

Tekst 6

Basic income: a good idea?

adapted from an article by Laurie Penny



- 1 What would you do if somebody gave you a few hundred pounds each month to spend on whatever you wanted? Basic income – the proposal to give a flat, unconditional payment to every citizen – is an old idea. It has been around for centuries, and for centuries its proponents have largely been dismissed as utopian, or insane, or both. This year, however, that insanity is gradually becoming a political reality. Finland is considering giving its citizens an unconditional stipend of €800 a month. In the US, the tech start-up funder *Y Combinator* is earmarking money to test the theory. In Germany, *Mein Grundeinkommen* ('my basic income'), a crowdfunding initiative to give a basic wage to as many people as possible, has attracted over a quarter of a million contributors.
- 2 Michael Bohmeyer, a former entrepreneur who runs *Mein Grundeinkommen*, says: "If we don't 11 work and income, humans will have to compete more and more with computers. This is a competition they will lose sooner than we think. The result will be mass unemployment and no money left for consumption." With that in mind, Bohmeyer began an experiment in anti-capitalism that has been more successful than he could have imagined. So far, 39 people, chosen at random from a pool of applicants, have received €1,000 a month through the scheme – and almost none has spent the year twiddling their thumbs. One quit his job at a call centre to retrain as a pre-school teacher, while others found fulfilling jobs, having given up on the prospect years earlier; almost all have been sleeping better, worrying less and focusing more on family life.
- 3 Basic income is an idea that is both simple and practical: it has received positive coverage from almost everyone, from *Financial Times* columnists to feminist campaigners, from libertarian techno-millionaires to young, left-wing organisers. It is also radical. 12-1
- 4 The present organising principle of economics is that without the threat of starvation, homelessness and poverty, people will not be motivated to work. Human beings, left to their own devices, will inevitably sit on the sofa and eat crisps until the species collapses into a state of degeneration and episodic television. 12-2

- 5 The notion of an economic system based on trust and mutual aid rather than anxiety, shame and suffering still sounds like a fairy tale. But as more and more jobs are automated away, as mandatory wage labour collapses as a method of organising society, even the most conservative governments may find themselves with no other option. We can choose to let fear and suspicion run our lives as we all struggle harder each year to survive in a collapsing economic system on a smoking planet. Or we can choose to trust each other enough that everyone can share in the rewards of technology. It is blasphemous and unthinkable. However, it may also be the only practical choice we have.

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“What would you do if somebody gave you a few hundred pounds each month to spend on whatever you wanted?” (aline 1)

- 1p 10 Worden er in de tekst concrete voorbeelden genoemd van wat mensen in zo'n geval hebben gedaan?

Zo nee, antwoord “Nee”. Zo ja, citeer de eerste twee woorden van de zin waarin deze voorbeelden genoemd worden.

- 1p 11 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 2?

- A analyse
- B appreciate
- C disconnect
- D exploit

Twee van de onderstaande zinnen (a, b, c, of d) zijn uit de tekst weggelaten (zie 12-1 en 12-2 in de tekst).

- 1p 12 Geef bij elke plaats aan welke zin daar hoort.

Noteer de letter van de zin achter het nummer op het antwoordblad.

Let op: er blijven twee zinnen over.

- a Fear, therefore, is necessary.
- b However, social stability is irrelevant as long as the economy thrives.
- c Implementing it will hardly affect people's daily lives.
- d It forces us to rethink an economic framework that has governed our lives for generations.

- 1p 13 What is the main function of paragraph 4?

- A to discuss the concept of a basic income from a historical perspective
- B to outline the argument that runs counter to the idea of a basic income
- C to report on earlier experiments with introducing a basic income
- D to support the writer's opinion on providing a basic income

“It is blasphemous and unthinkable.” (paragraph 5)

- 1p 14 Which of the following does ‘It’ in this quotation refer to?

- A “the threat of starvation, homelessness and poverty” (paragraph 4)
- B “an economic system based on trust and mutual aid” (paragraph 5)
- C “mandatory wage labour” (paragraph 5)
- D “a collapsing economic system on a smoking planet” (paragraph 5)