

# How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected policy-making and policy-discourse around UBI? Findings of a global survey

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## Introduction

We report about a global survey which was conducted in 2020 in order to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on discourse and policy related to basic income.

In December 2019, several cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) of unknown cause were reported in Wuhan, Hubei province, China (1). Later SARS-CoV-2 was described as the virus causing the severe Pneumonia and on March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the new coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to be a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic and its national control measures have highlighted the weaknesses of social protection programmes globally. As a consequence, many people, especially vulnerable and deprived groups, have ended up in or on the brink of poverty. At the same time, some governments have scaled up, modified and added to their social protection programmes to offer additional support to their populations.

However, the gaps and inconsistencies of these programmes have led to an increased global interest in Universal Basic Income (UBI) in 2020. Many governments and advocates have proposed instituting an emergency, temporary or partial basic income to support people financially during the pandemic and related lockdown measures. A team of mainly World Bank (WB) colleagues with support from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) started a 'living' paper in March 2020 (version 1) to collect global information on 'Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19' in different countries (2). We provide a brief summary of the findings related to BI-related measures which was the main objective of our global survey.

The first version covered 45 countries from all regions except Africa and included 30 cash transfer programmes. The term 'one-off universal basic income' or 'helicopter money' was used in version 3 and described 3 out of 149 cash transfer programmes (3). Version 6 described correctly the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income in Spain for low-income people (4), while the reference was an online media article which stated that it was the introduction of a basic income in Spain (5). A cash transfer programme of the Pacific Island state Tuvalu was mentioned in version 7 (6). The next version specified that all of its citizens would receive a temporary monthly cash payment of US\$ 40 during the crisis which was financed by donors and government (7) with 100% coverage (8). No specific source was given. The general review section stated that their data sources were official government websites, global and national news outlets and country-based experts with validation by regional and country social protection teams of WB and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The latest social protection report from May 2021 covers 222 countries or territories of which 186 had planned or implemented 734 conditional and unconditional cash transfer payments as social assistance measures (9). This version uses the term Basic Income for cash transfers in Lebanon and Germany. However, neither country has implemented it according to the criteria of the Basic Income

Earth Network (BIEN) (10). The Republic of Korea (South) implemented a one-off universal cash transfer, while Israel, Timor Leste and Japan covered over 90% of the population with a single cash transfer (9). The term UBI is used in the context of social protection measures in Iran and Tuvalu. In Iran, the report uses the term for a pre-COVID programme without further specifications.

Only the main body of the report uses the term UBI with respect to Tuvalu, while the specific country section describes the unconditional cash transfer in more detail (9). The monthly amount of \$40 is defined by the national poverty line of \$1.47 per day and per adult. Every citizen defined by a Mini-Census in 2017 received a universal payment for 2 or 3 months after the declaration of the State of Public Health Emergency (SOE) on 20 March, 2020. Subsequently the cash transfer was limited to people impacted by COVID and in October 2020 it was noted that it was unclear how many citizens received the cash and how the authorities selected the recipients.

The COVID pandemic has led to an increased interest in Basic Income (BI). Yet there has been concern among BIEN members that its clearly defined terms of BI may have been used to describe a variety of policies, programmes and interventions which bear only some minor semblance of the original concept (10). This may be due to misrepresentation of a government programme, misunderstanding in the media or the public. Therefore, the authors of this paper decided to develop a global survey for BIEN members and other activists and researchers interested in UBI.

We decided that the social protection which a new emergency UBI may afford to its population has to be examined in the context of available, accessible and adequate Universal Basic Services (UBS). These have been defined as “free public services that enable every citizen to live a larger life by ensuring access to safety, opportunity, and participation” (p. 11) in the report *‘Social prosperity for the future: A proposal for Universal Basic Services’* (11). The authors assumed that Health Care, Education, Legal Services and Democracy were free and accessible at the point of need in the United Kingdom (UK). Shelter, Food, Transport and Information should be added to complete UBS according to the report. Particularly the availability of free Health Care, but also the other services, may play an important role in the social protection of citizens in a country. The presence or absence of these services may determine whether a certain BI level may be sufficient or inadequate in a country affected by COVID-19 and its control measures.

Finally, the survey includes a section about organisations which can report and promote UBI in each country. We added this in order to collect information about UBI developments in each country from different sources and to explore the cooperation between these organisations.

In summary, a group of citizen-researchers with links to BIEN conducted a global survey in the second half of 2020 in order to ask:

- 1) What emergency social protection policies have been introduced in countries around the world and how have they been framed in relation to UBI?
- 2) What types of Universal Basic Services (UBS) are in place in these countries?
- 3) What organisations exist in these countries to promote UBI?

We received 24 responses from 16 countries. Our main findings: All social protection measures used cash but none fulfilled all five BI criteria. The amounts of cash varied widely within and between countries and the eligibility criteria were often not clear. There was much uncertainty about funding

sources. However, the rapid response of governments to the emergency demonstrates that they can mobilise financial means quickly, if there is a political will. Spain used the pandemic to introduce a guaranteed minimum income as a new permanent social protection measure. In South Korea one region responded to the pandemic with the payment of a form of basic income. Our responses reveal that the 'State' is back and we observe the end of neoliberal ideology where the 'Market' is supposed to be able to address most or all challenges to human existence. State responses to the pandemic have revealed that governments can act fast, have no cash limitations and can use their tax system for the benefit of all the people. The driving force for a BI appears to be civil society, sub-national governments and political challengers. The concept of Universal Basic Services (UBS) is not clear among our respondents. Most countries in our survey have single issue and many multiple-issue BI organisations and most of them collaborate well.

## Methods

Our approach to this survey included the following steps:

- Identification of jurisdictions with the decision-making authority to introduce a BI
- Development of a questionnaire tool
- Establishment of a contact list of organisations and individuals with information about BI
- Dissemination of questionnaire through website and email attachment
- Activation of email enquiry and helpline

We decided to use established lists of countries and territories based on membership with United Nations (UN) organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and WB and their country reporting. We arrived at a list of 217 countries and territories as our global target of jurisdictions. We did not try to verify whether all of these countries and territories had the authority to establish a BI.

The questionnaire was developed during several collaborative online sessions during the first half of 2020 after the onset of the pandemic. All the authors participated and contributed their knowledge and experience. Another BIEN member, Malcolm Torry, contributed the section about BI organisations. The final questionnaire has 4 sections with a total of 60 options to respond (Annex 1):

- Respondent details: 12 options
- Basic income measure: 35 options
- Basic services available: 2 options
- Basic income organisations: 11 options

Some responses were tick-box options, while others involved short answers. Most questions were easy to answer, while others required detailed knowledge about the social security and services system in a country. The authors asked some informed volunteers to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback in order to establish the final version. The questionnaire was then converted into a Google online survey tool.

The primary target audience for our survey comprised the individual members and organisations of BIEN. Additionally, we contacted WHO and UNDP country offices to forward the survey request to people and organisations interested in BI in the respective country. We also asked personal BI contacts to complete the questionnaire. Our email request included the website address to answer the questionnaire and an attachment with all survey questions for information. Respondents were asked to complete the survey during the second half of 2020. We offered an email helpline which was checked and answered on a weekly basis. A few respondents had difficulties in completing the questionnaire online, asked for and received a Word version.

## **Findings and Discussion**

We present and discuss the findings of our global survey in nine parts:

- 1) Characteristics of respondents,
- 2) Financial social protection measures as pandemic response,
- 3) Characteristics of the social protection measures,
- 4) Funding sources,
- 5) Integration of social protection measures with other cash transfers,
- 6) Other Benefit withdrawal and introduction,
- 7) Media interest and public debate,
- 8) Universal Basic Services,
- 9) BI organisations and debate.

### **Characteristics of respondents**

We received 24 responses. This is lower than expected, because we made considerable efforts to contact people interested in the survey topic through BI organisations, United Nations organisations and personal contacts. Figures 1 and 2 describe the association of the respondents with BI organisations and their BI-related activities. Both indicate interest and probably good knowledge about the topic. For example, one respondent who is not a member of a BI organisation is a senior member in a Ministry with an interest in the implementation of BI in her country. The other BI organisations included the Japan Association of Basic Income (JABI), Left Alliance Finland, Red Chilena de Ingreso Básico, The Gerald Huff Fund for Humanity, UBI Europe, UBI Lab Network and UBI Works. The role in BI organisations covered President/Coordinator (4), Vice-President/Co-chair (2) and Secretary General/Advisor/Member (6).

