

Chapter 6. Basic Income: How it fits in the Policy Framework for Green Jobs

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“Prosperity for the few founded on ecological destruction and persistent social injustice is no foundation for a civilized society.”

Tim Jackson, Prosperity without growth

Abstract

The basic argument in this paper is based on the premise that when green is the qualifying criterion for work rather than profit or economic growth, the world of work and the economic scenario in which it has to operate assume a different dimension. The focus of this new dimension is here placed on work performed in the intersection between employment and entrepreneurship. This is a grassroots level hibernation sphere for innovation and thus also a fertile breeding ground for green jobs. A green job in this context is being associated with meaningful work. What makes work meaningful is its potential to enable the worker to participate meaningfully and creatively in the life of society in less materialistic ways. This does not however mean that the instrumental value of work has to be ignored. In whatever perspective work is perceived it ultimately has to assure one's survival and well being. Herein lies the principle of basic income. This paper challenges the conventional economic theory of pay and argues that a national and/or macro policy of basic income can be very conducive to the creation and sustenance of green jobs.

Work in the intersection between employment and entrepreneurship can be characterised as “meaningful”, as there is some value attached to it that the pursuer considers worth striving for, as opposed to merely a bread-winning job. Such work represents both personal aspirations and human and social concerns. James Robertson sees this kind of individualised work, “ownwork”, as he calls it, as the future mode of employment (1985/2006).

How work in this sector should be compensated is a big challenge, to which a basic income could be a solution. In addition to securing people's subsistence, a basic income would serve multiple purposes such as providing start-up funding both for work aimed at profit and non-profit work. A basic income would furthermore serve the envi-

ronment in multiple ways as it facilitates people's individual work that often is small-scale and thereby mostly local and light. In Robertson's words ‘ownwork’ will enhance the informal economy which will become one of the main areas for further economic growth and social progress (1985/2006).

A reassessment of the notion of work is generally called for. This should be linked to green economics that challenges the narrow scope of mainstream economics. Green economics look for solutions that simultaneously address poverty, climate change and biodiversity within an equitable framework. It is a question of re-orientating ourselves and our economics, “manoeuvring it back onto its rightful course to a better “life-world” result,” says Miriam Kennet. (2008, p. 19).

Research in Namibia and South Africa as well as a basic income project in Namibia illustrate the potentials of a basic income as a means of facilitating new venues for subsistence and work. In affluent societies a basic income would greatly enhance the creative sector and activities in civil society. A basic income would assist in levelling the very uneven playing field we face on many fronts.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

There are both economic, environmental and governmental system failures that need to be assessed and the issues renegotiated. To do that we need, on the one hand, new paradigms to allow for alternative approaches to the problems we face, on the other, we need new social instruments to correct these failures, basic income schemes being one of them. Joseph Stiglitz and James Robertson who have been in the economic epicentre, as well as Tim Jackson, whose major focus is sustainable development, will here paint the bigger picture, and offer their alternatives to present day impasses.

Nobel Price winner Joseph Stiglitz was economic adviser to the American President Bill Clinton 1993-1997 and senior vice president and chief economist at the World Bank 1997-2000. He gives us the promise “Another World is Possible” (Chapter 1) in his book Making Globalisation

Work (2006). Furthermore he was involved in the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, appointed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and chaired by presidents Benjamin W Mkapa (Tanzania) and Tarja Halonen (Finland) (2004). Thereafter he directed the Commission set up by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, to consider the measurement of economic performance and social progress. Main members of the commission were Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi (www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr). The report was presented in September 2009.

Stiglitz considers that the latter commission's report (here called the Stiglitz commission) and its implementation may have a significant impact on the way in which our societies look at themselves and, therefore, on the way in which policies are designed, implemented and assessed (2009, p. 9).

