

I would like to continue to advocate for the basic income, BUT...

- Barriers to political UBI-participation in German-speaking countries –¹

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Why pay more attention to the activists?

“There will never be a basic income guarantee without basic income activists: They are the ones who will eventually turn this attractive ideal into a viable policy option” (Vanderborght, 2020, p. ix)

- Within society, civil organizations can exercise considerable power in agenda-setting (Strachwitz, 2022)
- Looking for ways to keep putting the UBI on the political agenda and gather the social approval (Liebermann, 2020)
- The volunteers and especially their **activism experiences** must not be neglected and should also play an important part in UBI research (Vanderborght, 2020)
- **However, surprisingly little research has been conducted so far in the area of UBI-volunteering**

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- 1. Political vs. non-political participation:** Why is it more difficult to recruit volunteers for political than for „ordinary“ non-political organizations?
 - 2. Qualitative study design**
 - 3. Sample of UBI volunteers:** What are the sociodemographic characteristics of the UBI-volunteers?
 - 4. Barriers to UBI-engagement:** What factors make it difficult to retain UBI-volunteers in the long-term?
 - 5. Implications:** How can sustainable solutions be found to address these problems?

- Political participation describes activities undertaken by the public to influence political decision-making processes, either directly or indirectly, by influencing politicians in different spheres of action within the political system (Gaiser et al., 2010; Grasso & Giugni, 2022)
- Ensuring that different needs and interests of various sectors of society are taken into account in the political-decision making process in a balanced way and not being dominated by a privileged elite (Bessant & Grasso, 2019; Coffé & Bolzendahl, 2010; Giugni & Grasso, 2020)
- Strengthening politicians' problem sensitivity to societal problems and increasing the legitimacy of political decisions (Hebestreit & Korte, 2015; Voss, 2014)

Political versus Non-Political Participation

	Social (social-service oriented) Engagement	Political Participation
Unpaid, altruistic voluntary activities that without financial compensation are aimed at enhancing the common good (Wilson, 2000) and unlike spontaneous helping activities are embedded in a formal organisation (Snyder & Omoto, 1992).		
Examples	helping the homeless in a soup kitchen (Pavlova et al., 2022)	drawing attention to poverty with demonstrations (Pavlova et al., 2022)
Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More influenced by self-interested values (Neufeind et al., 2014) • Involves direct help, being accompanied by direct feedback (Pavlova & Silbereisen, 2012) • Cooperative collaboration (Eliasoph, 1998; Walker, 2002) • Moments of success occur with higher probability and comparatively faster (Pavlova et al., 2022) ➤ Comparatively higher perceived self-efficacy (Silbereisen & Pavlova, 2015) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often triggered by negative feelings (anger, disappointment) (Van Zomeren et al., 2008) and influenced by justice dispositions (Neufeind et al., 2014) • Relationship between the beneficiary and volunteer is rather indirect (Hitlin, 2003; Marzana et al., 2012) • More prone to conflicts (Serrat et al., 2021) • Success is delayed or does not occur et all (Eliasoph, 2013; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See also: Pavlova et al. (2022)</i></p>

Political versus Non-Political Participation

	Social (social-service oriented) Engagement	Political Participation
Societal impression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are associated with the promotion of democracy (Musick & Wilson, 2008) • Societal attributions as morally superior and selfless (Walker, 2002) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconventional forms of political participation are perceived to challenge the smooth functioning of society (Musick & Wilson, 2008) • Viewed more negatively, motivated by self-interest and sometimes considered a „dirty business“ (Walker, 2002)
Antecedents and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A clear gap in the qualitative assessment between social and political participation. • In particular, among those with prior experience, each and every aspect of political participation was rated significantly lower, with the largest absolute differences in the key dimensions of effectiveness and contentment (Pavlova et al., 2022) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>See also: Pavlova et al. (2022)</i></p>	

Study goal: **to analyse which barriers arise before and during the work of volunteers in UBI-NPO's**