Figure 1: Link of Respondents to BI organisations (multiple responses)

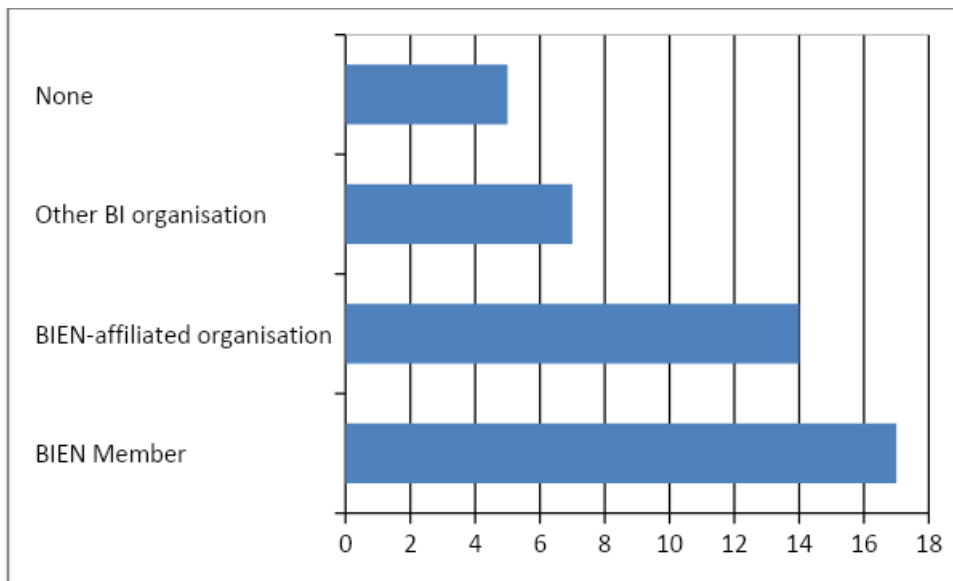
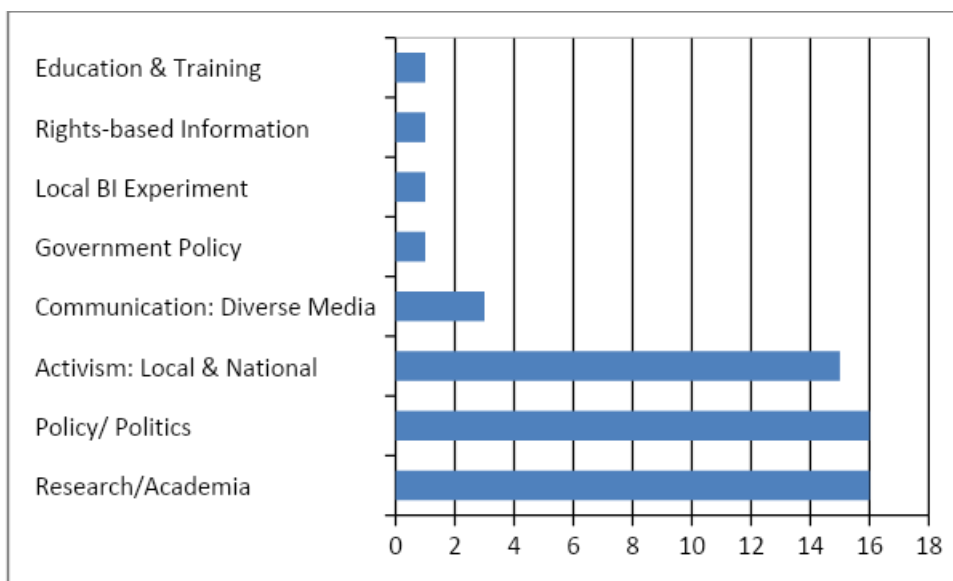
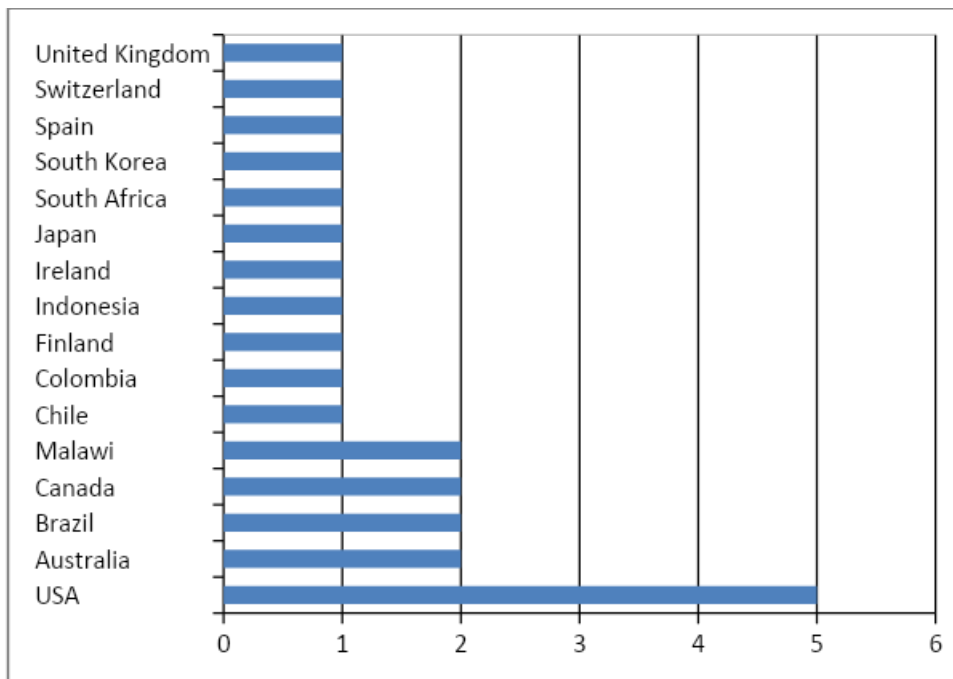


Figure 2: BI-related activities of respondents (multiple responses)



Our survey covered 16 countries and most regions of the Earth except Antarctica (Figure 3). We received multiple responses from 5 countries which enabled us to compare perceptions and viewpoints about their national situation. We have noted interesting differences in these responses.

Figure 3: Country of respondents



The low response to our survey is probably due to the length of the questionnaire and the complexity of questions related to characteristics and financing of emergency COVID-19 measures. Another reason could be that potential respondents judged there were no emergency measures in their countries or that the measures were not related to BI characteristics and therefore they did not respond. We received only one such negative response, from Switzerland.

According to the most recent edition of a World Bank survey paper on global social protection responses to Covid-19, only the small Pacific island state of Tuvalu claimed to have introduced an emergency cash transfer similar to BI (9). However, this social measure does not appear to fulfil the criterion of universal coverage. The emergency measure in Spain was reported in some media as a BI, but not by the government. Even the UK furlough measure was sometimes described as a quasi-BI. This highlights the confusion among public and media about the characteristics of BI and the need to separate other cash transfers from BI.

### Financial social protection measures as pandemic response

Table 1 describes the emergency financial protection measures which have been introduced at the national or federal level in 15 countries, omitting Switzerland. Our respondents stated that half (8) of the measures were general, while the others (7) were targeted according to the programme objectives. In most countries, the measures started a wider public debate in the media about these measures and BI. This may have been helped by specific circumstances, such as the pro-BI Green Party as part of the government together with the efforts of the civil society organisation BI Ireland. In three (Australia, Malawi, USA) out of the five countries with multiple respondents, there were divergent perceptions about the media debate. The furlough scheme in the United Kingdom started some media and public debate. Siddiqi from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) described this measure in a blog as ‘universal basic income (UBI) albeit for finite period’ (20). The furlough policy approach led to some media debate about the difference between this scheme

and a true UBI (21, 22). The Government of Colombia claimed to have introduced a Basic Income. However, the respondent did not agree, as the measure was time-limited and not universal.

Our findings in this section have three limitations. The responses regarding media debate and regarding government claims about the measure are personal perceptions at the specific date of the response. The Indonesian respondent provided a short document about the emergency response in the Indonesian language. We had no opportunity to translate the briefing. Our question “Has the new measure sparked broader media attention or other popular debates or calls for basic income?” with just one yes/no option for three different aspects is ambiguous. This may be the reason why the UK respondent wrote ‘no’ referring to the BI aspect rather than the media discussion about the furlough scheme. Therefore the responses are open to various interpretations related to BI.

