

Event – Universal basic income and universal basic services: What have we learned and what’s next?

Thursday 13 February 2019, 12:00 – 13:30 GMT/London, ODI

Over the past years, Universal Basic Income (UBI) has increasingly been discussed in countries across the world. For instance, India’s 2019 elections featured UBI in a prominent way; a presidential candidate in the United States 2020 elections has made UBI a core platform of his campaign; a decade-long trial is underway in rural Kenya; and since 2010, an average of a book per month is published on the topic. While such policy research and practice are yielding important lessons and learning, UBI is also subject to a growing volume of critical challenge, notably from advocates of expanding collective services (Universal Basic Services, UBS).

This event will bring together researchers and practitioners to discuss how UBI and UBS fit within the broader social protection agenda – and growing demands for building more inclusive social contracts that include universal social protection at their center - in different country settings (e.g. India and UK); address select policy trade-offs (e.g. transfers and services; guaranteed income and guaranteed jobs); and lay out practical implications for implementation, including financial and delivery considerations. Based on recent publications and operational experience, participants will discuss these issues engaging in a lively online conversation.

Universal basic income and universal basic services: What have we learned and what’s next?

Thursday 13 February 2019, 12:00 – 13:30 GMT/London, ODI

<p>12:00 – 12:05 (5 minutes)</p>	<p><u>Welcome [Francesca Bastagli]</u></p> <p>Good morning /afternoon and welcome to ODI. I’m Francesca Bastagli, Head of the Equity and Social Policy programme here at ODI, and will be chairing the discussion.</p> <p>Today, we’re considering one of the liveliest ongoing debates in the field of social policy. Basic income is being increasingly discussed as a policy instrument for tackling a range of challenges incl poverty, inequality, lab mkt change-related, and shortcomings in existing social protection programmes/systems. At the same time, there is a concern that UBI campaigns threaten to divert resources and attention away from equally or more important policy priorities (e.g. basic services) and are part of wider efforts to individualise life cycle risk and responsibilities. The rise in calls for UBS are in part a response to this concern and emphasise policy solutions aimed at pooling resources and sharing risks through collectively provided services. In this debate, UBI and UBS are commonly debated in terms of either-or. Does it need to be that way? Many UBI proponents are in fact calling for a fundamental shift in social protection along the lines touted by UBS advocates (incl move away from narrow means testing, conditionality and towards more generous, less stigmatising basic income support). What does convergence between UBI-UBS look like? How does it happen?</p> <p>In today’s discussion, we draw on recent publications and practical and operational experience from countries world-wide (Kenya, India, South Africa, UK). Two recent</p>
--------------------------------------	--

	<p>publications we draw on: Anna Coote and Andrew Percy's <i>The case for universal basic services</i> (https://politybooks.com/bookdetail/?isbn=9781509539826) and Gentilini and colleagues' publication on UBI (https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotection/publication/exploring-universal-basic-income-a-guide-to-navigating-concepts-evidence-and-practices).</p> <p>Delighted to be joined by esteemed speakers:</p> <p>Anna Coote Principal Fellow, New Economics Foundation Jean Drèze Honorary Professor at the Delhi School of Economics and Visiting Professor at the Department of Economics, Ranchi University Isobel Frye Director, Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute Ugo Gentilini Global Lead for Social Assistance, World Bank Caroline Teti Director, Recipients Advocacy, GiveDirectly</p> <p>We will first hear from the two authors of the recent books, then move on to country debates and experience, followed by a moderated discussion. We'll also be taking questions from the online audience.</p>
12:05 – 12:12 (7 minutes)	<p>Ugo Gentilini, World Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UBI: In a recent book, you explore UBI, what it is, what we know about what works/what doesn't, how design details (e.g. transfer value) matter and how financing and the wider social policy system are critical to how UBI works and its potential to tackle poverty, inequality – what have you found?
12:12 – 12:19 (7 minutes)	<p>Anna Coote, New Economics Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UBS: in a recent book, you make the case for UBS: explain what they are and how universal basic services would tackle some of the problems facing the contemporary world?
12:19 – 12:26 (7 mins)	<p>Caroline Teti, GiveDirectly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic income experiment in rural Kenya: could you please tell us about how a universal basic income (project/experiment) is changing people's lives? How does the universal and unconditional nature of this income support matter (e.g. compared with means tested and/or conditional cash transfers)? Any evidence of links with basic services/service provision and/or utilization?
12:26 – 12:33 (7 mins)	<p>Isobel Frye, Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic income debate and experience in South Africa: an overview of the arguments and experience in the country; social grants – e.g. the Child Support Grant – and UBI; what role of the Basic Income Grant Coalition and links between the BIG proposal and basic services?

<p>12.33 – 12.40 (7 mins)</p>	<p>Jean Drèze, Delhi School of Economics and Ranchi University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The basic income, cash transfers and PDS debate in India: a review of the arguments and experience in the country – potential and pitfalls of cash transfers, and UBI specifically, in India at this time.
<p>12:40 – 13:10 (30 mins)</p>	<p>Question prompts and facilitated debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ugo: concern that a near-exclusive focus on cash transfers and UBI may detract attention and resources from equally or more important sectors/policy e.g. services – what UBI design features would avoid this/work in the opposite direction? ● Anna: progressive champions of UBI share many goals with its critics. Both sides want more and better-quality public services, more generous non-stigmatising income support, and stronger collective power for workers – how do we ensure efforts on both sides reinforce each other and are not viewed/proposed in terms of either-or? ● Caroline: concern about the feasibility and sustainability of basic income ‘experiments’, and about the by-passing of national institutions and divergence of funds away from building social services, towards income transfers – what do you think? ● Isobel: In SA, is the time right for a UBI? Why now? ● Jean: In your book “Sense and solidarity” you discuss UBI, public social services, fiscal space and ‘social development’ - in India, what role for UBS?
<p>13:10 – 13:20 (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Facilitated debate using questions from online audience – may extend or shorten depending on questions submitted.</p>
<p>13:20 – 13:30 (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Reflections and close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each speaker to deliver 1-minute final pitch on what needs to be the policy priority - UBI or UBS - and / or how to ensure the two are taken forward together to combat poverty and inequality effectively and sustainably.