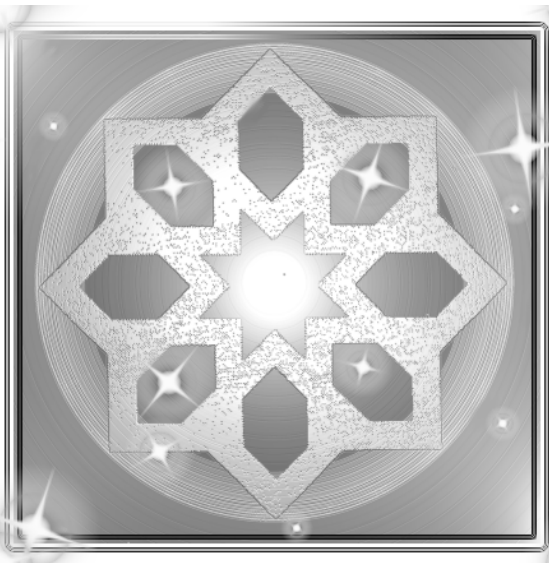


UNIVERSAL INCOME

Ao Whānui Moni Whiwhi



MEETING OUR LEGAL ECONOMIC
RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES

**What are Universal
Income Systems?**

**How can they
be funded?**

**What are
the benefits?**

General Information

1. General
Universal Income

What are Universal Income Systems ?

Universal Income Systems are economic systems that comply with international human/economic rights laws: e.g. the *International Bill of Human Rights*.

They are legally binding on all ratifying countries like NZ. When combined with their interdependent sustainability and development conventions, *these laws guarantee, as a legal right, an amalgamated type of unconditional minimum income level* for every adult in addition to their present income. This type of income or wage can be understood as *payment for every person's existing, yet unpaid, "job" responsibilities for their role in the shared sovereignty over their democratic society*¹. In common speech, this can be referred to as paying everyone for being "the boss." The payment creates in "real terms" full-employment for everyone, ending unemployment and financial poverty. It also helps educate the public on the responsibilities and behaviour changes required, as this income is clearly not a handout.

Vital job responsibilities all people have, as defined in law, include:

- monitoring and securing human rights for everyone,
- working in harmony with our natural environment and protecting it for future generations,
- and supporting a healthy, democratic, environmentally sustainable economy, encompassing the expense, education and well-being of the sovereign people.

The wage/dividend is unconditional. No-one has the right to take it away from anyone else. If there is an economic problem, the society would find ways to generate income without taking people's basic "living wage" away.

It is universal. The income is provided to all citizens and permanent residents.

Universal Income Systems include upgrading the education system to encompass people learning about human rights--and their democratic responsibilities--in their role of the shared sovereignty over their society. In compliance with the *International Bill of Human Rights*, these models affirm the necessities of, and the rights to:

1. freedom from the fear of poverty
2. a minimum-wage set at a level whereby one person's income is sufficient to provide for a household

3. freedom from forced or compulsory labour programmes and free choice of employment
4. compensation in the event of "unemployment"
5. free* health and education, including tertiary levels
6. the equality of status that we all share living in a democratic society
7. participation in the decision-making and management of issues involving one's interests, family/whānau and society without imposed discriminative/economic constraints
8. options for at least one parent/guardian to stay home to guide development of children in their care

In countries that have ratified the *International Bill of Human Rights* like New Zealand, international human rights laws supersede conflicting national statute laws.

Some Types of Universal Incomes

Any economic model meeting human rights standards--such as some proposals representing Basic Income, Social Wage, Social Credit, Guaranteed Annual Income, Universal Basic Income and Unconditional Universal Income (UUI)--is a type of Universal Income.



A UUI Banner, at the Hikoi of Hope, 1998 Wellington, NZ

Note: Both Universal Income (UI) and Unconditional Universal Income (UUI) refer to the same concept. UUI is the term used by advocates campaigning for a UI such as *UUI Action*: an informal grassroots organisation.