The majority of respondents thought that the government measures have sparked an interest in the concept of BI. The Irish response indicates that other contextual factors may play an important role such as the participation of a pro-BI political party in government. Equally the divergent multiple responses from three countries underline the different perceptions of popular debates and media interest. The four to one responses from the USA indicate that a majority view can be established. Only in Colombia did the government seem to claim that the cash transfer resembled a Basic Income according to our respondent. This claim differs from the description in the World Bank survey document (9). It highlights the fact that the public political statements may differ from the presentation in official government documents (12). The document “A global repository of policy responses to tackle COVID-19” (23) provides a timeline, taxonomy and analysis of policy documents from 23 countries. It refers to a UBI initiative in Denmark. Unfortunately it does not provide the source of this information.

Table 1: Financial social protection measures as pandemic response

Country	Name	Jurisdiction	Objective	Media Debate	Gov. BI Claim
Australia	Jobkeeper and Jobseeker Payment/Coronavirus Supplement	Federal	Income Support/Stimulus Package/Wage Subsidies	Yes/No	No
Brazil	Auxílio Emergencial /Emergency Aid Program	Federal	Income support and mitigate unemployment and poverty	Yes	No
Canada	Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)	Federal	To provide immediate support for citizens with lost income	Yes	No
Chile	Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia	National	Supplement lost income of most vulnerable population	Yes	No
Colombia	Ingreso solidario	National	Provide poor household monetary resources	Yes	Yes (3)
Finland	Support to cultural workers and small businesses	National	Casual support for people affected	Only marginal	No
Indonesia	Program Kebijakan Yang (1)	National	Lessen the economic hardship	Yes	No
Ireland	COVID-19 Unemployment Payment	National	Maintain a steady income for those made unemployed	Other factors (2)	No
Japan	Special Cash Payment	National	Provide prompt and accurate support to households through a simple system.	No response	No
Malawi	COVID19 Urban Cash Transfer Intervention (CUCI)	National	Mitigate socio-economic impact on Informal Sector Workers in Cities Lilongwe, Zomba, Blantyre and Mzuzu	Yes/No	No
South Africa	COVID19 Social Relief Measures	National	Relieve plight of most desperately affected	Yes	No
South Korea	1st Emergency Disaster Relief	National	Ease economic impact of pandemic and help revitalize the domestic economy	Yes	No
Spain	INGRESO MÍNIMO VITAL	National	Tackle extreme poverty and child poverty	Yes	No
Switzerland	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
United Kingdom (UK)	Furlough	State	Keep people in jobs and paid	No	No
United States of America (USA)	Economic Impact Payment	Federal	Reduce negative economic impact and relief due to lockdown	Yes x 4/ No x 1	No
<b>SUMMARY</b>		15 x Central level	8 x General Measure, 7 x Targeted support for poor, specific sectors, unemployed, 1 x No measure	Mostly Yes	14 x No 1 x Yes



- (1) Complete name: Program Kebijakan Yang Komprehensif Untut Menyelamatkan Jiwa Dan Perekonomian
- (2) Green Party in government and the work of Basic Income Ireland have sparked broader media attention on UBI
- (3) Basic income but not universal, and only temporarily (3 times)

Abbreviations: N/A - Not applicable

Gov. - Government

## Characteristics of the social protection measures

We wanted to find out how much the social protection measures during the pandemic resembled the five criteria of the BIEN definition (10). We added the criterion of ‘Subsistence level’ which only appears in the long commentary on the definition as a full basic income. It is often assumed that all adults would receive the same amount, but this is not specified in the definition. Therefore, we have added the criterion of ‘Uniformity’.

The cash criterion has been fulfilled in all 15 countries (Figure 4). The transferability and fungibility of cash as a means to access different resources is a distinct advantage for any emergency social protection measure. It allows governments to act in a quick, flexible and efficient manner and it gives recipients the freedom to decide about their most urgent and important needs. In contrast, the universal criterion was only applied in Japan and South Korea. This reflects the widespread political and public reluctance elsewhere to accept a ‘universal’ basic income. It is not well understood or accepted that a BI is not only effective, but also an efficient and transparent method, providing social protection to everybody and then collecting funds through tax from recipients who do not need this support. The other five criteria were applied in some countries.

Figure 4: Characteristics of social protection measures associated with BI criteria

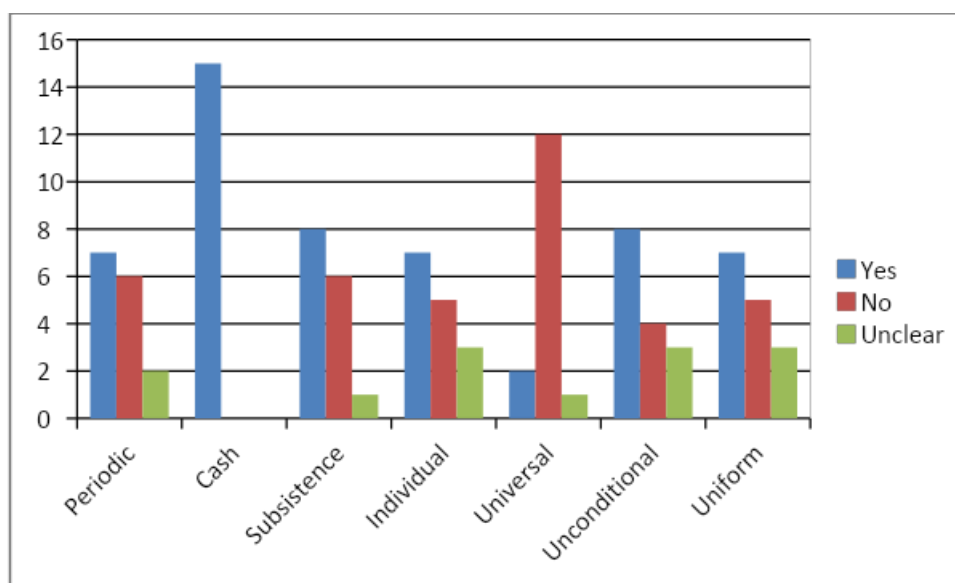
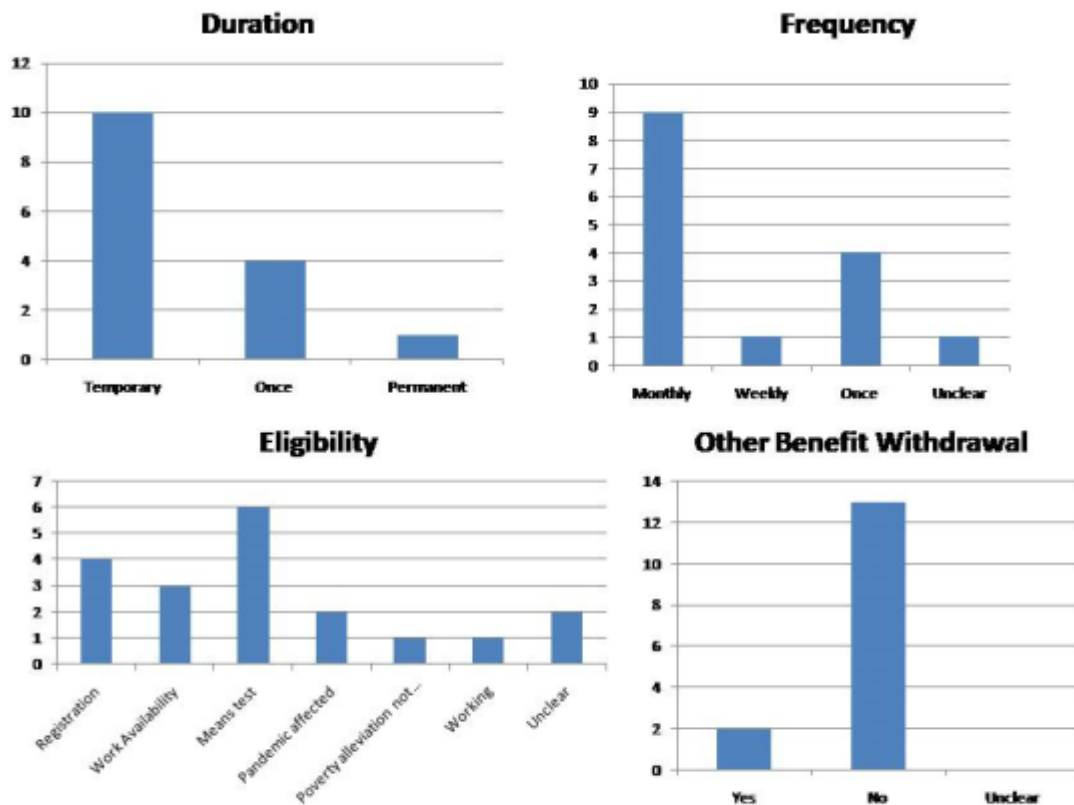


Figure 5 presents the characteristics of duration, frequency, eligibility and other benefit withdrawal. Among the 15 countries in our survey only Spain introduced a new permanent social protection measure called ‘essential minimum income’. In most countries, the measures were not linked to the withdrawal of other benefits.

