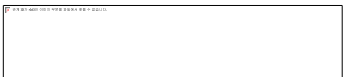# From Theory to Practice: Embedding Feminist Principles in UBI Implementation

Chloe Halpenny
School of Kinesiology & Health Studies
Queen's University

Maria Franch
Department of Social and Policy Sciences
University of Bath

Clem Davies
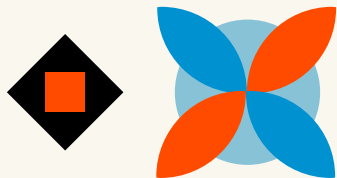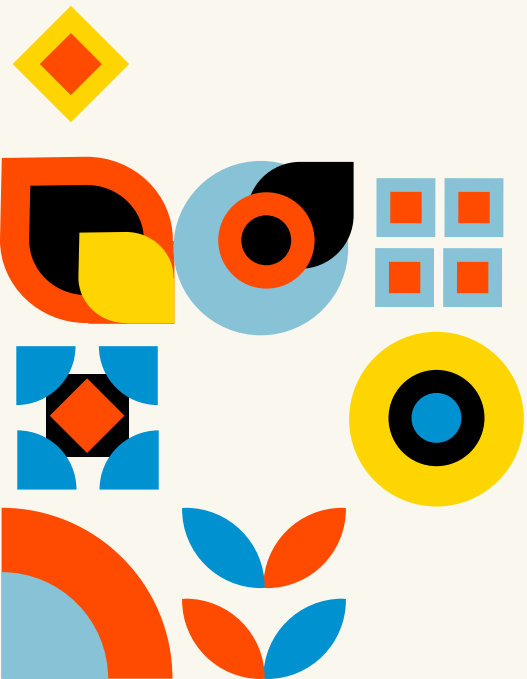Götz Werner Chair (GWP)
University of Freiburg

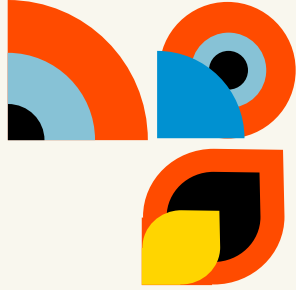# Introduction and Research Questions

Context

- There exists a traditional model amongst BI theorists and practitioners that UBI alone will act as a catalyst for transformative change not only in the economic but in the social, cultural, environmental, and political (SCEP) spheres.
- This assumption neglects the high context-dependency of UBI in application.

Research Questions

- To what extent are the considerations of intersectional equity incorporated into the design of basic income pilot programs?
- To what extent is social, cultural, environmental, and political context considered?
- What is the significance, and what are the implications?

Methodology

Fraser's 7 Principles of Gender Equity

Fraser 1994

Overlap of Gender Equity and SCEP

Feminist Policy Analysis Frameworks

Kanenberg et al., 2019; Hankivsky et al., 2012

Pilots: Evidence Building and Design Testing

Contextual (social, cultural, environmental, political) and intersectional factors are highly relevant to the design of basic income pilots.

A tailored framework that makes visible and engages with these issues may be a valuable tool to inform the design of more gender just and transformative basic income policy.

The Questions

Problem definition:
What problem(s) does the pilot purport to respond to? How are these framed?

Recipients:
Who are the intended recipients of the pilot? How are they represented?

Work, care, family, state:
How are these concepts (and recipients' relationships to them) defined, considered, and valued?

Financing:
How is the pilot being funded (e.g., public, private, etc.)? What are the implications of this?

Purpose & solution:
What solution(s) does the pilot purport to offer? How are these linked to the problem(s)?

Visibility:
How are women and others who face gender- based oppression visible, if at all?

Evidence:
What evidence is (or is not) used to inform the pilot? What are the implications of this from a feminist lens?

Context:
How is the broader social, political, cultural, and economic context reflected (or not) within the pilot design?

Engagement & consultation:
How has engagement been integrated into the pilot's design? Who is (or is not) involved?

Power & intersectionality:
Are intersecting systems of oppression acknowledged or considered? If so, how?

Defining success:
How is "success" conceptualized? What outcomes are (or are not) being prioritized? How are they being measured?

