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The Voice of Public Health
La voix de la santé publique

BASIC INCOME A PRIMER

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DEFINITIONS

- **Public Health:** The organized efforts of society to keep people healthy and prevent premature death. It is a combination of programs, services and policies that protect and promote health of all Canadians.
- **Basic Income:** An umbrella term for an income that is unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis without means test or work requirement.
- **Social Utility:** A service or characteristic that benefits the majority of the population of any given society.

A BRIEF HISTORY ...

- Thomas More (1516) and a “cure” for theft
- Johannes Ludovicus Vives (1526) assistance for the poor
- Basic income and the Utopian Socialists (1848)
- Bertrand Russell combines anarchism and socialism (1918)
- Dennis Milner, “Scheme for a State Bonus” (1918)

Basic Income for Earth Network, n.d. Available at:
<https://basicincome.org/basic-income/history/>.

RECENT HISTORY

- Basic Income Experiments in the United States
 - New Jersey, 1968
 - Seattle, Washington and Denver, Colorado, 1969
 - Indiana, 1971
 - The Great Smoky Mountains Study of Youth, 1992.
- International Examples
 - India, Namibia, Macau, Brazil
- Manitoba Basic Annual Income Experiment (Mincome), 1974-1979.



CURRENT EXAMPLES

- **Oakland California** – Y Combinator experiment (expected to start mid-2019)
- **The Netherlands** – Test the influence of financial gain on encouraging social utility (Under discussion)
- **Finland** – a partial basic income model to simplify their complicated social benefit system. (Ended after 2 years, January 2019)
- **The Ontario Basic Income Pilot** - consolidation of federal and provincial programs into a single cash benefit (ended 2019)



BASIC INCOME MODELS

- **The Principal** – a publically administered program that provides financial support to an individual to guarantee a level of financial stability.
- Basic income guarantee (BIG) versus Minimum income guarantee.



BASIC/GUARANTEED INCOME MODELS

- **Universal Demogrant Model**

A regular, non-taxable payment made to every citizen. Income over a base level would be taxable at an income tax rate identified for the program (Canada Child Benefit)

- **Negative Income Tax Model**

A system that uses the tax system as a means of identifying need and providing payment to the individual. It consists of three parts: the benefit level, the reduction rate and the breakeven level (Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement)

CONSIDERATIONS

- Measuring poverty
- Program reach – setting the minimum income
- To include or not existing benefits
- Stigma and equity
- Conditions for payment? (social utility)
- Effect on taxation
- Administrative needs and costs

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Analysis report



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SUMMARY

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