James Robertson, again, gives us a model that combines a new economic order with a basic income. He has arrived at these models after extensive experience of how things work in practice. He started as a policy-making civil servant in Whitehall in the 1950s and 1960s, during the decolonisation process, of which he had first hand experience. "It was a very exciting time for a young man", Robertson tells (at <http://www.jamesrobertson.com/about-james-robertson.htm>). Then he worked in the Cabinet Office, participating in the central processes of government, "getting a privileged bird's-eye, worm's-eye view of how they worked." Thereafter he gained experience of mergers in the public service, which were "very educative and very frustrating." After that he turned to the private sector getting involved with management consultancy and systems analysis. He set up the Inter-Bank Research Organisation for the British banks (1968-1973). His next excursion, as he puts it, was to stand for Parliament in 1974, in support of the Campaign for Social Democracy, "Another learning experience." The lessons he learned was that, "although effective processes of conventional politics and government may still be needed to implement radical changes, different processes of 'pre-political' action are needed to get radical changes on to mainstream policy agendas." As part of this agenda he has, among others, created the New Economics Foundation.

Through his work "Prosperity without growth? Transition to a sustainable economy" (2009), Tim Jackson links together different strands.

He points to how narrowly government has been associated with material aims, "hollowed out by a misguided vision of unbounded consumer freedoms". Jackson considers that the concept of governance itself stands in urgent need of renewal. He sees the current economic crisis as "a unique opportunity to invest in change". The short-term thinking that has plagued society for decades should be substituted with the challenging task of "delivering a lasting prosperity" (2009, Foreword).

WHAT KIND OF PROSPERITY

For Jackson prosperity means that human beings should flourish within the ecological limits of a finite planet. "The challenge for our society is to create the conditions under which this is possible. It is the most urgent task of our times." (2009, Foreword).

Jackson considers government to be the principal agent for protecting our shared prosperity, in contrast to the narrow pursuit of growth that "represents a horrible distortion of the common good and of underlying human values". (2009, p.11). The Stiglitz commission moves along these same lines. Its report is, first of all, addressed to political leaders. "New political narratives are necessary to identify where our societies should go." (2008, p. 10). The Stiglitz commission advocates a shift of emphasis from a "production-oriented" measurement system to one focused on the well-being of current and future generations, i.e. toward broader measures of social progress (Stiglitz, 2008, p. 10).

The small island-state Vanuatu captures in an excellent way the effect of looking at things differently. According to the conventional way of measuring well-being, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Vanuatu has been classified as one of the least developed countries in the world. Yet the quality of life for most people, according to Anita Herle (2010, transcript of radio program) is remarkably high. This is how she pictures the situation in Vanuatu:

"Nobody is hungry and there is a food security that comes from local access to fertile gardens. There's no homelessness, everyone is cared for within extended family units. There's relatively little violence, and disputes are resolved within communities by traditional leaders, and the rich natural resources

have been sustained for centuries through excellent traditional resource management.”

In 2006 Vanuatu was declared to be one of the happiest countries in the world by the New Economics Foundation (Herle, 2010), the institution created by James Robertson.

Namibia may illustrate the reverse of this picture. There it becomes clear that the economic growth and “sound” macro-economic indicators that Namibia had had since independence, did not translate into sustained benefits for the majority of the population (Kameta, Haarman, C, Haarman, D, Jauch, H, 2007, p. 20). This can be seen in the operations of the international company Ramatex. This company has contributed to the emergence of a large number of “working poor” in full-time employment, unable to meet even their basic needs. This stands in sharp contradiction to the Namibian government’s stated objective of promoting decent work in line with ILO standards, Kameeta *et al.* note (2007, p. 18). The hope that the private sector would become a large-scale job-creator with substantial impact on employment has not been fulfilled (Kameeta *et al.* 2007, p. 20).

WELL-BEING ASSESSED

The Stiglitz commission recommends that when evaluating material well-being, one should look at income and consumption rather than production. (Recommendation 1). Likewise, the household perspective should be emphasised. (Recommendation 2). The commission notes that without this change of focus one may get misleading indications about how well-off people are, which might result in wrong policy decisions. (2008, pp. 12-13).