The social protection measures started in the first half of 2020, mostly in March and April, with the onset of the pandemic. Some countries had just one target group, while others covered several diverse targets such as companies and the unemployed and covered either citizens or residents. The amounts of cash varied widely within and between countries and some High-Income-Countries (HIC) had complicated arrangements with considerable variation in eligibility criteria.

According to our respondents there was a considerable lack of clarity about the eligibility criteria. This is particularly noteworthy during a pandemic where one would expect clarity of government information. Spain introduced a guaranteed minimum income, but no country introduced a measure which resembled a BI applying all or most of the five criteria.

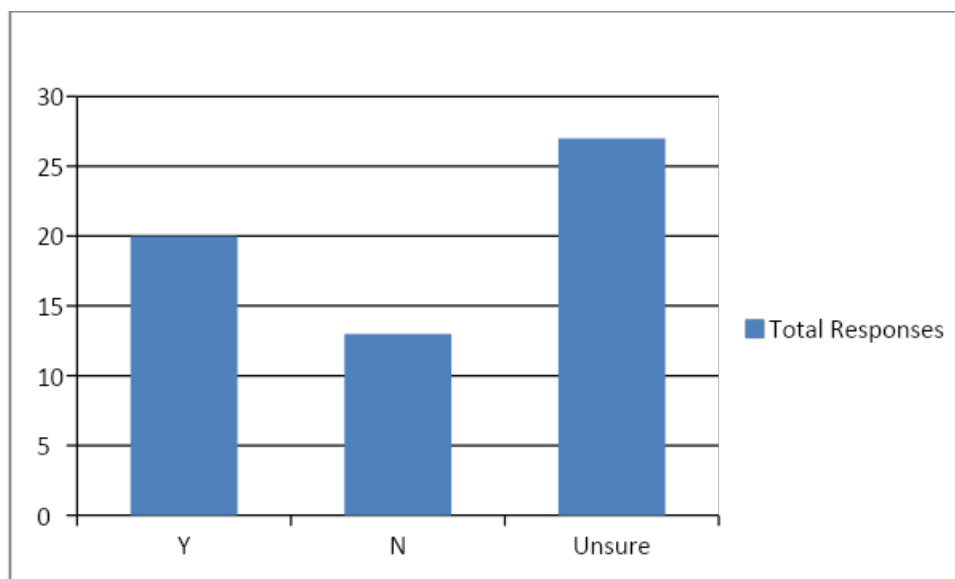
Figure 5: Other characteristics of social protection measures



## Funding sources

The responses to our questions about funding sources for the social protection measures reveal much uncertainty (Figures 6 and 7). We can probably assume that our respondents are well-informed citizens. However, the state funding of its emergency measure appears mostly like a ‘Black Box’ to the respondents. It probably reveals a lack of public discussion and pronouncements by political decision-makers on this topic. At the same time, the rapid responses of most governments to the pandemic and their social protection measures demonstrate that governments have a ‘magic money tree’ available, that is, some reserves, or access to debt, on which they can call in order to respond to emergencies, such as providing social security during this COVID-19 emergency. The other opaque option and part of the ‘Black Box’ is money supply. Various concepts such as quantitative easing, modern monetary theory and sovereign money have been discussed in relation to government money creation and basic income (13, 14, 15).

Figure 6: Total responses about different funding sources (multiple responses)



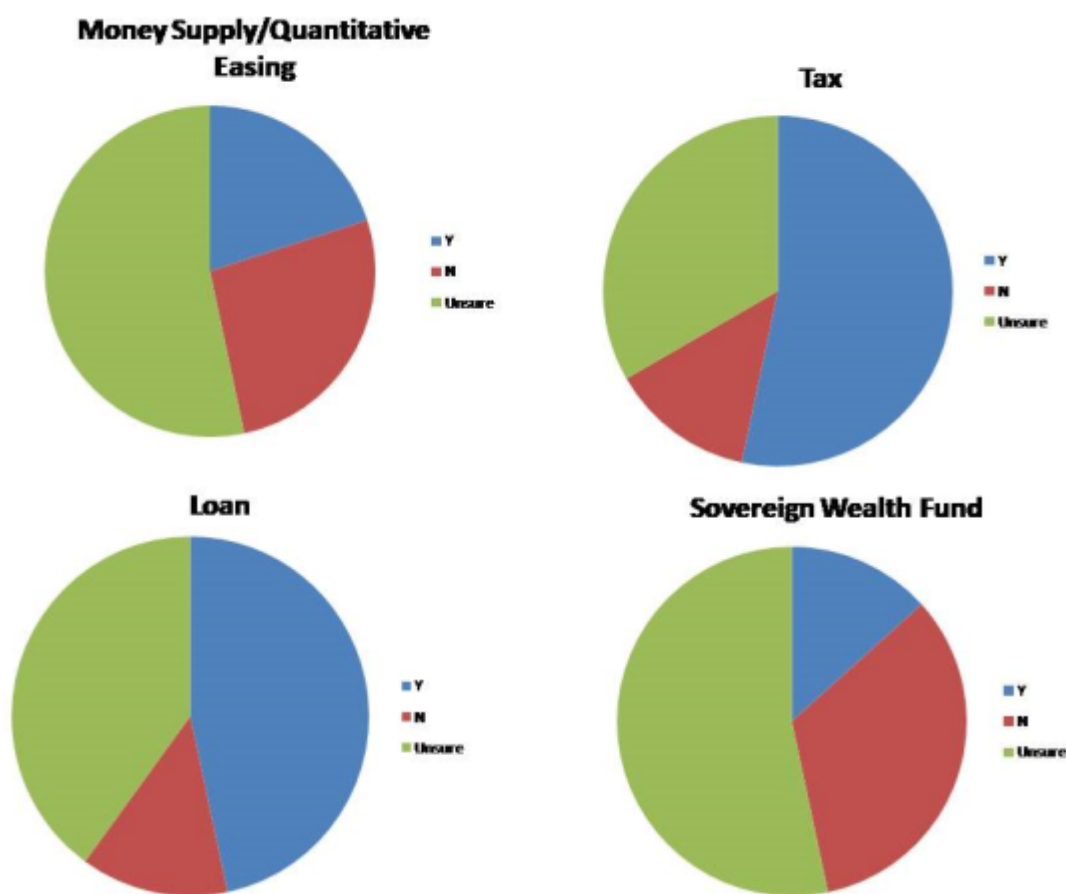
This Black Box situation is best revealed by one respondent from the USA “No clue. Could not find information” and Canada “unclear, increasing large federal deficit”. The total number of unclear/unsure responses was 27 out of 60 (Figure 6). The uncertainty is also confirmed by the lack of agreement among respondents from the same country. The Sovereign Wealth Fund option may have elicited many no and unsure responses, because it does not exist in most countries and respondents may be unfamiliar with this type of funding (Figure 7).

Malawi emergency response was funded by development partners and multilateral donors. International partners also contributed to the emergency response in South Africa. This may be an option in Low and Low-Middle Income Countries, if donors and development partners accept their responsibility to protect the most vulnerable people from the shock of the pandemic and its public health interventions. We did not provide ‘Donation’ as an option in our questionnaire.

Indonesia used the Village Fund for the emergency social protection measures. We could not translate the Indonesian document, which may provide more detailed information on this approach. The redirection of existing funds was not given as a specific option in our questionnaire.

In general, governments do not want to reveal, do not know or have not decided, how their social protection measures will be funded. This is a sad state of public affairs, as citizens should be well informed and in charge of their governments. There is often a public and media discussion promoted by international organisations around the familiar funding sources of taxation and public debt during an emergency such as the pandemic (16). The option of quantitative easing is less often considered. It appears to be available to financial institutions but not for the protection of citizens (13). Most of our respondents did not consider a Sovereign Wealth Fund as a likely funding option. Very few political entities, other than Norway and the state of Alaska, have introduced Sovereign Wealth Funds to finance social protection (17, 18). Such an institution can help to make social protection of state residents independent of taxation and thus the specific political orientation of a government, but they are medium and long term solutions.

