therefore disturbed that those who research the climate and sustainability do not share their knowledge with a broad public in the best Humboldtian tradition and instead seek their salvation in the publication of their work in a tripleA journal, which then often only is read by five to seven people, as a colleague at the Institute recently dryly commented.

**JSch** Yes. When it comes to economic publications, the so-called A-Channels and A-Plus journals are at the forefront; but the texts are often quoted three times and that's it. One might receive a Nobel Prize in Economics for it at some point, but this work only serves the innermost circle, which regenerates itself and degenerates again and again and more importantly is completely irrelevant for the real debate. But it also can be quite different, as with a work on »Hothouse Earth«<sup>91</sup>, which I co-published. It was downloaded over 400,000 times right after it was released.

**AG** Because it moves beyond specialized journals.

**JSch** The article is for everyone and is being distributed worldwide, even though it is a specialized article. That means we have to make distinctions. I have never experienced such a broad reception, including from the media. It was reported around the world. Biocide Today as well as Lee Australian, Shing Bun, etc. And there is a new metric: Alt-metric Top 100. The distribution via Facebook & Co. is part of that calculus. According to that metric, by now the piece has reached almost 6400 points. So we see that it's quite possible to do scientifically profound work that is received by the broader public, up to and including the evening news. It is now no longer possible to ignore that – even if the Paris Agreement is implemented – the climate machinery will not simply stop, but will slide on because the context in the earth system has already changed. »The context strikes back« is the insight that is experiencing an explosive reception.

Adrienne Goehler

91 Will Steffen, Johan Rockström, Katherine Richardson, Timothy M. Lenton, Carl Folke, Diana Liverman, Colin P. Summerhayes, Anthony D. Barnosky, Sarah E. Cornell, Michel Crucifix, Jonathan F. Donges, Ingo Fetzer, Steven J. Lade, Marten Scheffer, Ricarda Winkelmann, Hans Joachim Schellnhuber 2018. Trajectories of the Earth System on the Anthropocene. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences | PNAS. <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2018/07/31/1810141115>



- AG** And how do we now move into action after we have accumulated an insane amount of knowledge worldwide about all that we need to change as quickly as possible? It seems to me that societal willingness to do this is there, but it takes individuals experiencing themselves as part of the solution, not always just as part of the problem. Because it makes people sick when their skills are not in demand, when they are not fast, fit, slim, successful, wealthy enough.
- JSch** I can only agree. At the end of summer 2018, I was invited to a talk-show during prime time, together with German Agriculture Minister Klöckner from the CDU and Annalena Baerbock from the German Green Party. First of all, of course, the issue was the summer of drought and, because of the article on ›Hothouse Earth‹, the questions for me were: What is your opinion on this? What can we do? So I summed up what I have tried out in the last 30 years in terms of communication – including in articles like ›Hothouse Earth‹. In the end you just have to tell a good story in which people want to see themselves. They want to be on the right side of this story. That is now my most deeply held conviction.
- AG** And for this, the Basic Income | Livelihood could be a damn important tool for empowerment of self-empowerment and of active participation in the world.
- JSch** That's part of this good story. We scientists, who have accumulated so much specialized knowledge, have to contribute to the creation of a good narrative. It is the sum of my insights: in the end, I want to tell a simple but beautiful story, in which we are no longer slaves to the carbon that enables us to produce more and more and to consume more and more. Because what is it that makes one happy? Relationships with people, a beautiful sunset. Simple things.
- AG** A good wine to go with a good conversation and good sex?
- JSch** (laughs) Yes, all of that. But the things that make us happy are often nuances, sometimes large vistas, surprising sympathies that one wouldn't expect. We have to succeed in telling a story in which one feels at home, sheltered. Under what material preconditions is this possible? And that gets me to the Basic Income | Livelihood. It increases the possibility of achieving a technical civilization that takes from nature what we need as humans without destroying nature.
- AG** Or delivers something back to her.
- JSch** Exactly. For example, the story will feature good gardeners. They are very important.
- AG** Whose passion is agriculture and not agribusiness. Isn't it interesting that the German word for agriculture, Landwirtschaft or literally ›the economizing of land,‹ stresses the economic over the cultural?
- JSch** Agro-industry is the reality and it has a long and terrible tradition here in the East. In the GDR one studied ›animal production!‹ The gardener is far from that in my story. There are good new connections with garden culture – I talked to the gardening director of the Prussian Palaces and Gardens about his predecessor, the great

Peter Joseph Lenné. And about what climate change is doing to the gardens. Horticulture is the slowest of all art forms. You paint with trees and bushes; it might take 50 years before the picture is developed. For me, garden culture is in any case part of this good story, which can become a big narrative that includes 10 billion people without having to destroy their livelihoods – at an appropriate pace, in your words: slowed down, without hurry, but also without utter boredom.

**AG** We urgently need more stories that connect us in order to overcome the disastrous separations. Explain to me why politics continues to permit itself to negotiate development-, energy- and climate policy separately, splitting these up into three departments that operate like closed silos?