The effects of foreign investment may be illustrated by Namibia and the case of Ramatex. The government invested about N\$ 120 million in public funds to set up infrastructure for Ramatex. Kameeta *et al.*’s assessments of the effects are the following:

“The financial support that Ramatex received from the Namibian government is equivalent to the salaries of all workers for 40 months – more than 3 years! A huge investment by any standard which could only be justified if Ramatex’ operations in Namibia would lead to long-term sustainable jobs of decent quality. Otherwise one may well argue that the huge

public investments could have been spent more efficiently on other programmes aimed at job creation.” (Kameeta *et al.*, 2007, p. 18).

Experiences from South Africa also show that the government’s efforts to create jobs have not been effective. The cost of a South African workfare programme amounts to several times the cost of a basic income grant, yet it fails to distribute benefits to those most in need of social assistance (Samson, Haartmann, C. & Haartmann, D., 2001, cited in Kameeta *et al.* 2007, p. 21).

Another aspect that C. Haarmann and D. Haarmann (2005) have brought to the fore is that people in disadvantaged communities carry a disproportionately high burden for caring for other people. The informal social security system effectively imposes an informal tax on the poor. Whereas the richest households support other households with only about 8% of their income, the poorest households spend up to 23% of their meagre incomes on other poor people. In economic terms this constitutes a regressive tax on the poor, diminishing their ability to save and invest, and thereby diminishing the chance to enhance their own economic opportunities (cited in Kameeta *et al.* 2007, p. 9).

Scarcity is also reflected in the local economy. The absence of substantial amounts of cash in the local economy prevents businesses and local projects from becoming successful and sustainable. Especially in small rural communities, the limitation on the demand side to actually pay for the provision of goods furthers the monopoly situation of larger businesses, exploiting the little cash there is. These monopolies are very effective in outmanoeuvring upcoming new business into bankruptcy, and then raising prices again (Haartmann, C. & Haartmann, D, 2004, cited in Kameeta *et al.* 2007, p. 9).

Governments have not fared much better in the affluent part of the world when it comes to promoting citizens’ well-being. The pattern is the same. Analysing the global crisis, social protection and jobs, Joseph Stiglitz notes (2009, p. 3) that the level playing field has been destroyed for years to come because of the bailouts, not only of financial institutions but also the promise that this could be the case with big companies, as signalled by the US and Western European governments. “This has changed the propensity of these companies to undertake risk, because

if they undertake big risks and lose, taxpayers pick the losses up. If they win, they get the profits.”(2009, p. 3).

What are we left with? Stiglitz observes:

“The people in the global economy have the same skills as before the crisis, and the machines and real resources are the same as before the crisis. The problem is that there is an organizational failure, a coordination failure, and a macro-economic failure.” (2009, p. 11).

Robertson has developed a model for monetary reform that would correct the failures Stiglitz refers to. A basic income complemented and reinforced by such a monetary measure would offer a two-pronged approach to address the issue of financial stability different from the policy of bailing out banks adopted by several governments. This is how Robertson sees the new economic system and a basic income interact. Writing in 2009 Robertson notes that there is growing awareness of the need for “quantitative easing”, financial jargon for getting central banks to create large sums of money and pump them into the economy. The question for today’s policy-makers is how and where are they to be pumped in?

“If central banks themselves were accused to keeping the money supply at the right level, and if arrangements already existed for the regular distribution of a Citizen’s Income, the answer would be easy: vary the size of the Citizen’s Income as required. This would inject the money into the economy where it would circulate quickly and would directly benefit those who most need it in economic downturns.” (2009, p. 6).

Robertson’s scheme is based on taxing the value of common resources as an alternative to present taxes on incomes, profits, value added and other financial rewards for useful work and enterprise. Public spending would in his scheme be shifted to distributing a Citizen’s Income, as a share in the value of the common resources, “away from perverse subsidies and heavy spending on big governmental and business organisations to provide dependency- reinforcing services to welfare consumers.” (2009, p. 2).

And here the perception of work is central as a diversified view of work offers an exit from the organisational failures pointed to here.

A DIVERSIFIED WORKING LIFE - A DIVERSIFIED VIEW OF WORK

The uniform view of work that was typical for the industrial society is no longer valid. Work is today increasingly performed in some form that is a deviation of the old model of ‘long-duration, full-time employment’. There is therefore an urgent need to reassess the notion of work, its compensation and regulation. In addition, there are strong economic, social, cultural and environmental reasons for a new approach to work, as highlighted above.

