



## Group Assembly Process (GAP) - Stirring Paper

# **Degrowth and Unconditional Basic Income (UBI)**

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### **Economy and Growth**

The goal of Degrowth is the radical decrease in the consumption of natural resources and the end of ecological destruction by humans.

Increasing consumption of natural resources and ecological destruction are caused by a society and an economy which places profit and consumption above the production and distribution of goods necessary for a good life for everybody. We want to change to a need-orientated economy.

Furthermore, economies that value competition and individual advantage more than cooperation and common welfare are a cause of increasing consumption.

### **Democratic strengthening relevant for Degrowth and Unconditional Basic Income (UBI)**

Democratically organised societies and economies are the ones which may be able to overcome profit seeking, competition and overconsumption.

It is a requirement for democratic societies and economies that all humans have a guaranteed minimum of material security and that redistribution massively reduces social inequalities. Poverty and social inequalities endanger and prevent democracy and the political participation of all in the process of forming societies and economies.

## **Material Security and Participation in Community – The basic idea of UBI**

Having a guaranteed minimum of material security and the reduction of social inequalities additionally minimizes fears with regard to consequences of reducing the consumption of natural resources in production and consumption.

Having a guaranteed minimum of material protection for all and the reduction of social inequalities minimizes individual consumption of positional and relational goods. In fact, democratization and political participation promote the status of cultural and ideal goods.

One way to advance the democratization, radical minimization of social inequalities and distribution is the Unconditional Basic Income as a non-stigmatising and non-discriminating guaranteed minimum income. This is an individually guaranteed payment to every human, without compulsion to work or do other service in return, without social administrative means test (test of income and property) of an amount that secures everyone's material existence and participation in the community.

This payment will be supplemented by other means, through unconditional access to public services (education, health etc.) and secure, equitable access to common goods (knowledge, culture, nature, water, land etc.).

Democratization, radical minimization of social inequalities and the distribution of our common wealth are global, national and local tasks.

In contrast to the social transfers based on means tests and forced labour, a radical redistribution by unconditional basic income abolishes the discrimination and stigmatisation felt by transfer recipients as well as hidden poverty and divisions in society.

Unconditional Basic Income opens up further freedom of choice concerning where people live. Unconditional basic income support the Global Social Right of Permissiveness -

without dependence on employment.

## **The core interfaces of the ideas of Degrowth and Unconditional Basic Income**

It is imperative that if our ecological belt has to be tightened, it has to be secured with sufficiently equal girth (minimization of social inequalities).

Inversely, it is imperative, that the minimization of the consumption of natural resources and the ending of ecological destruction itself minimizes social inequalities and the increasing social division within societies. Those affected most by the destruction of nature and environment are the poorest people and the most disadvantaged in terms of other forms of privilege and disprivilege such as race, gender, sexuality etc. This is as valid for the poorest in rich countries as it is for the poorest in poor countries.

## **Unconditional Basic Income and another Economy**

Unconditional Basic Income minimizes unequal valorisation of socially necessary tasks (paid work in the market, unpaid reproductive and other work) regarding individual security of existence and social participation (decommodification).

Democratisation of the economy and Unconditional Basic Income support the abolishment of alienated work, allow the refusal of undesired work and allow the opportunity of free desired work – thereby minimizing the consequences of alienated and undesired work: the escape into individual consumption during leisure time.

An Unconditional Basic Income supports reproductive work, which is in favour of human beings and is sparing in the use of resources therefore supporting degrowth. On the one hand, reproductive work can be offered without payment (e.g. in care communities or neighbourhoods etc.), because everybody is secured by the Unconditional Basic Income. On the other hand, the demand of for reproductive work could increase. Especially, if families and people on low incomes currently suffering a shortage of reproductive work, could afford such services because of their financial

improvements.

A radical redistribution through Unconditional Basic Income promotes a reduction of labour-time and allows time resources for extortion-free political participation and the configuration (forming) of society and the organisation of ecologically, solidarity-based and need-oriented economies, which serve to make a good life for everybody.

Unconditional Basic Income allows time resource for leisure and self-reflection. Next to the deceleration effects of democracy, it supports the deceleration of life of humans and decelerated societies. Unconscious human beings and an unconscious society cannot take the responsibility for themselves or their relationships to nature.

### **Unconditional Basic Income opening financial options to guide towards a degrowth society**

An Unconditional Basic Income means radical redistribution from rich to poor – nationally, globally. This supports the option for more ecological (more expensive) consumption for lower income classes and at the same time minimizes the power of ecologically destructive investments of higher income classes. Investments in the expectation of high profits are the greatest accelerators of growth.

Unconditional basic income could be (partly) financed by taxes on natural resources or unecological goods, so it would directly support the minimization of consumption of natural resources and unecological consumption.

Further global tax options for financing the unconditional basic income, e.g. at the financial markets, could reduce global streams of goods and support local production. Additionally global taxes could reduce security gaps of international taxing systems and enable global, social justice.

Unconditional Basic Income is fundable, also with a shrunk state budget - because a lot of follow-up costs caused by unecological production and consumption and by social inequality will shrink (pollution, health costs, social problems ....). Last but not least,

in future we need another system of distribution what more and more distributed the social wealth independently of the taxation of commodity production (see André Gorz).

### **The personal economical and psychological stimulation to change to a degrowth lifestyle**

Freedom of choice over where to live and Unconditional Basic Income make people independent from cities or special regions where currently many people have the only option to work and to exist.

The option of shrinking cities enables people to use more natural places to live. Especially the land, on which they live, could be used more reasonably and efficiently. Air quality, where humans live, could get better as well as the problem of waste could be minimised by direct and natural recycling options.

Ecological use of natural resources and regionalisation of production chains will encourage a more direct relation to the products, which were made by people themselves, and improve their ability to learn about healthy and sustainable production. Ecological, need orientated, regional and democratically organised production eliminates some industrial and transport-intensive production.