After reading your book, the question arises more urgently than ever for me: could we reduce the climate refugee movements with a globally distributed Livelihood, because people would have the economic means to take their fate into their own hands and to produce something with their knowledge and their will in the places where they feel at home? Can you tell this story too?

**JSch** That is of course an absolutely radical thought. The idea of introducing a »climate passport« is also radical.

**AG** Isn't that your demand, which the Greens included in the EU election platform?<sup>92</sup>

**JSch** We are destroying the territories of other cultures. The least we can do is to take in those whose livelihoods we destroy. And we must do this without drafting resettlement plans from our vantage for those who have to flee for climate reasons. Instead, the climate passport gives them a document with which they can freely decide where to go. That is empowerment or agency – i.e. the ability to act. But even that of course mostly leads to toxic reactions along the lines of: ›we're not about to pay for others.‹

**AG** The climate passport would be a huge admission of the responsibility of the industrialized countries for climate change. And if the issuing countries combined their economic cooperation with the idea of an Basic Income | UBI, instead of filling the coffers of the warlords and corrupt governments as they are doing now, would that really be so radical? After all, traditional ›development aid‹ has failed completely.

**JSch** Your proposition means: by providing people on other continents – on whose backs we have built the foundation of our economic expansion – with a basic livelihood, we are paying back a small part of our historical debt and supporting them in being able to continue

92 »We are therefore calling for the introduction of a climate passport that enables people who have to leave their homes due to climate change and environmental degradation to obtain European citizenship. [www.gruene-jugend.de/europa-kann-anders-wir-machen-uns-ready-fuer-die-europawahl](http://www.gruene-jugend.de/europa-kann-anders-wir-machen-uns-ready-fuer-die-europawahl)

to experience their own home as such. The African continent, on which, in my opinion, the fate of humanity will be decided because climate change will have a massive impact there, has these insane resources of land, of minerals, rare soils, of biodiversity, of sun, of energy. The transformation towards a cyclical economy would function perfectly in Africa, of this I am certain. What Africa needs is also a good narrative.

**AG** And the means to be self-determined in advancing this transformation.

**JSch** I'm just trying to work it out. What is your proposal for a monthly Basic Income as development aid?

**AG** In the Namibian village of Otjivero, 930 people below retirement age received 100 Namibia dollars per month from January 2008 to December 2009, which at that time was just under 10 euros. A contribution that was not quite enough to secure a living, but nevertheless led to a culture of trust and joint purchases in the village. Now, ten years later, there is a sensational Basic Income project in Kenya, initiated by 'GiveDirectly', a non-profit organization from the USA. GiveDirectly raised so much money through crowdfunding that they can now – under scientific supervision – try out various payment models in different villages for twelve years.

**JSch** Okay. But for the sake of simplicity I'll stay with the proposal of 10 euros. That means 120 euros per person and year, multiplied by a billion. Then you're at 1.2 trillion for Africa. That comes to around 2.5 percent of the world's gross national product.

**AG** For the Federal Republic of Germany, the estimate usually goes as follows: today's annual social expenditure already covers the posited 12,000 euros per person per year.<sup>93</sup> Of course, it is still necessary to look very carefully at which people need more due to their special medical needs.

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After all, this country gives out one trillion euros in social security benefits a year. That is an average of 12,500 euros per capita. This raises the question of whether we cannot improve the efficiency of our social benefits.

**Finance Minister Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble,  
February 12, 2010 Frankfurter Rundschau**

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**JSch** Although large sums of money are at stake, in my opinion such an UBI could generate so many advantages (such as a more stable society) that these sums would easily be justified. I can embrace the

<sup>93</sup> Social spending in Germany in 2018: 996 billion = 29.8 percent of GDP, 12,030 euros per inhabitant

idea that industrial societies, historically as the main agents responsible for the emission of climate-damaging greenhouse gases, have a kind of transfer-debt of which they can absolve themselves in this way. A Basic Income could also massively reduce migration.

**AG** We should still talk about your keyword »Reallabor Lausitz | realtime laboratory Lusatia«.

**JSch** I have now expanded it and call it the »European Superlab« because it goes far beyond Lausitz. That's what I'm currently promoting in Brussels.

## Conversation Part 2

**AG** A year ago we made an appointment for this second part. Having touched on the global context, we come back to Brandenburg, to Lausitz. The Coal Commission has now finished its work there and before the European and state elections, lavish funds for structural change were quickly proclaimed.

**JSch** I still have the triangular relationship among sustainability, deceleration, and Livelihood that you mentioned present to mind, as well as the paradox we encountered: the fact that we have to be incredibly fast, must in fact race, in order to be able to decelerate. Frenzied deceleration.

**AG** The dilemma has only intensified in the meantime. Incidentally, am I now speaking to the future Minister of the Environment of Brandenburg?