In practice one can talk about at least two parallel working lives

- the “traditional” work performed in an employment relationship;
- work performed outside an employment relationship such as freelance work, artistic work, research without funding, voluntary work, developing a product or trying out a business idea.

An employment relationship forms the basis for labour legislation with associated rights and obligations at work, and also work-related social security. To its nature it is instrumental and value neutral. The second category of work can be characterised as meaningful for the one doing the work and it often reflects the new thinking that is required from changed social circumstances, of which green work is an essential part. Yet, work performed in this sector lacks legal protection, support or proper compensation.

A welcomed reassessment of work and its regulation is the Supiot Report. On the invitation of the European Commission, a group of lawyers and economists looked at the needs for reforming labour law. The report of the committee, lead by Alain Supiot, has been characterized as “one of the most original contributions to thinking on the reform of the employment relationship and employment law.” (Marsden & Stephenson, 2001, p. 1).

Three fundamental observations are made in the Supiot report:

- the employment relationship in its existing form has reached its limits as many firms need more flexible relationships with their employees than it can currently provide;
- tinkering at the edges with special types of employment contract for different categories of workers has diluted protection without increasing new jobs; and
- reform of the employment relationship poses severe problems for labour law, collective bargaining and social insurance, because they have all based themselves on the standard employment relationship (Marsden & Stephenson 2001, p. 3).

There is a promise of something new in the experts' observations. The fundamental redesign of employment that Supiot and his colleagues propose includes the idea of an equivalent to citizenship rights in the arena of work. A person would have an "occupational status" that establishes a citizen's right involving access to markets and trade. It would also cover the transition between different kinds of activity, market and non-market work, training, re-training, and so on. The right to an income and other advantages would also apply in regard to socially recognised non-market activities. By making workers' employment rights less dependent on their current jobs, such changes would spread the risks of short term and uncertain employment more widely, making them more acceptable to workers and so encourage the development of activities that require them. (Marsden & Stephenson 2001, p. 6). This is a good start, although the report tends to focus on employment and firms without sufficient consideration of ownwork. Unfortunately, politicians have not been ready to act on these proposals (see Supiot 2006 and 2009). Nevertheless the report is a step in the right direction and hopefully its proposals could pave way for a basic income.

MEANINGFUL WORK

The Stiglitz commission points to the challenges we face in perceiving the value of work particularly in activities such as medical services, educational services, information and communication technologies, research activities and financial services (Stiglitz commission, 2008, p. 11).

The employment-based perception of work is incapable of capturing substantive aspects; value considerations do not fit the paradigm. Be the products things we need or don't need, be the work something we are passionate about or something we do for our livelihood, anything goes as long as focus is placed on work performed in an employment relationship, a salary is paid and the economic transactions are registered as part of the gross domestic product, GDP. This is the dominant perception of work.

"The exchange of cash is the key", Marilyn Waring observes about how we measure GDP (2000, p. 53) and gives an African perspective on this phenomenon:

"The transactions can be immoral and illegal and universally condemned, but no one cares. Resources are mined, skies are polluted, forests are devastated, watercourses become open sewers and drains, whole populations are relocated as valleys are flooded and dammed, and labour is exploited in chronically inhumane working conditions. The statistics record economic growth."

The Stiglitz commission's response to this state of affairs is to broaden income measures to non-market activities (Recommendation 5).

Household work is not recognized in official statistics, yet it constitutes an important aspect of economic activity. The commission notes that the reason for excluding such data is not so much conceptual difficulties as uncertainty about the data. There has been progress in this arena and the commission considers that more systematic work should be undertaken. "This should start with information on how people spend their time that is comparable both over the years and across countries." (2008, p. 14).

