Sparks, fires and ripple effects:
Basic income initiatives across four countries

Unconditional basic income – a case of social experimentation
Wageningen UR, Stadium Generale
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Based on research carried out by Julia Backhaus (Maastricht University) and Bonno Pel (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

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   the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Canada
   ➔ One (common) cause?
   ➔ Experience, experiments & evidence

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   ➔ Challenging, altering or replacing dominant institutions?
   ➔ Based on case study research for the TRANSIT project

the TRANSIT project

www.transitsocialinnovation.eu
Our cases: 20 social innovation networks

Basic income in the Netherlands

- 1985 - 1994: discussions around basic income as a policy option
- 2001: "silent implementation" (Groot & van der Veen, 2000) followed by a decade of silence
- 2013: Rutger Bregman’s article “Why we should give free money to everybody”
- 2014: MIES launches its crowd-funding platform
- 2015: network to coordinate experimentation
Basic income in Germany
- 1980s: discussions in academic circles and associations of unemployed
- Early 2000s: several networks form
- 2005: dm CEO Götz W. Werner starts promoting his basic income model
- 2008: Online petition for a basic income achieves a public hearing
- 2014: Crowd-funding initiative Mein Grundeinkommen starts

Basic income in Switzerland
- Early 2000s: networks and initiatives form
- 2008: Movie-essay "Basic Income – a cultural impulse"
- 2012: Launch of the citizen initiative for a popular vote
- 2013: 126,000 valid signatures are submitted at the palais fédéral in Bern
- 2016: Swiss vote on introducing a basic income & Lausanne announces pilot

Basic income in Canada
- 1974 – 1979: the MINCOME experiment
- around 2005: interest revives (advocacy by Senator Hugh Segal starts)
- 2008: Founding of BIEN-Canada (now BICN)
- 2011: Evelyn L. Forget publishes results of the Canadian MINCOME experiment
- 2016: The "BIG push" campaign & Ontario commits to a basic income pilot

Networking networks
- Independent, self-organising individuals & groups
- Information hubs: (re-)posting, (re-)tweeting, repeating
- Ideas travel: imitation of moves
- Images travel: powerful pictures help
- International collaboration
A common cause?

Yes:
- Promoting the idea of an unconditional, universal income
- Stimulating societal debate
- Non-acceptance of the status-quo

No:
- Different models
- Different framings
- Different approaches

One vision?

Basic Income Canada Network
Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti

The Basic Income We Want
A recent surge of activities and activism

- Crowd-funding initiatives (DE, NL, US, …)
- Online petitions (DE, NL, EU)
- Swiss popular vote
- Planned experiments (NL, CH, FI, CA)

Experiences, experiments & evidence

- Macro-trends: rising inequality, persistent poverty, demographic changes, technological changes
- What institutions are needed?
- ‘Future-proofing’ social welfare systems
- Evidence-based policy-making as a trend
- Policy-makers are picking it up

“If Canada, Switzerland, Finland and the Netherlands are taking the basic income seriously, then Britain cannot keep dismissing it without its own test of the evidence.”

-- Hannah Fearn, The Independent Online, 9 March 2016
Transformative social innovation?

Transformation: challenging, altering, or replacing institutions

- Challenging: questioning the status-quo, current systems and ideas (in light of future trends)
- Altering: basic income-inspired tax reforms or benefits
- Replacing: not yet...
  - Introduced as national policy
  - But the ‘knowings’ and ‘doings’ of some

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Thank you!

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WAT ZOU JIJ DOEN MET EEN BASISINKOMEN?