**JSch** So that's already making the rounds? Yes, I have declared that I'm prepared to take the job; because the times are simply so unusual and acute that even as a professor emeritus one has to think about how to implement politically what we in academia have so clearly recognized as necessary. But even without a ministerial office I declare myself ready to advise the democratic parties on the handling of the climate crisis.

**AG** Of course this news has spread right away and it is exactly what seems so urgently needed at the moment: to open parliaments and governments to external input, to leave the respective silos, and to occupy a different perspective. That is why I think it is important that you influence politics directly with your knowledge.

**JSch** It's possible that in extraordinary times there are opportunities not to stew in one's own juices, but rather to take on the work of shaping the future and to let fresh thinking seep through the cracks that have opened up.

German reunification was a big crack of this kind. Talents like that of Angela Merkel seeped in, something which would never have had a chance under normal circumstances. That also applied to other people from the natural sciences and mathematics; one even became Prime Minister in Saxony-Anhalt. In the event of sudden,

historic upheavals, even unusual talents can gain political power and influence. We are right now in such a time. Climate change will either destroy the environment or transform us and we have the opportunity to help shape the transformation ourselves. This also requires that people who have the necessary skills do not refuse to participate, whether as parliamentarians or as part of the government. That's why for the first time in my life I think that I shouldn't stay out of the dirty political hustle and bustle in some sort of immaculate self-contentment and should also encourage other colleagues in academia to participate. After all, the old constellation of parties is currently disintegrating.

**AG** At the same time, academic institutes should open up in order to be able to influence society.

**JSch** At the moment, the greatest advocates and the most intelligent defenders of science are pubescent 14-year-old girls and boys; through them a completely new framework of possibilities has opened up.

**AG** The transfer of this framework into politics now is absolutely worthy of imitation. I want to follow up on the statement made by the academic Schellnhuber last year: »we need a real-time laboratory in Lausitz with the aim of becoming? a European Super Lab.« I ask now: what happened this past year and would Minister Schellnhuber realize a Basic Income pilot-program in Lusatia with the funds allocated for structural change?

**JSch** If I actually had the power to design a program, what would I do with such power in view of the extremely tortured compromise of the Coal Commission? For I am, of course, of the opinion that the complete phase-out from coal-based power generation by 2038 is far too late, but I am sure that the real dynamics of the energy industry will outstrip this date. Nevertheless, the symbolic political value of »a leading industrial and export country definitely getting out of coal after getting out of nuclear power« is extremely important. The second really important point is that a »mission-driven transformation process« will probably be enacted for the first time in the world. The mission in this case is climate protection and considerable resources are being used to transform entire mining regions for the future. This is now an integral part of the German industrial landscape and thus becomes a real-time laboratory. And from here on, Minister Schellnhuber would continue on differently than the status quo. That is to say: not to treat desires like items on a Christmas wish list and scatter money so that as many groups of voters as possible feel served, but rather to use this really large amount of money to develop a concept for the future of Lausitz, but also for other mining regions.<sup>94</sup>

94 In 2019 Axel Vogel of »Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen« became Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Climate Protection of the State of Brandenburg

**AG** A concept that can only be heterogeneous if it is based on citizen participation, right?

**JSch** Yes. Nevertheless, a vision is needed that is sufficiently concrete. Otherwise it remains a hodgepodge, where gyms are renovated and train tracks improved ...

To come back to your question: If I were given the power to shape things, as part of a troop, part of a process, then I would really like to try this.

**AG** Once more in concrete terms: would you, as a minister, follow up on the demands for a Basic Income, which are already being formulated in this region by a smaller group? For this would also enable those in Lusatia who have not been able to make ends meet to actively participate in the transformation; to become part of a larger future-oriented project.

**JSch** The answer is: the money would be there for this kind of a project and, and even just from a socio-psychological point of view, it could set a lot in motion. Why do people here vote for the AfD? In my opinion, this has to do with the cultural evacuation of rural areas, which is a huge problem and is accompanied by an immense loss of trust and a wide-spread fear of loss. After all, we have been to several places with the Coal Commission. People are full of aggression, hurt, and fear, which in this case are mutually determining experiences. And so, a Basic Livelihood would result in a considerable calming of spirits. A Livelihood would really ensure peace of mind – but the question of what kind of innovations would follow would nevertheless persist. Once the emotional waves were calmed a bit and people were less afraid, one could set about realizing the potential.

I don't know if I've already told you what has become my favorite topic: wooden architecture. If we switched to wooden architecture, we could partially solve the climate problem. And now I am absolutely determined, whether as a minister or on my own initiative, to found the »Bauhaus of the Earth« after the 100th year anniversary of Bauhaus – just as you would like to realize the Basic Livelihood.

**AG** I'm with you all the way, for we should do one thing and not forget the other. The two complement each other pretty well since you need financial wind in your sails; security so that you can soar and open up to new ideas.