What this boils down to can hardly be better told than Marilyn Waring does (2000, p. 53):

"Consider Tendai, a young girl in the Lowveld in Zimbabwe. Her day starts at 4.00 am when, to fetch water, she carries a 30-litre tin to a borehole about 11 kilometres from her home. She walks barefoot and is home by 9.00 am. She eats a little and proceeds to fetch firewood until midday. She cleans the utensils from the family's morning meal and sits pre-

paring a lunch of *sadsa* for the family. After lunch and the cleaning of the dishes, she walks in the hot sun until early evening, fetching wild vegetables for supper before making the evening trip for water. Her day ends at 9.00 pm after she's prepared supper and put her younger brothers and sisters to sleep. Tendai is considered unproductive, unoccupied and economically inactive. According to the International Economic System, Tendai does not work and is not part of the labour force."

In the affluent part of the world we have groups of highly educated hard-working persons who contribute greatly to a nation's both material and spiritual wealth – artists. Yet, they don't reap the profit. Artists have made the creative sector one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Here some EU statistics from the study *The Economy of Culture in Europe* (2006, p. 6).

- Turnover: The cultural and creative sector turned over more than € 654 billion in 2003, compared to ICT manufactures € 541 billion in 2003 and the car manufacturing industry, € 271 billion in 2001.

- Value added to EU GDP: the cultural and creative sector contributed to 2.6% of EU GDP in 2003. During that same year.

- Chemicals, rubber and plastic products accounted for 2.3%.

- Real estate activities 2.1%.

- Food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing 1.9%

- Textile industry 0.5%.

- Contribution to EU growth: the overall growth of the sector's value added was 19.7% in 1999-2003. The sector's growth during this period was 12.3% higher than the growth of the general economy.

And how does this translate into work? In 2004, 5.8 million people worked in the cultural and creative sector, equalling 3.1% of the total employed population in EU25. While total employment in the EU decreased in 2002-2004, employment in this sector increased by 1.85%.

Here we can talk about both meaningful work and green jobs. And here we see a lot of deviations from 'the standard'. The share of independents is more than twice that in total employment (28.8% against 14.1%). This means own work is performed in the intersection between employment and entrepreneurship. And those who are employed are often so on a more irregular basis. 17% are temporary workers, compared to 13.3% in total employment,

whereas the share of part-time workers is one out of four against 17.6% in total employment. Another distinctive feature is that people working in this sector generally have a high level of education. 46.8% possess a university degree, whereas the percentage in total employment is 25.7% (2006, p. 6). This triggers the question how human capital is treated in present day structures.

HOW THINGS ARE RELATED

In their book *The Spirit Level, Why Equality is better for Everyone*, Wilkinson and Pickett (2010, p. 5) observe that we have got close to the end of an era that has lasted for thousands of years, when economic growth has meant an improvement in people's quality of life. In the rich countries economic growth has largely finished its work. "We are the first generation to have to find new answers to the question of how we can make further improvements to the real quality of human life." (2010, p. 11). Their answer is equality:

"The powerful mechanism which makes people sensitive to inequality cannot be understood in terms either of social structure or individual psychology alone. Individual psychology and societal inequality relate to each other like lock and key. One reason why the effects of inequality have not been properly understood before is because of a failure to understand the relationship between them." (Wilkinson & Pickett 2010, p. 33).

The question of equality is of great relevance for those working in the intersection between employment and entrepreneurship. Many of them are discriminated against in regard to pay. As they mostly lack the support structures that a work place, labour legislation or collective agreements accord, the conditions under which they work can be quite burdensome. Insecurity is often a constant companion. A Canadian study, *Impact of Arts-Related Activities on the Perceived Quality of Life*, revealed that there was no connection between 66 different art genres and the artist's reported sense of psychological well-being. The researchers, A. C. Michalos and P. M. Kahlke, (2008) were surprised, as it is generally recognized that art contributes to people's well-being. They were probably unaware of the hardship that is often associated with artistic work. So a basic income would be a compensation for society's lacking ability to compensate artists for their work. So much so, as artistic

work is an ideal means of improving prosperity without growth.