Figure 7: Responses by type of funding source

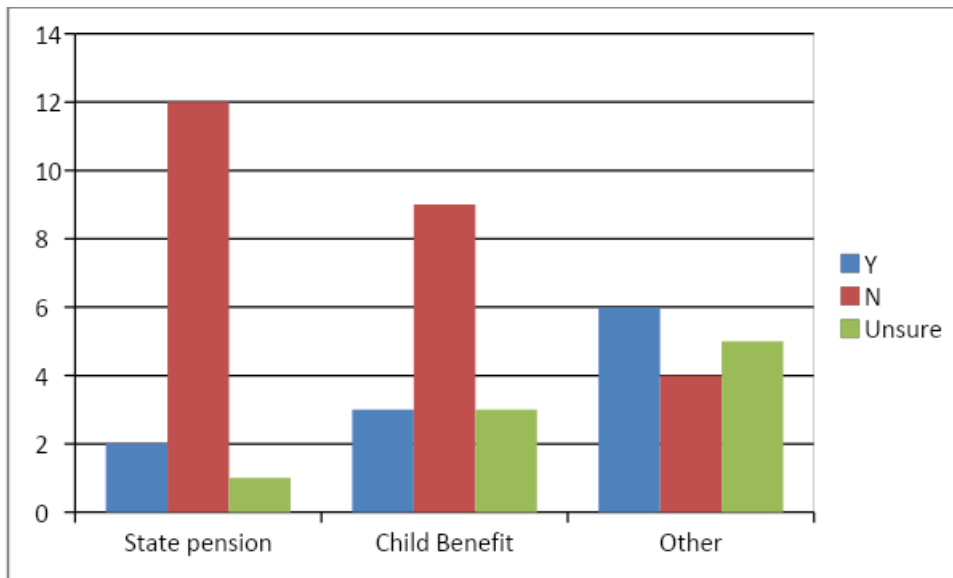


### Integration of social protection measures with other cash transfers

The responses to this question indicate a lack of clarity about the topic, because 13/45 did not provide Yes/No responses. Where multiple responses from the same country were received, we ignored these uncertain responses, if others gave a clear Yes or No response and added an explanation. In most countries, there was no integration of the emergency social protection measure

with existing cash transfers (Figure 8). The UK respondent assumed that furlough may have been integrated with other benefits but was not sure.

Figure 8: Integration of social protection measure with other cash transfers by a country



The exceptions include Spain, where the new benefit has replaced and improved child benefit and has been complemented with regional schemes. In Brazil, the eligible Bolsa Familia beneficiaries had their benefits topped up. South Africa provided a top-up of existing grants and measures for relief of social distress. Canada used the tax system as a delivery mechanism similar to other tax benefits. The latter example could be used for the delivery of a BI grant. However, it raises the question of how to reach beneficiaries who are not registered in the tax system.

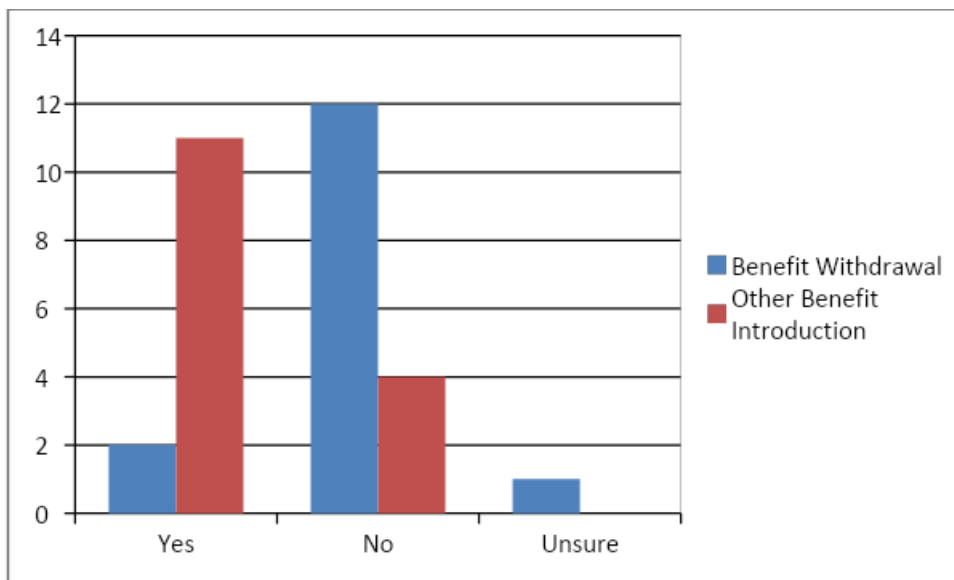
### Other Benefit withdrawal and introduction

In most or all countries there was no benefit withdrawal (Figure 9). Even for the two countries which confirmed a benefit withdrawal, according to their explanations it appeared to be more a change of benefit arrangement rather than a complete withdrawal of a specific benefit. In most countries, a wide variety of other benefits have been introduced, such as the removal of certain types of taxation, or specific support to companies and businesses or support for workers, individuals and households.

There is also the specific case of South Korea where one region responded to the pandemic with the payment of a form of basic income:

“Gyeonggi province (governor Jae-myung Lee) paid ‘Gyeonggi Disaster-related Basic Income’ to all nationals and some of legal immigrants residing in the province, in April to July 2020. It was a universal, unconditional once-off payment on an individual basis. It amounted to 100,000 won and was paid in the form of local currency or prepaid cards. Gyeonggi province introduced this measure one month earlier than central government's.”

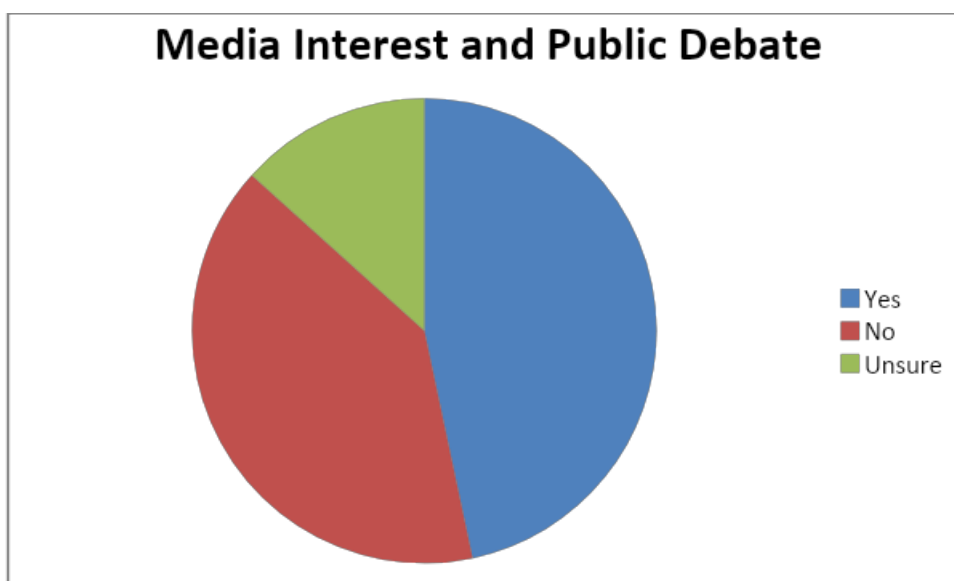
Figure 9: Benefit withdrawal and introduction



### Media interest and public debate

Our question about media and public debate was almost evenly divided between yes and no responses (Figure 10). Unfortunately, this may have been due to the ambiguity of the question “Has this other measure sparked broader media attention or other popular debates or calls for basic income?” However, we have received interesting and informative comments from various countries (Table 2).

Figure 10: Media interest and public debate by country



The quotes in table 2 reveal that the 'State' is back and we observe the end of neoliberal ideology where the 'Market' is supposed to be able to address most or all challenges to human existence. State responses to the pandemic have revealed that governments can act fast, have no cash limitations and can use their tax system for the benefit of all the people.