**JSch** Yes, right. Just briefly: the association of architects with which I am in close contact wrote the manifesto ›The House of the Earth‹ and now things are falling into place. After 100 years, the Bauhaus is invoked for the 21st century. I'm currently trying to find sponsors for that. This Bauhaus of the Earth should also have an original chapter in Brandenburg. Because part of my vision is to return to polycentrism, to the great cultural advances made by humanity, which were organized in a polycentric manner – be it during the Renaissance or in the Greek polis.

**AG** In fact, the Bauhaus also began far from the metropolis, and it was in the provinces that it had its greatest aesthetic impact. The movement began with a widely circulated manifesto by Gropius, with which he wanted to unite in this Bauhaus-hut the distinctions between art and craft, between theory and practice – distinctions that were common then and are still today. Therefore: highly relevant!

**JSch** It was conceived as a cultural program, wasn't it?

**AG** Absolutely.

**JSch** This cultural program, crushed and trampled on by the Nazis, should be revived under 21st century conditions. And for this, building with wood, polycentricity, and the new design of landscapes are important.

**AG** I've been dreaming of a large field of experimentation for hardy bamboo as a fast-growing raw material and thus as an alternative for building, heating, and for the production of paper or textiles ever since the designer Jens Burde<sup>95</sup>, whom I immediately included in the exhibit, made me aware of it. We simply need more laboratories.

**JSch** Also more experimentation in the field of ›misery‹ architecture, mobile accommodation for refugees, ›shifting architecture‹ and more. There is an endless number of challenges and impulses for work in the fields of urban planning, architecture, social psychology, for cultural workers, engineers, and technicians.

**AG** More and more, the awareness of the necessity of working together for a larger and more sustainable whole is gaining traction in society.

**JSch** And I believe that the world now needs a new Bauhaus, the Bauhaus of the Earth, exactly for this purpose, as a center around which I would organize everything, from cultural theory to workshops.

**AG** Such a center would certainly attract many city dwellers, including those who are being replaced by algorithms. Coupled with a Basic Livelihood this could encourage other forms of living and working.

**JSch** Yes, the future of wage labor shaped by digitization will help to overcome the differences between urban and rural areas. Bauhaus of the Earth would have to think about all this. And around this cultural nucleus a global model could emerge, which emanates from the Lausitz region. It would ultimately be a new narrative of modernity. You can tell I've been thinking a lot about all of this, can't you?

**AG** The visionary inclination can expand once one stops being the director of an institution.

**JSch** But that's not the issue; I continue to do a lot of research.

**AG** With a different degree of freedom, I imagine.

**JSch** Well, I probably would not have held the speech to the Green Party as I did if I had still had to be acutely vigilant not to appear as

<sup>95</sup> Jens Burde. »Zur Nachahmung empfohlen | Examples to follow, expeditions in aesthetics and sustainability«, catalog, Hatje Cantz 2010

an activist. I now have this freedom. And this big undertaking: the Bauhaus of the Earth. For this there has to be a transformation collection, a »Germany Fund« that might be linked to the European program »Horizon Europe.«<sup>96</sup> Actually, all the threads are already there.

**AG** In order to weave the threads into a cloth, however, a critical mass of people and institutions wanting to get out of their silos is needed. For it is obvious that governments alone are not in a position to implement all this.

**JSch** No, they can't tie the threads together, but it's becoming clear that society expects exactly that. The young people have contributed a lot to this, especially to those alliances that cannot and do not want to be developed within the traditional party framework.

**AG** We were able to see this for ourselves worldwide on September 20, 2019, when in Germany alone 1.4 million people from four generations accepted the invitation of »Fridays for the Future« and demonstrated their cheerful but clear determination to force politics to stop climate change. That was a tremendous sign. The next day the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* headlined: »The world is rising up.«

**JSch** In terms of numbers, of course, there is only a small part of the world that's rising up, but the movement is globally networked and prominent in the media. The movement combines two characteristics that make it unique – the pure idealism of the young generations and the indisputable claim to life, meaning survival. The grand coalition, on the other hand, comes across like a timid old mare. But the »Fridays for Future« kids have gotten even this old nag to change stride. This global movement will mobilize many forces yet. But in view of the whole spectrum of necessary changes, let's also urgently intensify our work on digitization. It's about more than the substitution of human labor. We need to apply the most powerful tools we have ever created to the most pressing problems: climate, resources, energy, etc.

**AG** I think that this necessary connection, too, goes hand in hand with a Basic Livelihood. With the certainty of having a livelihood, the fear of being replaced by algorithms could be transformed into the chance to fundamentally rethink what and how one actually wants to work. If digitization frees us from some types of work, we can do other things with the free time, such as becoming part of the social departure from the age of fossil fuels. Currently, we lack both the time and the security of having a livelihood.

**JSch** Many tributaries flow into the idea of a Basic Livelihood and it could be linked to another important idea: the restructuring of our democracy. I was elected to the Academy of Athens, which I feel is a great

<sup>96</sup> The European Union is planning a new, extensive program for research and innovation. The new Horizon Europe program will follow from the ongoing Horizon 2020 program and will aim to promote research on important social issues. Bmbf.de



honor and obligation to reflect on the origins and further development of democracy. And the Athenian democracy worked essentially by means of a lottery. Most of the political offices were raffled off there.