TO BE RENEGOTIATED

The constant call for economic growth is a major reason for both social and economic ills, but something that is not easily questioned. “Questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries”, Tim Jackson observes in the Foreword to his report “Prosperity without growth?” (2009, p. 7). But this myth about growth has failed us, Jackson notes:

“It has failed the two billion people who still live on less than \$2 a day. It has failed the fragile ecological systems on which we depend for survival. It has failed, spectacularly, in its own terms, to provide economic stability and secure people’s livelihoods.” (Foreword, 2009).

Therefore it needs to be questioned. Jackson’s primary recipe is a new macro-economics for sustainability. The presumption of growth in material consumption can no longer be the basis for economic stability. The folly of separating economy from society and environment must be substituted by ecological and social sustainability (Jackson 2009, p. 10).

Structural change, Jackson notes, must lie at the heart of any strategy to address the social logic of consumerism. “It must consist in two main avenues. The first is to dismantle the perverse incentives for unproductive status competition. The second must be to establish new structures that provide capabilities for people to flourish – and in particular to participate meaningfully and creatively in the life of society – in less materialistic ways.” (2009, p. 11).

HOW A BASIC INCOME FITS THIS PICTURE

A basic income has been tried out in a deprived village Otjivero in Namibia. This is what Jacob Zetterman reported in 2008 after the project had been running for half a year. (<http://www.dagen.se/dagen/Article.aspx?ID=160382>)

Did it turn out, as the critics feared, that people who get money for free become passive and shy working; that in the long run, it leads to society’s collapse; that the only ones to profit from the concept are alcohol dealers and prostitutes?

No, not according to the half-year report from the project. According to this report there are now more people working at Otjivero, and there has been several start-ups since the basic income was introduced. The malnutrition of children under the age of five has decreased from 42% to 17%. More children are attending school and the payment of school fees has doubled. The number of school dropouts has decreased from more than 30% to 5%.

In 2011 this result was confirmed by Guy Standing, one of the architects of the Namibia project. In 2011 he is working on two pilot projects for cash transfers in India (*The Times of India*, 4 October 2011).

At Otjivero, the effects the basic income had had on health was remarkable. The local health clinic reported that its income had increased five times as more people were able to afford health care. Thanks to an improved diet the medicines for HIV-infected persons were more effective. Further, poverty-related violence had decreased by 20%, according to the first half-year report.

The basic income had up till then proved to be a success, and Bishop Kameeta, who directed the project, said in a speech that they now could look towards a promised land that is said to exist beyond the desert march of the poor Namibians. – “It was a society that stood up against poverty and assumed its dignity, this is what we saw.” (<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=1110435337885>)

THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

A number of preconceived ideas had to be done away with when a cash transfer system was tried out in South Africa. One of them was the generally held view in conventional economic theory that a basic income might “undermine labour force participation by reducing the opportunity costs of not working”. When empirically tested against the cash transfer systems in South Africa the researchers found that:

- Social grants provide potential labour market participants with the resources and economic security necessary to invest in high-risk/high-reward job search.
- Living in a household receiving grants is correlated with a higher success rate in finding employment.

■ Workers in households receiving social grants are better able to improve their productivity and as a result earn higher wages (Samson *et al.*, 2004 in Kameeta *et al.*, 2007, p. 22).

In regard to the Namibian model for a basic income “The Basic Income Grant”, BIG, Kameeta *et al.* maintain that it is more than an income support programme.

“It provides security that reinforces human dignity and empowerment. It has the capacity to be the most significant poverty-reducing programme in Namibia, while supporting household development, economic growth and job creation. The cost is ranging from 2.2% to 3.8% of national income.”

Over time, Namibia’s economy will benefit from the long-term growth impact of the Basic Income Grant (Kameeta *et al.*, 2007, p. 23). This report was presented in 2007, thus before they tried out a Basic Income Grant in 2008, with the unambiguously positive results we have seen above.

(<http://www.facebook.com/#!/photo.php?v=1110435337885>)

BASIC INCOME – A WAY OF PROMOTING PROSPERITY

The prosperity Jackson is in search of is a less materialistic society that will enhance life satisfaction. It is a more equal society that will lower the importance of status goods. It is a less growth-driven economy that will improve people’s work-life balance. Enhanced investment in public goods will provide lasting returns to the nation’s prosperity (Jackson, 2009, p. 11).