- Qualitative interviews were conducted via Zoom US with seven experts in German-speaking countries in the period between december 2021 and november 2022
- + the results of a group discussion of UBI activists during the last annual FRIBIS conference
- Duration: between 50 minutes and one hour
- The audio files were transcribed using the simplified transcription method of Dresing & Pehl (2018) and analysed in line with Mayring & Brunner (2009)
- To avoid social desirability bias the statements are anonymized

Sample of UBI volunteers

- People who also volunteer in other areas
- Predominantly middle-aged (between 30-60 years)

“ [...] when you're unemployed, divorced, or have become insolvent, then you understand where the gaps are in today's system, and then the understanding for our demands increases. That's perhaps also the reason why we were able to introduce only a few young members to our association, because they don't understand it.” (Interview 1, p. 9)

- More men than women
- Increasingly academic background and sufficient financial resources

“Those who need it most urgently, for example to fight poverty or increase their low wages, are not represented” (Interview 3, p. 1). “Volunteering means you also have money [...] Otherwise you can't do voluntary work. Many wealthy people do voluntary work and the poor don't, because they can't afford it” (Interview 4, p. 6).

- Large gap between active and passive members (Interview 3b)

Barriers to UBI-engagement

Lack of political efficacy

(Hamilton & Fauri, 2001; Rocha et al., 2010)

Little political knowledge & low political interest

(Rocha, 2000; Rocha et al., 2010)

Lack of time

(Veludo-de-Oliveira et al., 2015)

Insufficient overview of participation opportunities

(Interview 2a,b)

More difficult to mobilize people for than a against a project

(Interview 5a,b)

Future orientation of UBI

(Interview 2b)

Mehr Zeit für Oma

DURCH EIN BEDINGUNGSLOSES GRUNDEINKOMMEN?



Figure 1: Expedition Grundeinkommen (2023)

Probieren wir's aus.



Barriers to UBI-engagement

Abstractness of the
political reform

(Interview 5a)

Difficulty in recording
measurable
successes

(Interview 1)

No tangible
countervalue

(Interview 2b)

Conflicts and disputes
within NPOs

(Interview 4)

Political losses as the
main barrier to long-
term commitment

(Serrat et al., 2021)

No long-term
perspective of the
organisations

(Interview 5)

Weniger Existenz- angst

DURCH EIN BEDINGUNGSLOSES
GRUNDEINKOMMEN?



Probieren wir's aus.



Statements linked to the barriers

- *No tangible counter value* “[...] we do not have anything concrete to offer. If I join a sports club, then once a month or whatever I can use the swimming pool or do some training. What can I get from the Netzwerk as a member, what benefit do I get that I can't get without paying membership?” (Interview 2b, p. 13)
- *Abstractness of UBI/ difficulty to record measurable success* “The difference for us is that we don't have a concrete product. We can't say: "We have now saved this animal or can give this refugee child a place to live." In that sense, we are only active on a very abstract level “ (Interview 1, p. 3)
- *Conflicts within the organizations* “[...] as soon as it becomes important, strong antisocial instincts set in: envy, accusations, insinuations and trench warfare become rife. So the fact that these NPO's or NGO's often get no bigger is not due to the evil in society but because they get involved in fights with each other” (Interview 4, p. 5)

- Long-term perspectives that are more closely aligned with the **intrinsic motivation of volunteers** (Bidee et al., 2013; Haivas et al., 2013)
 - particularly social relationships and the need for competence are decisive (Lorente-Ayala et al., 2020)
- Lack of perceived measurable success could be counteracted by adopting a **strategy of small steps** (Koo & Fishbach, 2017)
 - **Cross-cutting engagement** with organizations in other fields on which UBI could have a positive impact (climate change, care work etc.) – possibly reaching underrepresented people (Neely et al., 2022)

Possible solutions

- Likelihood of volunteering increases when **many different opportunities** are offered (Neely et al., 2022)
- To reduce disappointment, leaders can direct focus to the „**bigger picture**“
- To avoid the feeling of a stagnant organization, **limit the duration** of the collaboration to the implementation of a specific project
- Social attention, and thus more people committed to the UBI, can only be achieved in the future if the various UBI initiatives **put aside their rivalries and disputes**

Thank you for your attention!

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