Future outlook:
How is the pilot positioned vis-a-vis future policy action or reform? What are framed as potential next steps?

Case Study: Germany's Pilotprojekt Grundeinkommen (PPGE)

Crowdfunded experiment, running for 3 years (2021 – 2024) with 122 participants each receiving 1200 euro monthly (1.719 million Korean Won).

Recipients: People between the age of 21 and 40 in single-person households, registered in Germany, and earning a 'middle class' income.

Measuring success: Framing of the project focuses on quality of life changes – the experiment aims to "know - and scientifically test whether an unconditionally guaranteed income leads to fundamental changes in the context of health, work, digital revolution, cohesion, politics and consumption."
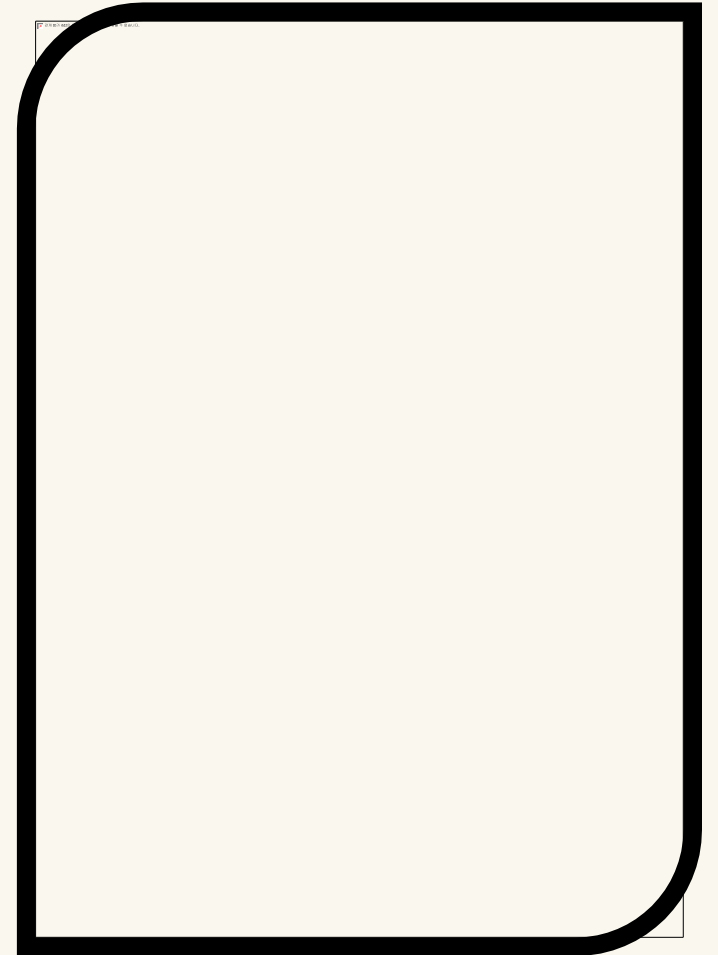
Case Study: Namibia's Basic Income Guarantee (BIG)

Demographic identifies gender, age, cultural and language differences but no account taken of differential impacts or barriers based on them.
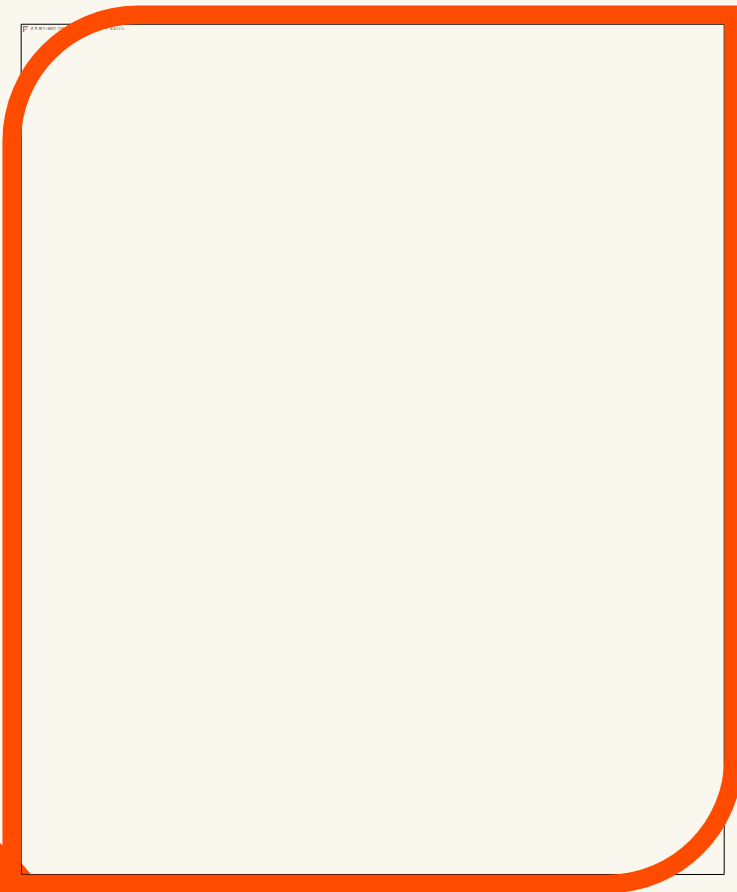
Community engagement not built in but advantages recognised and adapted to when community set up a committee.