Table 2: Explanations regarding media interest and public debate about UBI

Country	Explanation
Australia	UBI is barely covered by the media/not even at universities
Canada	<p>Broader debate about basic income was spurred by both the emergency measures' positive elements and their weaknesses, especially the fact that so many people who needed help were left out by its complexity and conditions. This has resulted in societal problems getting worse for some people, more homelessness, food bank use and disproportionately high levels of viral spread and economic hardship among people with low income, racialized people and women. With these pre-existing weaknesses revealed, calls for a basic income have increased.</p> <p>The greatest positives were the government's recognition that people needed cash, that \$2000 per month was a reasonable level of adequacy and that qualifying processes had to be faster and simpler. Above all, the government clearly demonstrated that it has far greater capacity to be rapidly responsive and adaptive in the administration of the tax system than anyone had been led to believe. This helps the case for a basic income greatly.</p>
Chile	More than in the media, in smaller local groups organised politically.
Indonesia	<p>Several proposals on Basic Income from Non-Government organizations:</p> <p><a href="http://theprakarsa.org/policy-brief-21-program-tunai-di-era-covid-19-bantuan-tunai-korona-atau-jaminan-penghasilan-semesta/">http://theprakarsa.org/policy-brief-21-program-tunai-di-era-covid-19-bantuan-tunai-korona-atau-jaminan-penghasilan-semesta/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.csis.or.id/download/224-post-2020-04-03-CSIS_Commentaries_DMRU_033_ID_Mumbunan.pdf">https://www.csis.or.id/download/224-post-2020-04-03-CSIS_Commentaries_DMRU_033_ID_Mumbunan.pdf</a></p> <p>National Media (KOMPAS) coverage on Universal Basic Income in Indonesia: <a href="https://jeo.kompas.com/pak-jokowi-saatnya-berpihak-kepada-wong-cilik">https://jeo.kompas.com/pak-jokowi-saatnya-berpihak-kepada-wong-cilik</a></p>
South Africa	I represent an organization called Black Sash in South Africa, which is a veteran human rights organisation that is 65 years old. The organization that has been advocating for a basic income since 2002. We recently launched a campaign calling for Basic Income Support starting with those aged 18 to 59 years with no or little income and working towards universal basic income.
South Korea	Gyeonggi Initiative helped central government change the beneficiaries of 1st Emergency Disaster Relief policy from 70% of the population to 100%.
Switzerland	As far as I know, all payments in Switzerland (and there are very many) are designed to replace earnings lost because of the pandemic. This even applies to sans-papiers (illegal residents), and is quite often on the basis of declaration on one's honour as to the earnings lost, but still on the basis of earnings lost.
USA	there may be more to come; UBI is picking up steam in media coverage. Andrew Yang was a great candidate if for nothing else than introducing UBI to many



However, national governments appear not to be ready for the introduction or piloting of a BI. Instead, sub-national government levels, such as Gyeonggi Province in South Korea, have taken this step. Another example is Maricá, a city in southern Brazil, which has not been mentioned in this survey (19). Sub-national governments appear to be more courageous or advanced in their thinking about the social contract between the state and its citizens/residents. Certain quotes indicate that the driving force for a BI is civil society, sub-national governments and political challengers. The quote from Switzerland demonstrates that there is a strong government preoccupation with the replacement of lost earned income, rather than a desire to secure basic living standards for everybody.

### Universal Basic Services

Our results indicate that the concept of Universal Basic Services (UBS) is not clear among respondents (Figure 11). Five respondents did not answer the question. In 5 countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Malawi, USA), where we received several responses from the same country, the respondents did not agree on some or all UBS. This was due to a situation that certain healthcare services may be payable and education may only be free up to a certain level. In six countries respondents agreed on healthcare and education, in three countries on education and in three countries on healthcare as UBS (Figure 12). The problem with the concept of UBS is that even the

Figure 11: UBS according to 24 respondents (multiple responses)

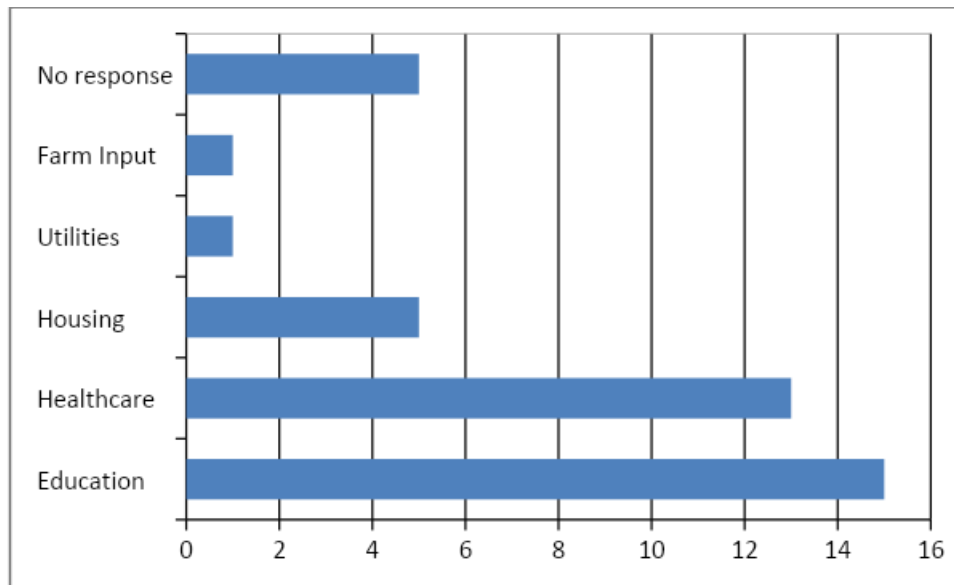
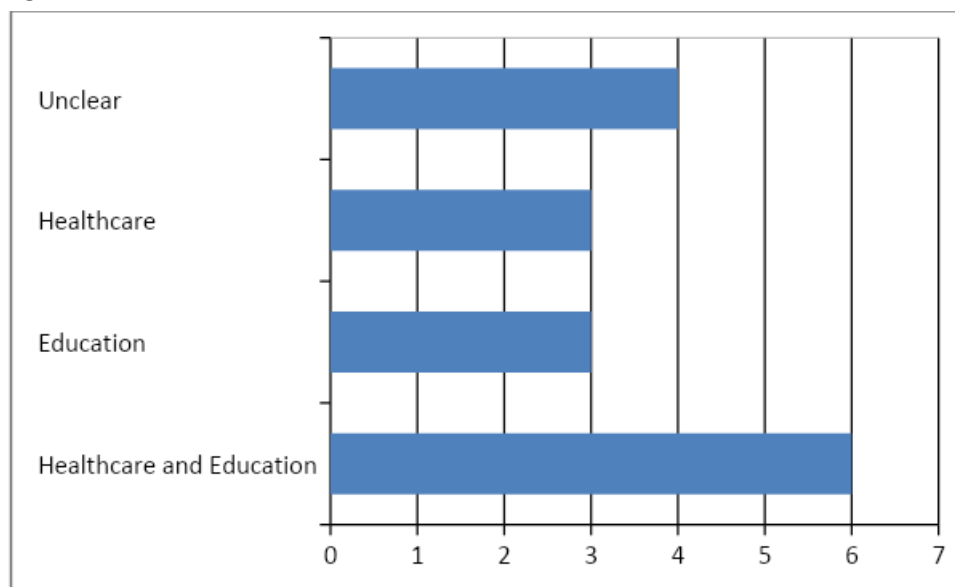


Figure 12: UBS in 16 countries



widely known National Health Service of the UK is not completely free in terms of certain costs such as fees and transport. The explanations of respondents highlight further problems with the concept of UBS and why respondents did not include certain services as part of UBS (Table 3).

Indonesia has healthcare coverage for all residents, but certain services such as infertility, contraception and treatment of alcohol abuse are not included according to the description of the National Health Insurance. Farm Input Subsidies are an unusual free basic service mentioned by one respondent from Malawi.

### BI Organisations and debate

We wanted to use the opportunity of the survey to find out more about the BI organisations and debate in each country. This has led to the development of a BI country profile fiche for each country based on the provided information (Annex 2: Example Australia).

Most countries in our survey have a single issue BI organisation (Figure 13). Several countries also have multiple-issue organisations which include BI in their portfolio. Several respondents were unsure about the question relating to multiple-issue organisations and BI. One factor may have been the consideration and inclusion of political parties supporting BI.