**AG** Only among men and among the socially privileged, however. In this respect, as we know, the Academy of Athens today has not developed much since Plato's time. So it is only of limited use as a model.

**JSch** But precisely this would change if women, men, and young people were able to stand for office by lottery – let's say for a single electoral period of eight years. I am certain that one would achieve more social representativeness and therefore probably more competence than if the parliaments are exclusively populated by people who have worked their way through the party mill and then survive there.

**AG** During the founding of the Green Party, the principle of rotation was a fundamental cultural motivation, meant to preserve impulses from outside against the threat of party sclerosis. This principle could have distinguished the party from all others to this day, but it has unfortunately been abandoned. With an expansion of democracy by means of lottery procedures – which has led to astonishing results in Ireland and Wales – making party structures more liquid could experience a renaissance.

**JSch** My proposal is initially a very mild one: to allocate ten percent of the parliamentary seats exclusively to the interests of future generations; that is, to raffle them off among young people.

# THINKING SPACE "THE FUTURE OF GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT"

## DIGITALISATION & EMPLOYMENT



## SUSTAINABILITY & EMPLOYMENT



### COCREATION

Manfred Helweg

Who is in charge of the company?

Who is the future Employer? Employee?

We need OUT of the Box thinking & being

deep collective LISTENING

How can we apply long term thinking?

What is a GOOD L.I.F.E.?

MORAL PARADIGM SHIFT

What is a GOOD L.I.F.E.?

LIFE? ~~WORK~~ LIFE

What is a GOOD L.I.F.E.?

GAINFUL = work & gain why not MEANINGFUL

FUN FACT:

It will cost 15-2 bn € in the next 15-20 years to restructure the Lausitz region, where 3000 ppl will lose jobs. If that cost paid in 1812 every person would receive 1.180 € / month for up to 20 years



What is the role of science?

Global Collective

1. Knowledge

2. Skills

3. Innovation

4. Leadership

5. Responsibility

6. Empathy

7. Resilience

8. Creativity

9. Collaboration

10. Communication

# MENT "

IAS  
Potsdam  
30.11. - 1.12.2017.

Paradigm shift needed in  
**DISTRIBUTION**  
We need a much more  
varied system

Cooperative  
Sector

MAKER  
Space

Volunteer  
Work

1. vibrant participating  
COMMUNITIES

Charles  
Taylor

2. getting communities  
together

Lisa  
Herzog

3. Overcoming impotence  
caused by polarisation  
& fragmentation of the  
current system

becoming  
a political  
force

Matthias  
Greffrath

ALGORITHM  
is a concentrated  
experience of  
geopolitics

How can we turn  
our discussion into  
**POLITICS**

Translation needed:  
Dream ↔ Practical  
politics

US move to "ABOLITION"  
of the work of labour  
Strategies on consumption  
of goods

The most educated ever  
**WORKERS**

+ Expectation of equality  
+ Experience of submission

HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT & PROGRESS

Reduction  
of forces for  
corporation

Private  
Sphere

Economy  
work  
force

Public  
Sphere

SERVICE  
BASED  
ECONOMY

EMANCIPATION  
of work from priv. to pub.

DEMOCRACY & CAPITALISM  
are in front of an inevitable clash

Karolina Jwa  
Collective Flow

## **The idea of transforming our society towards sustainability and deceleration by introducing an Unconditional Basic Income or Livelihood fascinates us, because it is simultaneously simple and complex**

**Patrizia Nanz** is an expert on democracy, transformative sciences and sustainable development. In her research she explores how social change can succeed and experiments with co-creative thought and design processes in which people from different sectors, organizations and living situations can contribute their knowledge

**Lukas Kübler** works on social philosophy, social theory and cooperation research. Most recently, he has been seeking to connect transformative sustainability research and knowledge management

The idea of transforming our society towards sustainability and deceleration by introducing an unconditional Basic Income | Livelihood fascinates us, because it is simultaneously simple and complex. On the one hand, the idea seems simple and, given the present political situation, seems to be an attractive recommendation for a concrete utopia. On the other hand, it is precisely this simplicity that we mistrust, because we have learned that there are no blueprints for social transformations. Things are always more complicated than they seem. So, simultaneously, two basic intuitions pull us in opposite directions: »How could our society have ever worked without a Basic Income | Livelihood?« And: »Isn't this idea just too simple?« Until now, we haven't attempted to carefully weigh the reasons for and against introducing a Basic Income | Livelihood. This simultaneity of two contradictory intuitions has got us wondering. And, as we can't resist the temptation to discuss political and social questions on a theoretical level, we'll first consider precisely why we find this idea so simple and persuasive, especially when it is linked to efforts to advance transformations to-

wards sustainability. Then our social theory Über-Ich will raise its head and call on us to question this hope for a simple solution.