A basic income would give people the opportunity to opt out of activities that burden the environment, in which they are engaged solely for the sake of their livelihood. Those who are involved in own work, again, to a great extent contribute to social prosperity through culture, caring functions and other voluntary work rather than environmentally harmful activities.

A lot of human energy goes into work in the intersection between employment and entrepreneurship that might or might not be business one day. Whether one is successful or not, should not be an issue as great leaps in development often originate in somebody’s failure or mistake. It is work ‘outside the structures’ rather than employ-

ment that drives development. It is here that much green jobs see the light.

The one size fits all view of work as employment and economic profit needs to be substituted with a ‘both and’ approach. Old and new work formats should be seen as complementary. The notion of meaningful work cuts across formal divisions of work categories such as private and public employment. This is important because outsourcing has blurred the borderline between public and private. Making meaning a part of the equation will give leeway for work in civil society as complementary to work for profit, allowing them to be pursued parallel without internal competition. Or as Robertson says “We will do what we see to be our own good, useful and rewarding work – for ourselves, other people and society as a whole (Robertson, J., 2006 Preface, p. 2). This will bring changes to national economies in the kinds of work people do, the ways they work, and the way society organises work (Robertson, 2006, p. 3).

MAKING PEOPLE PART OF THE EQUATION

As noted above, the Stiglitz commission advocates a shift of emphasis from a “production-oriented” measurement to one focused on the well-being of current and future generations, *i.e.* toward broader measures of social progress (Stiglitz, 2009, p.10). Here Wilkinson and Pickett’s book “The Spirit Level why Equality is better for Everyone”, fills a void. They see that the extraordinarily positive reception their book has received is a sign that there is a “widespread appetite for change and a desire to find positive solutions to our problems.” They point to the social failings that has led to pessimism, and on top of that, the economic recession and its aftermath of high unemployment. “But the knowledge that we cannot carry on as we have, that change is necessary, is perhaps grounds for optimism: maybe we do, at last, have the chance to make a better world.” (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010, p. 11).

In their book Wilkinson and Pickett show that “the quality of social relations in a society is built on material foundations. The scale of income differences has a powerful effect on how we relate to each other. Rather than blaming parents, religion, values, education or the penal system, we will show that the scale of inequality provides a powerful policy lever on the psychological well-being of all of us” (2010, p. 5).

WHAT NEXT?

The Stiglitz commission regards its report as opening a discussion rather than closing it. The report points to issues that ought to be addressed, such as societal values, what we, as a society, care about, and whether we are really striving for what is important.

At the moment of writing (28.10.2011) 795,486 persons around the globe have signed Avaaz' petition The World vs. Wall Street in support of the thousands of Americans who have non-violently occupied Wall Street – “an epicentre of global financial power and corruption”. The occupants call for real democracy, social justice and anti-corruption.

(http://www.avaaz.org/en/the_world_vs_wall_st/)

This adds a “western” dimension to the Arab spring where ordinary citizens began claiming their right against oppressive or undemocratic regimes starting in Tunisia, followed by Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Morocco (?). In the Avaaz posting on the internet on 5 October 2011 launching the Wall Street petition, they note that 2011 could be our century's 1968.

In the 1980s Anna Christensen pointed to the failures raised in this paper, in the form of tensions inherent in the wage-labour society. Writing in the context of future studies, she notes that changes have to emerge from the cracks and paradoxes inherent in a society which is built on wage labour. This change will come about among groups that refuse to adapt themselves to the value order of society, among women, part-time workers, among young people outside the wage labour system that refuse to be miserable and to accept the oppression and humiliation of “employment enhancing measures”. What the new order will look like, nobody knows, it can only grow through practice, Christensen notes (1983, p. 23).

And here we have a parallel with the project economy and the control embedded in it. The message of my contribution is to allow things to grow without external interference. The central question therefore is to give space for a sound development of today's potentials. A basic income would allow for this. And the Arab spring, as well as the occupation of Wall Street, show that people want change – social justice.

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