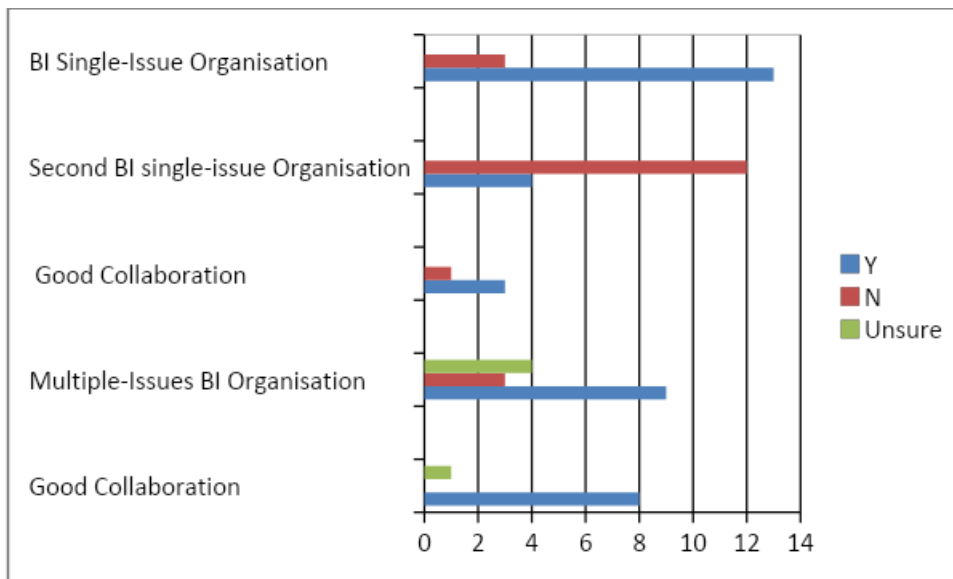
Our respondents report mostly good collaboration between BI organisations (Figure 13). One exception appears to be Switzerland: “There were others [BI organisation] before & during our basic income referendum in 2016, and they did not work particularly well together.” An important limitation of our survey is the very small number of respondents with one person reporting about the situation in a country. For example, the UK respondent stated that there is no single BI or multiple-issue BI organisation in the UK which is clearly not correct. The two respondents from Malawi presented contradictory statements on single-issue BI organisations. The two respondents from Brazil and Canada presented different statements on multiple-issue BI organisations. The two respondents from Brazil and Malawi presented different statements on study and research BI projects. Future surveys can overcome this challenge either with group discussions among

respondents from the same country or a minimum number of respondents so that a widely agreed response can be established.

Table 3: Explanations about UBS

Country	Explanation or "Quotes"
Australia	"Social housing is totally arbitrary and there is a long waiting list." "Public education is only free up to secondary level and requires private funding for higher level."
Brazil	Only one respondent included Housing, Utilities (gas, electricity, water) without further explanation
Canada	"Primary and secondary education are universal public services but not university or college." "Our health care system covers doctor visits, diagnostic tests and hospital care but not prescription medications outside hospital or dental or vision care."
Chile	"Education is free only up to highschool"
Colombia	No explanation
Finland	No explanation
Indonesia	"Indonesia has a universal healthcare coverage called the National Health Insurance (JKN), run by the BPJS Kesehatan (Healthcare and Social Security Agency)."
Ireland	"Primary and Secondary Education are free (though not entirely free - book costs etc), but Third-Level education is not free (university, college etc.) A very limited number of health services are provided free at the point of use to all; GP services are provided free at the point of use to all people over 70. Some museums and galleries, parks etc. are freely available to the public"
Japan	No explanation
Malawi	Only one of the respondents included Farm Input Subsidies
South Africa	"Essential services is tied to an indigent policy and is means tested"
South Korea	"The public healthcare in South Korea is not free, but it is reasonable. On average, residents only need to cover 20% of their medical treatments, which is typically just the copay[co-payment] or the service fee. South Korea provides free education for elementary and middle school students. In April 2020, the government and the ruling Democratic Party agreed to implement free education at high schools in 2021."
Spain	No explanation
Switzerland	No explanation
United Kingdom	No explanation
USA	"Generally limited to public primary and secondary education (no college level) If someone picks that they're from the US, this question is like salt in an open wound. Haha" "I think that technically education is free at point of use, however there are tons of costs involved to even truly participate in the K - 12 level."

Figure 13: Characteristics of single- and multiple-issue BI organisations by country (multiple responses)



Most respondents reported about BI research or study projects in their countries and participation in the global BI debate (Figure 14). We present the quotes of respondents about the participation in the global BI debate in table 4. We have highlighted two provocative quotes. Table 5 presents specific issues related to BI in the respective countries. Countries where we have received no response have been removed from the two tables.

Figure 14: BI Activities by country (multiple responses)

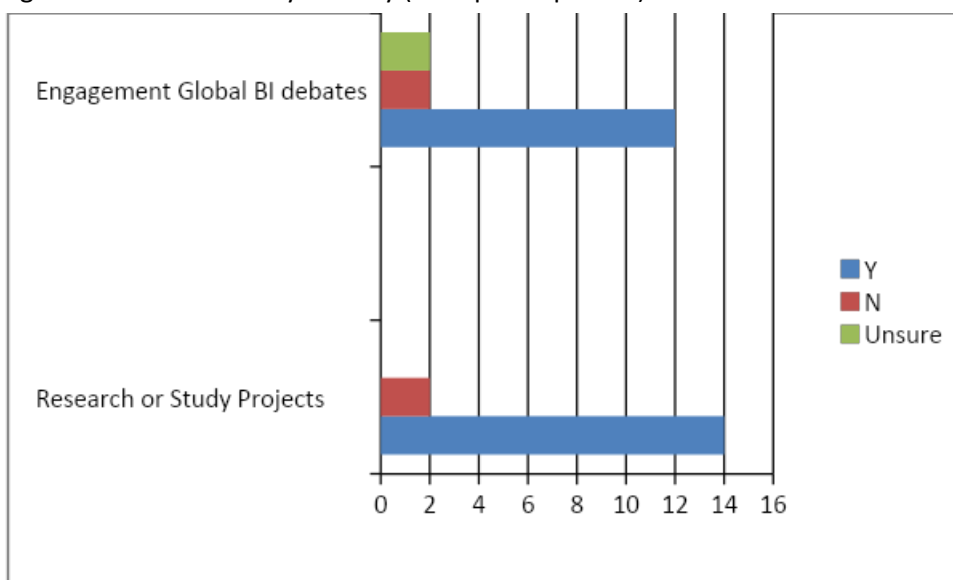


Table 4: Contribution to Global BI debates

Country	Statements
<b>Australia</b>	<b>BASIC INCOME IS SEEN AS A “COMMUNIST” IDEA = BAD PROPAGANDA.</b> Research Paper of Parliamentary Library: Basic income: a radical idea enters the mainstream
<b>Brazil</b>	By participation on Congress of BIEN; by the actions developed by the Brazilian Basic Income Network and by some academic research developed among some Latin America universities. For instance, some Brazilian, Argentina and Uruguay researches just started to develop the Project: PROGRAMAS DE TRANSFERÊNCIA DE RENDA FOCALIZADOS E DE RENDA BÁSICA UNIVERSAL NO CONTEXTO DA PANDEMIA E DA PÓS-PANDEMIA DA COVID-19: acompanhamento e análise da realidade internacional com foco na América Latina e no Brasil (FOCALIZED INCOME TRANSFER PROGRAMS AND UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIE AND POS-PANDEMIE OF COVID-19: follow-up and analysis of international reality with focus in Latin America and Brazil.
<b>Canada</b>	Sometimes the intersection of poverty in Canada relates to global poverty. An increasingly wide range of social justice organizations working on issues related to the environment, anti-racism, gender.
<b>Chile</b>	we are organising at the latinAmerican level
<b>Finland</b>	The pilot
<b>Indonesia</b>	The Indonesian Basic Income debate is following the international discussions. As an example, in February 2020, just before the Covid-19 pandemic, Phillipe van Parijs was resource person for the first Indonesian Basic Income Boot camp: <a href="http://indobig.net/basic-income-bootcamp-2020-membawa-utopia-menuju-realita/">http://indobig.net/basic-income-bootcamp-2020-membawa-utopia-menuju-realita/</a> The Indonesian Basic Income Guarantee Network (IndoBIG) has organized several webinars inviting international speakers to enrich the lively Indonesian debate on Basic Income: <a href="http://indobig.net/ubi-webinar-series/">http://indobig.net/ubi-webinar-series/</a>
<b>Ireland</b>	The question is vague but certainly there has been a lot of discussion about trials that have taken place in other countries (Finland, Canada etc); about Spain’s Guaranteed Minimum Income, Alaska’s payment, and Andrew Yang’s campaign; and about broader issues of arguments for and against basic income, political strategy, feminism, finance, public services, degrowth, etc. Basic Income Ireland typically hosts at least one public meeting with an international speaker a year and is engaged in international networks including BIEN and UBIE.
<b>Japan</b>	Academics and activists have translated books into Japanese. Not many, but some have global connections.
<b>South Africa</b>	Black Sash is part of the UBI advocates email group. It is important to identify global trends
<b>Switzerland</b>	In the media and in public discussion the relevance of a basic income given the pandemic has been much discussed. I know of no concrete results.
<b>United Kingdom</b>	No response
<b>United States of America</b>	some discussion at NABIG congress. <b>We're lucky to even get two intelligent individuals on a debate stage, let alone talk about something like UBI.</b>