Health (HIV) was key to problematisation but not differentiated in other ways (no intersectional understanding).

Case Study: Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP)

Explicitly framed as a poverty reduction measure, however who is more likely to be poor and why this is the case are overlooked

Variable focus on supporting "vulnerable workers" (despite labour market attachment not being an eligibility requirement) serves to reinforce narratives of deservingness related to paid work and reify the value of formal labour market participation This perspective also emerged qualitatively with participants later on!

While poverty and the alleviation thereof were salient throughout pilot documentation, intersecting forms of power and oppression were omitted entirely (or engaged with only superficially - e.g., disability)

Implications

Not just a "nice to have"
► Leaving this out undermines the authority of pilots - doesn't inform the 'real' impacts and policy design.

Not neutral
► Positive or neutral impact is not a guaranteed result.
► Risk of a technical intervention in exacerbating disparities.

Not in a vacuum
► Pilots exist in a community, in a context.
► Transformative potential depends upon acknowledging and responding to context.

The framework draws attention but does not provide for the addition of significant pulses such as - coaching and advice around interactions with the state before during and after the pilot, collective and participatory space provided for in relation to the pilot and in order to maximise impact and maximise SCEP change - the need for these should be identified through the framework
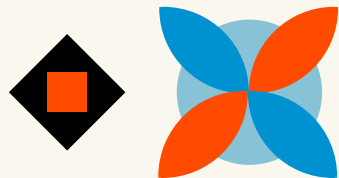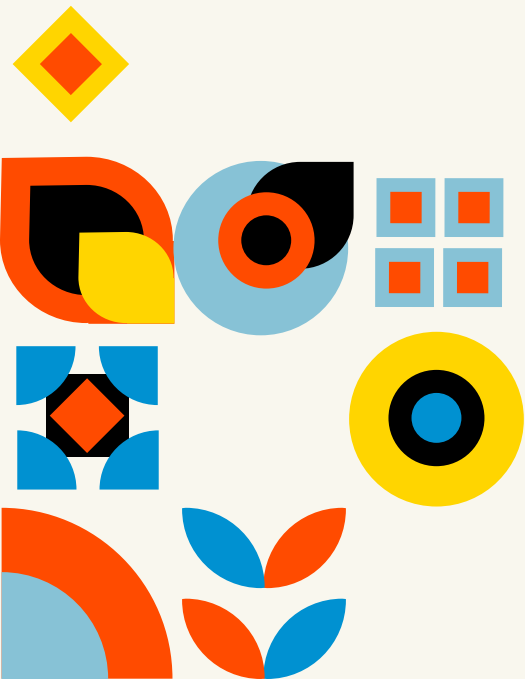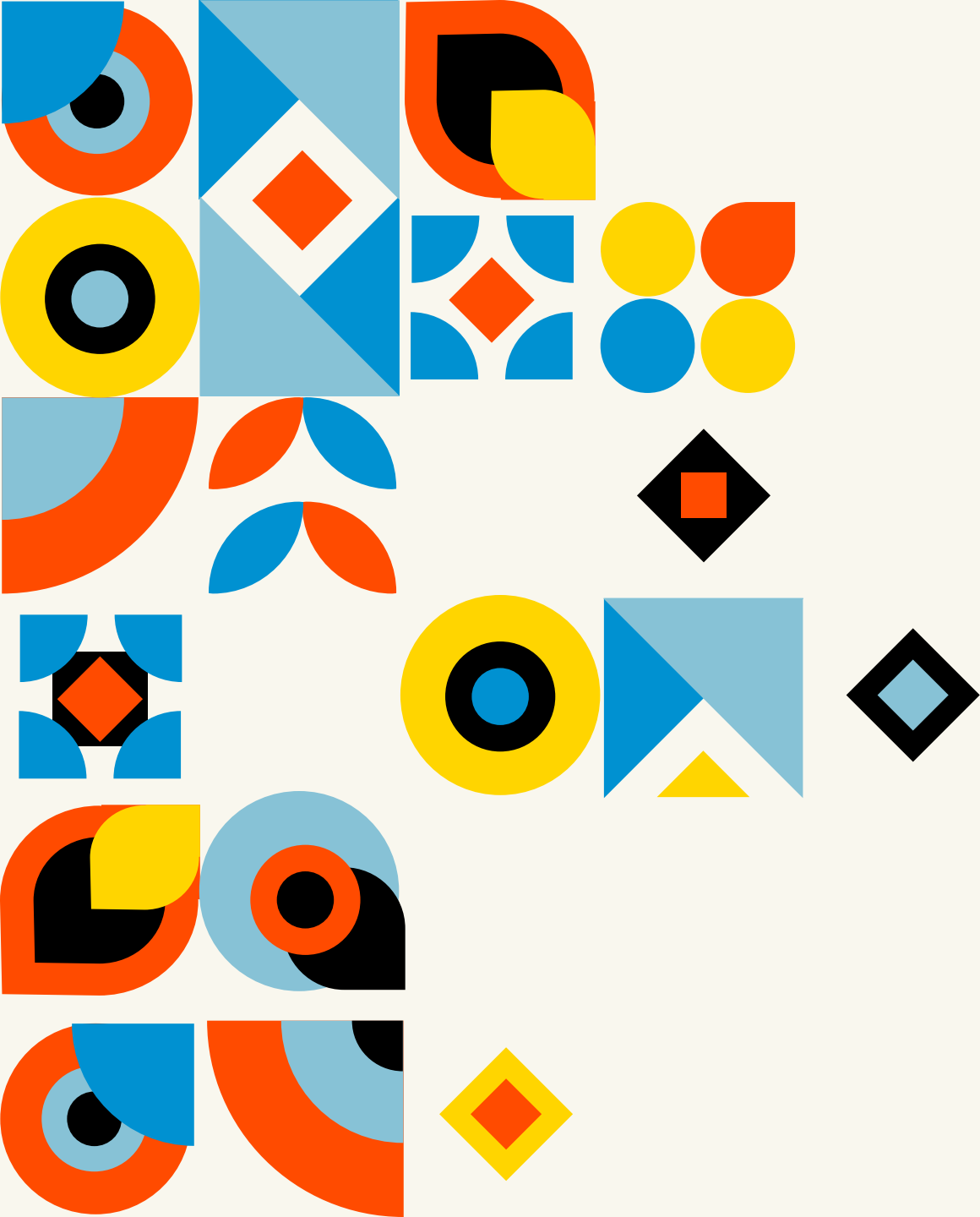
Conclusion and Next Steps