There are three reasons why the idea of a Basic Income | Livelihood is simple. For the sake of argument, let us start with the established idea of an Unconditional Basic Income and subsequently we will enrich it with the idea of a Livelihood.

➤ First, the idea is easily grasped: everyone receives an income that secures their existence – there are no further conditions, no strings attached. More precisely: to introduce a Basic Income would mean granting all adult citizens of a polity the individual right to receive an income sufficient to meet their basic needs and participate in society – without requiring citizens to meet any conditions or requirements such as proving their need or providing services in return.<sup>97</sup>

Of course, the level of income provided must be negotiated in the political sphere, as must the notoriously controversial question of how a Basic Income can be financed over the long term. However, one thing is clear: it is unambiguous what a Basic Income is and what screw we would have to turn in our society if we wanted to introduce it. In this sense, its introduction is a quite realistic step that becomes all the more attractive because it promises to replace a whole bundle of complicated, ineffective and imperfect mechanisms; a Basic Income could at least partially replace the bureaucratic/authoritarian network of welfare state operations, the labor market policies that futilely aspire to deliver full employment and the complicated efforts to reach equality between men and women in the division of social and care work in particular.

This promise at least partially explains why the idea of a Basic Income is finding advocates across the political spectrum, even if they often have very different ideas of its concrete shape. This ability to mobilize broadly increases the realistic potential of a Basic Income as a political project.

➤ ➤ Second: the idea of a Basic Income isn't just simple because it is easy to understand. It is also intuitive because it builds on many of our moral and political ideals that are often trampled upon in the real world. In fact, an entire series of utopian ideas of modernity and its energies crystallize in the idea of a Basic Income : it promises to connect the universal satisfaction of basic needs with John Locke's idea that each person has a right to the same portion of the earth's resources, with the appreciation of individual autonomy as a protection against foreign dominance, as defended by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft, and the need for social recognition emphasized by G. W. F. Hegel. Quite possibly, a Basic Income might pave the way for the realization of Karl Marx's claim that »the realm of freedom actually begins only where labor which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases«. Already in the 19th century, progressives like Thomas Paine or Paul Lafargue based their demands for

97 See Philip Kovec and Birger Priddat, *Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen. Grundlagentexte*, Berlin 2019



a Basic Income on these political ideals, which can still be found today in political philosophy and in the public debate.

Together with the first characteristic, a Basic Income promises to be both utopian and realistic at the same time; it is thus a concrete or real utopia that currently has few competitors.

↘ ↘ ↘ Third, a Basic Income promises to deliver an easy paradigm shift through a simple measure that would replace an endless muddling through. To put it pointedly, a Basic Income could cut the Gordian knot of problems that confronts a society which puts paid employment on center stage and, at the same time, »has run out of work« as Hannah Arendt noted, because the market-driven technical development of workplaces has »rationalized them away«. Because the vast majority's access to an income that ensures their existence and future as well as social recognition is still mediated by gainful employment, jobs are becoming more and more of the privilege they have always been, above all for many women. Given the threat of a growing post-industrial reserve army and the associated shift of power in the relationship between work and capital, even those people who still have a job are more and more willing to acquiesce; thus heteronomy and exploitation are massively increasing in service jobs.<sup>98</sup> This is particularly exacerbated by the scarcity and increasingly difficult access to unemployment benefits in the age of job centers and state policies of austerity. Given these ominous dynamics, a Basic Income promises to be a comprehensive, egalitarian recipe against poverty, oppression and the exclusion from societal participation and recognition – »real freedom for all«, as Philippe van Parijs, one of the most important philosophical defenders of a Basic Income, so aptly put it.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, the range of problems that a Basic Income promises to solve expands remarkably when, abandoning a close reading of the concept, we take the comprehensive social and cultural meaning of a Basic Income seriously as recommended throughout this book – in other words, if we understand and think of a Basic Income as a Livelihood. Doing so enables us to recognize the systemic implications of this rerouting of society: the formula »Basic Income | Livelihood enables deceleration enables sustainability« makes such a systemic context plausible. At the same time, it reminds us that in a society in which real freedom does not exist for all, deeply ingrained barriers for a transformation towards sustainability exist. On the one hand, these barriers exist very practically on an individual level: if you have to constantly concern yourself with your own existence and your future ability to work, and simultaneously cannot defend yourself against the »closer filling up of the pores of the working-day« identified by Marx, then care, political participation or volunteer activities can hardly take on the role they are meant to. This often also implies that these alternative activities are seen as being at best optional and half as important. On the

98 See Friederike Bahl, *Lebensmodelle in der Dienstleistungsgesellschaft | Life models in the service-based society*, Hamburg 2014

99 See Philippe Van Parijs, *Real freedom for all*, Oxford 1995

other hand, if we follow the idea of a Basic Income | Livelihood, then we see that the flipside of a work-oriented society is a consumption-oriented society – either because consumption promises to be an escape from meaningless and heteronomous work, or because consumption allows one to flaunt a meritocratic status achieved by work. Because the further development of consumer society fans the fires of a futile pursuit of full employment, the interrelationship between a work and consumer society essentially and simultaneously contributes to the acceleration of social inequality.