Ways of Funding Universal Income Systems

There are a variety of ways to fund Universal Incomes, e.g. by "progressive means" adapting one or more of the following:

- adjustment of anomalies and inequities of the existing tax structure: a primary source for funding

- resource/energy/pollution taxes based on equal percentages of one's income/wealth versus uniform charges (e.g. GST, petrol taxes, etc.) which are 100% regressive, penalising the poor
- **Negative Income Tax (NIT)**, where taxpayers with income above a given threshold pay taxes in a cash amount equal to the difference ("positive taxes"); and taxpayers with income below the threshold receive NIT refundable credits in a cash amount equal to the difference ("negative taxes")
- removal of work requirements from existing benefits (e.g. unemployment, DPB, illness, solo parent), forming a type of hybrid NIT social insurance safety net for all, and yet retaining a tier for exceptions²
- **Tobin Tax** on international financial transactions, esp. speculative currency exchange transactions
- taxes on unearned income, capital gains tax
- progressive taxes and/or capping high incomes
- see also the *UI Funding Brochure*

Nobel laureates in economics such as James Tobin, Jan Tinbergen, Herbert A. Simon and James Meade have shown the economic viability of Universal Income Systems.



"If all people are to be rulers, which is what democracy means, then all people must be educated as rulers; nine-tenths of them cannot continue to be trained as slaves [...] we are operating our

schools as if most people were fit only for servile occupations, not for the obligations of free citizenship."

Robert Hutchins, PhD, prominent 20th-century education leader and philosopher
The Conflict in Education, 1952

In 1981, renowned inventor, architect, engineer, and 20th-century thinker with 47 honorary doctorates, R. Buckminster Fuller, stated that there were four billion billionaires on our planet, and that *"the planet earth's four billion billionaires have not been yet notified of their good fortune."* Why we are not receiving our share of the wealth is because of *"obsolete power structures of all kinds"* and that these *"exploitative systems are organized only to take bias advantage of all scarcities."* **Fuller; Critical Path, 1981**



"The answer or part of the answer is rather clear: everybody should be guaranteed a decent basic income."

John Kenneth Galbraith PhD
Economist
Guardian Weekly, 1999

"I am now convinced that the simplest approach will prove to be the most effective – the solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income."

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.,
(Nobel Peace Prize winner 1964)
Chaos or Community?, 1967



"Our vision is that free, appropriate and quality health care and education, decent secure and affordable housing, and a universal basic income will be available to all as of right."

National Peoples Assembly, Aotearoa NZ, 1994



"Where is the leadership from this Government at a time when we need vision; at a time of recession when there should be innovative solutions to share the existing wealth more equitably; at a time when proposals like unconditional universal income should be looked at?"

Rod Donald, Alliance MP and Green Party Co-Leader – Speech to Parliament on the Social Security Amendment Bill (No. 5), 1998

Notes

1. In a democratic society, every person has the shared job responsibilities of that nation's acting sovereign. (Democracy = Gk. Demos [people] + kratos [rule]). For those responsibilities see *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* Preamble and the *General Assembly Resolution 53/144* on Rights and Responsibilities. See also the free online book *World of Universal Income* available on the "Resources" page of the website [uitrustnz.org]. Start there for more in-depth information on all topics and laws discussed in this brochure and much more.
2. As with all rights, "benefit levels" can be increased; but not discriminatively decreased below the legal standards. See *ICESCR* Art. 5.
3. Cover Design by Patrick Danahey, *Changing our World by Changing our Perceptions*. based on a Sufi contemplation diagram.

Benefits of a Universal Income

A Universal Income would

- end poverty and unemployment. It would restore full-employment by paying all adults, at minimum, a legal minimum-wage, of *"one person's income being sufficient to provide for a household,"* for their existing unpaid job in the shared sovereignty over their democratic society.
- raise the standard of living and create more jobs. By providing a minimum-wage at the above legal level, only one person in a household need work at a traditional job. This leaves more quality jobs for others. It will also reduce pollution and the expense for people now compelled to travel to remote jobs.
- restore free education, at tertiary levels, as well as provide free/equal access universal health care. Both are essential requisites for a sustainable democratic society.*
- reduce violence by removing the stress caused by discriminative and economic constraints designed to force people to work at jobs that pay no more than poverty wages.
- re-establish a functional democracy. People will have sufficient resources, time and skills to participate in the decision-making and management processes affecting their lives and interests.
- revitalise the economy. Businesses prosper when everyone has an income to buy goods and services. Profits and income increase for everyone.

***Note:** "Free" means, that after everyone has paid an equal percentage of their income/resources in taxes, those services paid through taxation are free for everyone to use: no additional charge.



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