Basic income in <u>reality</u>
- ► UBI is lauded for being a "disarmingly simple" idea.
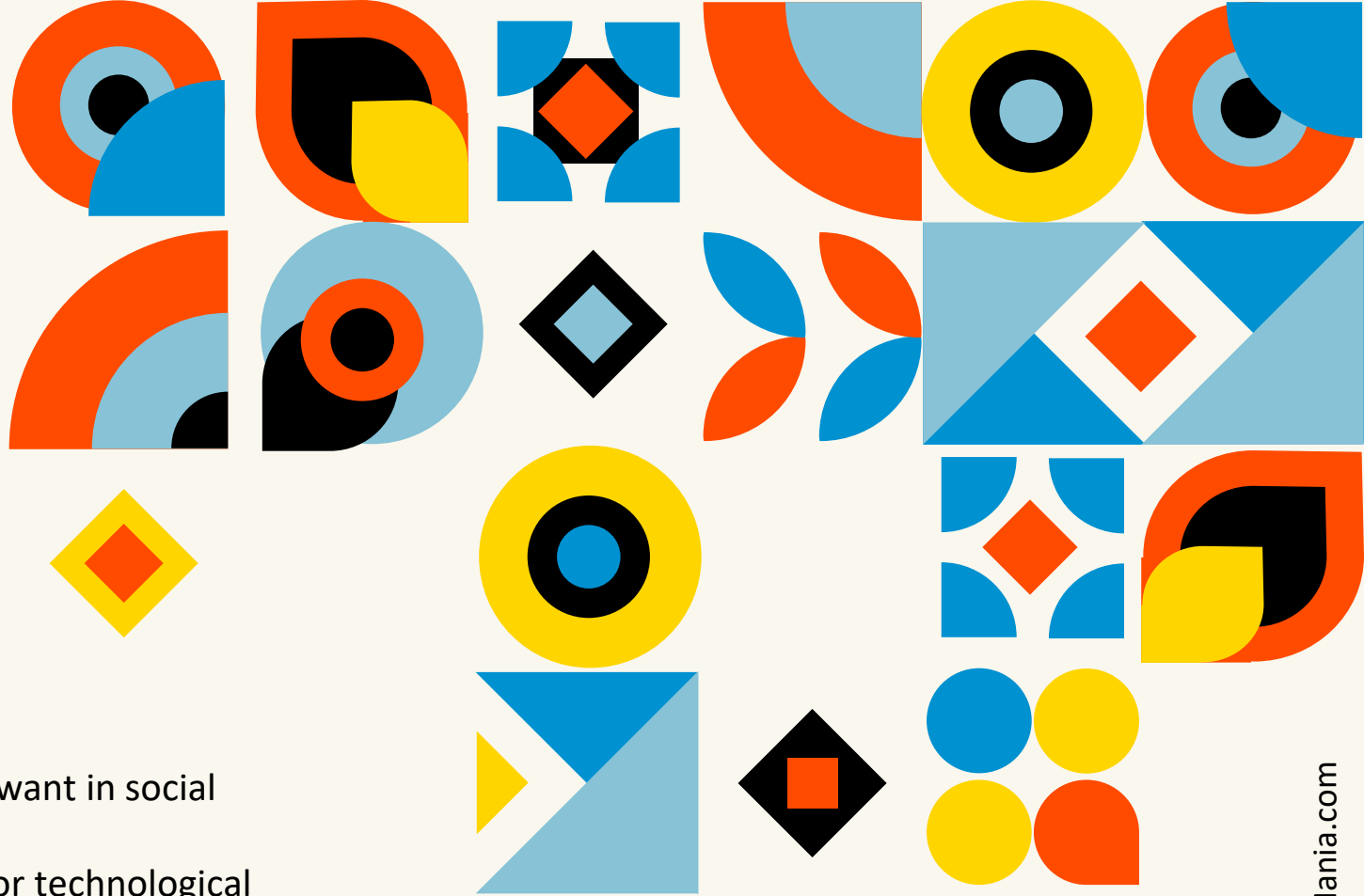- ► The 'real world' is a decidedly complicated place.

Next steps:
- ► How can improvements be made to pilot design, UBI design, and welfare policy and programs in general?

End.

Referenced Literature

Fraser, N., 1994. After the family wage: What do women want in social welfare?. *Social Justice*, *21*(1 (55), pp.80-86.

Fouksman, E. and Klein, E., 2019. Radical transformation or technological intervention? Two paths for universal basic income. *World Development*, 122, pp.492-500.

Hankivsky, O. (Ed.), 2012. An Intersectionality-Based Policy Analysis Framework. Vancouver BC*: Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy*, Simon Fraser University.

Kanenberg, et al. 2019. Revising McPhail's feminist policy analysis framework: Updates for use in contemporary social policy research. *Advances in social work*, 19(1), pp.1-22.