So work, consumption, and acceleration displace, undermine, and destroy other forms of social practice. The obligation to work, existential fear, and acceleration structure a society that follows the work society paradigm. As a result, the Basic Income | Livelihood paradigm shift could leverage a comprehensive transformation of our society towards deceleration and sustainability:

From the obligation to work to freedom

From acceleration to self-determined leisure and freely chosen social engagement

From existential fear to sustainability.

Lukas Kübler

The combination of these three ›simple‹ characteristics – realistic simplicity, utopian appeal, and the promise of a paradigm shift – make this connection between a Basic Income | Livelihood and deceleration and sustainability so fascinating. The concept of a Basic Livelihood promises to position the transformation towards sustainability socially and historically within the tradition of social emancipation movements and their utopian ideals and energies. Their ideas will be needed more and more if we want to liberate this transformation from technological and technocratic prejudices and turn it into a comprehensive societal project.

However, precisely because of its simplicity, a contrasting and skeptical intuition is awakened. Polemically, one could sum up this suspicion in the often-used quote by H. L. Mencken: »for every complex human problem, there is a solution that is neat, simple and wrong«. Given our own contrasting intuitions, we have not chosen this polemic exaggeration with defamatory intent, but rather to focus our own intuitions.

The triadic simplicity of the Basic Income | Livelihood idea is thus reflected in a triadic complexity.

➤ What would a Basic Income | Livelihood exactly mean, and how could it truly replace the diverse, complex, and imperfect steering mechanisms of the welfare state, labor market policies and politics of equality? It is clear that numerous characteristics of western welfare systems must also be integrated into the system of a Livelihood: banalities such as the difference in pension levels already mean that the same Basic Income | Livelihood has a completely different value in urban centers than in rural areas. The differences become more pronounced in the various special needs that emanate from handicaps or grave illnesses.

Proponents of a Universal Basic Income with an emancipatory agenda acknowledge these complications, which give rise to two problems: first, any reform aimed at introducing a Basic Income | Livelihood will have to consider the context of historically developed social and economic social security systems and interlock with existing labor market regulations and measures for equality. This rules out a 'tabula rasa' approach; instead, different regulations will continue to be necessary, even if they – in a best case – require far less bureaucracy.

This problem is aggravated by a second issue: As long as a Basic Income | Livelihood remains a political utopia that brings together supporters from a broad political spectrum, this common political project will conceal the differences of opinion existing among them. But this will work only up to the point where, perhaps after its introduction, every detail – from the actual payment rate to its relationship to other social/welfare services – must be negotiated within the framework of existing political and power structures.

↘ ↘ The utopian potential held up by proponents of a Livelihood also presents a number of difficulties because it will affect values and norms of Western societies which also have emancipatory meaning: the idea of a guaranteed Livelihood dismisses the social structure of recognition that is connected to paid labor and gainful employment. At the fundamental level, whenever paid labor is performed, it is part of a comprehensive societal exchange of services, an overarching cooperative context, which is advantageous to all members of society – and this is why the burden and the benefits of this exchange of services need to be shared fairly.<sup>100</sup> Let's call this the justice perspective.

The suggestion of a Basic Income | Livelihood may be motivated by the correct observation that many people are excluded from this recognition and the resources linked to it. But, viewed from the justice perspective, one could also react to this problem by making the existing structure of recognition more inclusive and developing it further, e.g. with a right to work, a general reduction in working hours and the inclusion of performed but not recognized work, for example in the home: unpaid care that is primarily done by women. Of course, none of these three options is the focus of a political project likely to garner success at present.

A Basic Income | Livelihood consciously chooses a different approach: in the end, its objective is to weaken the existing structure of recognition and create a space within which individuals can experiment with new ways of living that will lead to a revaluation of the relationships between gainful employment, care and engagement in civil society. While the justice perspective assumes that all individual work activities should be understood within an ideal and comprehensive cooperative context, the Basic Income | Livelihood perspective is far more individualistic: its guiding ideal is in-

<sup>100</sup> This idea was developed by Friedrich Kambartel, *Arbeit und Praxis*. DZ Phil 43/2, 1993; Angelika Krebs, *Arbeit und Liebe*, Frankfurt 2002



dividual autonomy and initiative, not mutual acceptance of responsibility and solidarity.

The difference between a collectivist justice perspective and the individualistic Basic Income | Livelihood does not only concern central ideals, but also has implications for models of social solidarity. The ideal society envisioned by proponents of a Basic Income | Livelihood is based on contexts that result from individual initiatives. In contrast, the insurance model of the modern welfare state is based on a notion of collective liability within a cooperative context.<sup>101</sup> Even though this insurance model was never perfect and has eroded considerably over the last decade, it has its own utopian energies and potentials – and we are unsure if it should be abandoned (and what that would even mean).

