

Press release

Basic Income Pilot Project reaches target of one million applications in 70 hours

First long-term study in Germany on unconditional basic income aims to increase the number of participants due to overwhelming response

Berlin, August 21, 2020 - The application phase for the joint study by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin) and the association Mein Grundeinkommen started on August 18, 2020. In order to have the best possible data basis for the research, the cooperation partners hoped to receive at least one million applications for participation in the study by the end of the application phase on November 10, 2020. As this number was already reached after three days, the organizers of the study now want to increase the planned number of study participants. "Reaching the target in three months seemed almost impossible the day before yesterday. Now the applicants have done it in 70 hours. We are overwhelmed," said Michael Bohmeyer, initiator of the association Mein Grundeinkommen.

As the minimum number of applicants has already been reached, the study can go ahead as planned. However, it is still possible to apply to take part in the study until November 10, 2020. "The fact that we have already reached our target of one million applications within the first week, which was originally set for November, is surprising even to us. For us researchers, the great interest in the study confirms society's desire for independent research on basic income," said Jürgen Schupp, Senior Research Fellow at DIW Berlin and Professor of Sociology at FU Berlin.

The Basic Income Pilot Project aims to pay participants 1,200 euros a month unconditionally. Participants do not have to prove that they are in need and can earn an unlimited amount of extra money if they wish. Anyone who has their first place of residence in Germany at the time of application and is at least 18 years old can apply.

More applications mean more participants

The larger and more diverse the group of applicants from which the participants are selected, the more reliable the results of the study will be. As the number of applicants is continuously growing, the initial number of 120 study places is now being increased. This was chosen as the smallest possible number of participants in order to achieve meaningful and generalizable results. All study costs were covered in advance - made possible by donations from over 140,000 private individuals.

The majority of these donors are long-term donors, so no appeal for donations was planned in the run-up to the study. In order to do justice to the great interest in the pilot project and to include further test subjects in the study, the costs of the basic income must be securely covered for three years for each additional participant. The pilot project is now calling for donations: How many more participants will be possible by the end of the application phase will therefore depend on the number of donations received by November 10, 2020.

"More applications means more participants - and that ensures better research. We are now increasingly calling on other donors from civil society who are willing to finance additional basic incomes through their donations," said Michael Bohmeyer.

Study design remains unchanged

As planned, payment of the basic income will begin in spring 2021 and continue for three years. In order to research the effects of the UBI on the participants, they will be asked to complete seven online questionnaires during the study period, which will include questions on employment, time use, consumer behavior, values and health. Voluntary, qualitative interviews are also planned with some participants.

To ensure that any observed effects are actually attributable to the receipt of the basic income, there is a comparison group that is also accompanied during the study period and takes part in the surveys, but does not receive the UBI. The size of the comparison group is also increased by ten participants for each additional participant receiving a basic income.

The study is intended to provide basic research on the UBI for the first time. As human decision-making processes are highly complex and the focus lies also on changes in the decisions and cognitive abilities of the participants, the study is being supported by scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Research on Collective Goods and the University of Cologne with psychological and behavioral economics research.

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