Table 5: Additional BI issues in your country

Country	Statements
<b>Australia</b>	Housing big problem for young people. BI should come in a package: Housing + BI, otherwise it does not make sense.
<b>Brazil</b>	Basic Income is a public issue and the debate is how to make minimum income schemes like BolsaFamília get closer to a Basic Income or a broader guaranteed income. The debate about is still open, but it's very clear that even a broader scheme would be an achievement towards BI. It's though, not clear how it will land in social policies actual structure, and it's not possible to conclude yet how the debate to fund this will develop.
<b>Canada</b>	<p>Universal coverage of all social programs is happening.</p> <p>In Canada, while there are a range of models proposed for a basic income (BICN's Policy Options models three, including a full, individual option for all adults that fits the BIEN definition as well as additional criteria related to adequacy, progressivity of impact, and a reduction in inequality), in general there seems to be convergence towards a basic income guarantee model as the most feasible at this time, with a focus on 18-64 year olds. This is largely because we already operate two long-term, successful programs for seniors (65+) and for families with children (under 18) with this model. A key limitation of this mechanism has been that it is slow to respond to changes in income but the experience of very rapid response and adaptability to COVID shows that Canada does have the administrative capacity to overcome this limitation.</p> <p>It is also important to note that Canadians generally distinguish between 'means' testing (an invasive examination of assets and resources compared to accepted need determined by countless rules and regulations that characterize our last resort social assistance regimes) and income testing. The latter is the foundation of tax fairness principles, helping to ensure that those who have a greater ability to pay tax do so and those who most need help receive it (we do not do this perfectly of course and a basic income guarantee would help, but our tax/ transfer system does work to offset the impact of market inequalities).</p> <p>A final point about Canada is that there is growing public attention to basic income (both pro and con), growing public support and growing support from politicians in the Senate (non-elected) and across political parties among our elected representatives in the House of Commons. Because we are a federal state, other sub-national orders of government must be involved for a full national program and COVID-19 budget pressure on them will, we hope, make them see the value for them in cooperating with the federal government for a basic income guarantee.</p> <p>As a post script to earlier answers:</p> <p>Advocates here were hoping that there would be mention of a basic income in the Speech from the Throne that sets government direction during its mandate. That speech was delivered in late September and it reiterated the emergency, employment-related focus mentioned in earlier questions, with no indication of a more universally available benefit. Despite rhetoric about 'leaving no one behind', it did in fact leave many people out. There were two notable developments, however. The first is a federal commitment to extend a form of basic income for seniors, to people with disabilities. This is very good news for the disability community and offers a chance, hopefully,</p>

	<p>to have deeper public debate about basic income policy more generally. On the other hand, it tends to reinforce old notions of ‘deservedness’ and may make it even harder to get a basic income for those without disabilities who are too often blamed for their own poverty. The second development is a commitment to make tax administration and tax filing simpler and more automatic, a move that will help ensure people with low income get benefits to which they are already entitled and with effectiveness in delivering a basic income that may be adopted. Some government Ministers are on record with the media saying that a basic income remains a part of post-pandemic future plans.</p>
<b>Colombia</b>	<p>People are getting clearly more interested in Basic Income in Colombia. It's time to encourage discussions at all levels</p>
<b>Finland</b>	<p>Too much</p>
<b>Indonesia</b>	<p>Beside the political discussions and the public discourse on the potential of a general UBI in Indonesia, the Basic Income Lab in cooperation with the GIZ programme FORCLIME is currently exploring the potential of a basic income scheme called ‘Basic Income for Climate and Nature’ for the provinces Papua and West Papua.</p> <p>The underlying scientific-based concept is currently being developed within the University of Indonesia in cooperation with local stakeholders in Papua. IndoBIG Network just launched a petition to support #UBI in Indonesia started August 30, 2020. This petition is part of the international campaign initiated by working group #53. Link: <a href="http://indobig.net/petisi-ubi/">http://indobig.net/petisi-ubi/</a></p>
<b>Ireland</b>	<p>The Green Party entered government a few weeks ago in a coalition and as a consequence there is a commitment to a state-?</p>
<b>Japan</b>	<p>Covid-19 pandemic made the government and Japanese people to experience “unconditional” “universal” payment, and has?</p>
<b>South Africa</b>	<p>The economic fragility of South Africa with the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty and inequality has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are a country that needs drastic intervention with working towards universal basic income for all those living in South Africa to survive</p>
<b>South Korea</b>	<p>We have an MP from Basic Income Party who won the last general election in April. She is a staunch basic income supporter and is working for making a few laws regarding BI in National Assembly.</p> <p>We will have the next presidential election in March 2022. One of leading candidates, Jae-Myung Lee, incumbent Governor of Gyeonggi Province, will propose BI scheme in his electoral promises which include land holding tax-dividend and carbon tax-dividend.</p>
<b>United States of America</b>	<p>Some members of congress are calling for regular monthly payments of \$2000 per adult, less for children, for the duration of the pandemic. Some people say "the damage caused by COVID-19 has revealed a fragile and inequitable economy and that the recent one-time. Mayors for a Guaranteed Income started. <a href="http://Mayorsforagi.org">Mayorsforagi.org</a></p> <p>The US is at a point with cost of living being high, wages not following inflation, politicization of everything, etc - that we desperately need a UBI (universal healthcare would do, as well) in order to give everyone a shot to make it out and retool our country and what it means to live (work to live and not live to work).</p> <p>We seem so far away that multiple generations are going to crumble under the weight of the decisions from our parents and grandparents.</p>

## **Limitations and weaknesses of our survey**

Some issues have already been mentioned in the findings section. Table 6 presents a summary of all issues based on the comments of respondents and our analysis. Certain weaknesses may be overcome in a future survey, if a chat function rather than an email helpline is offered to respondents. For example, we tried to find out whether in federal states, the sub-federal level may have the authority to introduce a UBI in their political and administrative unit. This question 1.02 was not understood by some respondents. The suggestion to request a group response from each country can help to overcome differences between respondents and establish an agreed perspective for each country. A shorter survey or separate surveys for the different topics may increase the responses.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly provided a big boost to the global BI debate and in most countries of our survey. Unfortunately we have only received 24 responses from 16 countries. The questionnaire was clearly too long and complex to achieve a high participation rate in terms of countries and respondents per country. If this survey is to be repeated in future, we recommend that separate questionnaires for each of the three sections should be distributed in order to increase the number of respondents. The provision of incentives such as a book prize for some respondents may increase the participation in future similar surveys.

Even with the limitations of the survey, it reveals valuable insights and information for advocates in different countries to reflect upon in the development of their own strategies and in international collaboration. The 'black box' of government financing of social protection measures is an interesting finding and an important topic for future public education and advocacy. People are unlikely to support the introduction of a UBI, unless they understand how it can and should be financed and protected so that a change of government does not lead to the loss of the UBI scheme.

It is very encouraging to find that BI organisations in most countries collaborate well. There appears to be ongoing BI research and participation in the global public BI debate.

## **Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to thank Malcolm Torry for the original design of the questions about BI organisations and debate.



Table 6: Limitations and Weaknesses

Issue	Description	Frequency	Country
Group response	Survey did not include option of group response	At least x1 mentioned	Japan
Question (Q) 1.02 Your region	Referred to jurisdiction unit below national/federal level which may have the authority in some countries to introduce or test BI. Some responses indicated that respondents have not understood the question.	8 responses	Brazil USA x 2 Malawi UK South Korea Japan Indonesia
Q 1.06 Are you a BIEN affiliated organisation member?	One respondent did not answer	1 response	Colombia
Q 2.05 Has the new measure sparked broader media attention or other popular debates or calls for basic income?	Several options to interpret questions and restricted yes/no response. Became obvious with several responses from same country. Other contextual factors to draw attention to BI e.g. Ireland	At least x 5	Australia Ireland Japan Malawi United States
Question 2.09 Date when implemented	Some variation about date: ? due to decision taken and implementation		Example: Japan
Q 2.11 Is the measure periodic?	Lack of clarity whether periodicity refers to short- or long-term	?	Example Japan from 05 to 08, N
Q 2.20 - Number of likely recipients: Q 2.21 - Number of likely recipients as percentage of population:	Percentage does not match actual population of 17-20 Million in Malawi, considerable variation between different respondents of the same country		Malawi: Validity , USA: Reliability
Q 3.01 - What essential universal public services are provided, which are free at the point of use:	'Left empty' responses and different responses from same country respondents indicate the difficulties in answering this question. It may require a clearer definition of free public services in a specific field such as healthcare.	16 with agreement of 2 respondents from USA	Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Malawi, South Africa, USA
Q 4.04 - Are there any multiple-issue organizations which include basic income in their charter?	'Left empty' responses and different responses from same country respondents indicate the difficulties in answering this question. It may require an explanation what type of organisations should be considered.	11 with agreement of 2 respondents from USA	Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, USA

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