↘ ↘ ↘ The thing about paradigm shifts is that their effects are not foreseeable, whether in science as Thomas S. Kuhn demonstrated, nor in politics and society. In the latter case, one has to add that the results are already difficult to foresee because it is completely open how different protagonists, with their different interests, perceptions and power resources, will react to a change in the rules of the game. This is demonstrated, for example, in the very different pathways that European countries followed in response to the downfall of socialism in Eastern Europe or to structural change in Western Europe since the 1970s.<sup>102</sup> We simply cannot know what effect the paradigm shift of a Basic Income | Livelihood will actually have and how social protagonists will exploit, negotiate or fight over tensions, uncertainties and ambivalences.

The issues outlined here are perhaps the cause of our contradictory intuitions. It is possible that these tensions and contradictions are not of the type that can be solved through theorizing, no matter how long we debate them. The oft-debated question of financing is ultimately a practical one; the question of how a Basic Income | Livelihood might be tailored to specific contexts or what utopian energies it might unleash, can only be answered in practice. As long as we don't know more about what we are getting into, experiments are needed to explore these issues further. And as long as an actionable political majority cannot be found, there is no alternative to this course anyway. What form these experiments take must be carefully considered.

It will not suffice to just continue with locally limited experiments of the kind initiated by here and there by governments – most recently in Finland. Initiatives from the sphere of civil society that award Basic Income grants are also unlikely to help us further. Such experiments are like isolated islands that lack the relevant and complex interactions with other social spheres and dynamics. Instead, we need to find concrete places for a Basic Income | Livelihood in existing society. We believe that regional and

101 On the social paradigm shift of social insurance see Robert Castel, *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale*, Paris 1996

102 See e. g. Philip Ther, *Das andere Ende der Geschichte. Über die Große Transformation*, Berlin 2018 and Lutz Raphael, *Jenseits von Kohle und Stahl*, Berlin 2019

local transformation processes precipitated in Germany's Lusatian mining district by the decision to abandon coal as an energy source could be harnessed to this end. In Lusatia, coal is more than just an industry; it is also a central »knot of economic, social and political togetherness«, as Johannes Staemmler has noted so aptly,<sup>103</sup> because coal has shaped the economic, cultural and political history of the region over the course of two centuries. This transformation process is an opportunity to explore – in actual practice – whether and to what extent a Basic Income I Livelihood could help to address the challenges of regional structural change by connecting this transformation to a comprehensive program of participation in civil society and structural support that is sensitive to local contexts and needs.

103 [www.iass-potsdam.de/de/blog/2019/12/strukturwandel-der-lausitz-bluehende-landschaften-reloaded](http://www.iass-potsdam.de/de/blog/2019/12/strukturwandel-der-lausitz-bluehende-landschaften-reloaded)

wünsche sich jedoch für die Zukunft ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, denn ... **02.01.19 Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen: Nicht sozial** [RP ONLINE Berlin](#) Die Grünen propagieren es. In den anderen Parteien findet sich für das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen keine Mehrheit. Es würde den ... **Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen: Habeck widerspricht Nahles** [Hannoversche Allgemeine](#) Der Grünen-Chef weist das kategorische Nein von SPD-Chefin Andrea Nahles zu einem staatlichen Garantiebeitrag zurück: Erst einmal müsse Arbeit ... **Geld für alle** [Süddeutsche.de](#) Noch vor Kurzem galt die Idee eines bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens als Hirngespinnst von Idealisten. Doch der Widerstand bröckelt - in vielen ... **Der Chaos Communication Congress, das digitale Prekariat und das bedingungslose...** [heise online](#) Der britische Ökonom Guy Standing hielt ein wuchtiges Plädoyer für das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen. 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INCOME**

As a right  
Is equalising  
Can be relied on  
Is non-judgemental  
Predictable and stable  
Enables anticipatory plans  
Forward-looking trust possible  
Precariousness a distant memory  
Deceleration of life has calming effect  
Frees up recipient to explore true vocation  
Provides solid foundations to secure Livelihood  
Opens up the future for compassion and concern  
Encompasses others – known and unknown – in care  
The gift of the future no longer the prerogative of elites  
Sustainability becomes possible as ideal, goal and practice  
Facilitates the flourishing of empathy, compassion and hope



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Andreas Rost. Haus der Statistik, Berlin 2019

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**Basic Income | Livelihood**  
enables Deceleration enables Sustainability

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**Grund<sup>ein</sup>auskommen**  
ermöglicht Entschleunigung ermöglicht Nachhaltigkeit

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Sustainability needs  
Deceleration needs  
Basic Income | Livelihood

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enables Deceleration  
enables Sustainability

Nachhaltigkeit braucht  
Entschleunigung braucht  
Grund<sup>ein</sup><sub>aus</sub>kommen

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ermöglicht Entschleunigung  
ermöglicht Nachhaltigkeit