



The basic income experiment 2017–2018 in Finland

Preliminary results

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The Basic Income Experiment 2017–2018 in Finland. Preliminary results

Olli Kangas, Signe Jauhiainen, Miska Simanainen, Minna Ylikännö (eds.)

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Abstract	<p>Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government set customer orientation of services as one of the strategic objectives of the Governmental Programme. To achieve this goal, Sipilä's government decided to launch a basic income experiment during its term. By experimenting with basic income, Sipilä's government tried to find out whether the introduction of a basic income could make the social security system in Finland more inclusive and further increase the labour supply.</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Kela - The Social Insurance Institution of Finland have agreed on the assessment of the basic income experiment. The assessment of the basic income experiment is carried out by Kela, together with the VATT Institute for Economic Research, the University of Turku, the University of Helsinki, the Labour Institute for Economic Research, the Finnish Association for Mental Health and Tänk. The scientific director of the research project is Programme Director (SRC) Olli Kangas, from the University of Turku, and the administrative director is Research Professor Jaana Martikainen, from Kela.</p> <p>The Basic Income Experiment Evaluation Project studies the effects of basic income, utilizing both registry, survey and interview data. The research results of the subprojects will be reported in stages during the evaluation research project running from 2019 to 2020.</p> <p>This report is the first research publication presenting the effects of the basic income experiment in Finland. It includes a preliminary register-based statistical analysis of the employment effects of the experiment for 2017. An analysis based on survey data examines the impact of the experiment on the wellbeing of the basic income recipients</p>		
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Tiivistelmä	<p>Pääministeri Juha Sipilän hallitus kirjasi hallitusohjelman yhdeksi strategiseksi tavoitteeksi palveluiden asiakaslähtöisyyden. Tämän tavoitteen saavuttamiseksi hallitus päätti käynnistää hallituskaudellaan perustulokokeilun. Kokeilulla hallitus pyrki selvittämään, voitaisiinko perustulon kaltaisella sosiaaliturvavalmilla uudistaa sosiaaliturvaa nykyistä osallistavammaksi ja työhön kannustavammaksi.</p> <p>Sosiaali- ja terveysministeriö ja Kela ovat sopineet perustulokokeilun arvioinnista. Perustulokokeilun arvioinnista vastaa Kela, joka toteuttaa sen yhdessä VATT:n, Turun yliopiston, Helsingin yliopiston, Palkansaajien tutkimuslaitoksen, Suomen Mielenterveysseuran ja ajatushautomo Tänkin kanssa. Tutkimuksen tieteellisenä johtajana toimii ohjelmajohtaja (STN) Olli Kangas Turun yliopistosta ja hallinnollisena johtajana tutkimusryhmän päällikkö, tutkimusprofessori Jaana Martikainen Kelasta.</p> <p>Perustulokokeilun arviointitutkimushankkeessa tutkitaan laajasti perustulon vaikutuksia ja hyödynnetään niin rekisteri-, kysely- kuin haastattelututkimusaineistoja. Eri osahankkeiden tutkimustuloksia raportoidaan vaihteittain arviointitutkimushankkeen aikana vuosina 2019–2020.</p> <p>Käsillä oleva raportti on ensimmäinen Suomen perustulokokeilun vaikutuksia esittelevä tutkimusjulkaisu. Se sisältää alustavan rekisteripohjaisen tilastollisen analyysin kokeilun työllisyysvaikutuksista vuoden 2017 osalta. Kyselyaineistoon pohjautuvassa analyysissä tarkastellaan kokeilun vaikutuksia perustulonsaajien hyvinvointiin.</p>		
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Referat	<p>Statsminister Juha Sipiläs styrelse erkände kundorientering av tjänster som ett av regeringens programmets strategiska mål. För att uppnå detta mål beslutade regeringen att inleda ett basinkomstexperiment under sin period. Genom att experimentera basinkomst, försökte regeringen ta reda på om en socialförsäkringsmodell som skulle kunna göra socialförsäkringssystemet mer inkluderande och arbetsvänligt.</p> <p>Social- och hälsovårdsministeriet och Kela har kommit överens om en bedömning av basinkomstexperimentet. Bedömningen av basinkomstexperimentet utförs av Kela, som implementerar det tillsammans med Statens ekonomiska forskningscentral, Åbo universitet, Helsingfors universitet, Löntagarnas forskningsinstitut, Förening för Mental Hälsa i Finland och Tänk. Forskningsdirektören är programledare (RSF) Olli Kangas från Åbo Universitet och forskargruppens administrativa chef, forskningsprofessor Jaana Martikainen från Kela.</p> <p>Basinkomstexperimentet utvärderingsforskningsprojektet undersöker i stor utsträckning effekterna av basinkomst och utnyttjar både register-, undersöknings- och intervjuforskningsdata. Forskningsresultaten från olika delprojekt rapporteras i etapper under utvärderingsforskningsprojektet 2019–2020.</p> <p>Denna rapport är den första rapport som presenterar effekterna av basinkomstexperimentet i Finland. Den innehåller en preliminär registerbaserad statistisk analys av experimentets sysselsättningseffekter för 2017. En analys baserad på surveydata undersöker effekterna av experimentet på de basinkomstmottagarnas välbefinnande.</p>		
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1 Introduction

1.1 What is the Finnish basic income experiment about?

Olli Kangas, Signe Jauhiainen, Miska Simanainen, Minna Ylikännö

Discussion of the problems of the Finnish social security system has been going on for a long time. Especially since the severe economic recession of the 1990s, one Finnish Government after another has acknowledged the need to reform the social security system. The Government of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä (2015–2019) has also strived to reform the social security system so that it would better meet the requirements of a changing working life, provide more incentives to work, involve less bureaucracy, and above all be less complicated than the current system. The Government also strives to promote a culture of experimentation as a part of representative democracy. The idea is that by trying out different new models for delivering social benefits and services on a small scale it is possible to obtain useful information about the way in which these new models can be implemented nationwide.

The section titled “Wellbeing and health” in the Government programme¹ lists customer-oriented services as a key strategic goal. To achieve this goal, the Government decided to launch a basic income experiment during its term of office. Through the basic income experiment, the Government wishes to investigate whether a social security model based on a basic income could promote more active participation and provide a stronger incentive to work than the present system.

¹ <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/sipilan-hallitus/hallitusohjelma>

Before the start of the actual experiment, the Prime Minister's Office commissioned a preliminary report on the suitability of various universal basic income models, namely an unconditional full basic income, a partial basic income, and a negative income tax, as well as further possible models. The report was the basis for the enactment of the Act on the basic income experiment in December 2016. A decision was taken to limit the experiment to a two-year period, from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018.

The model chosen for the experiment was a partial basic income and the amount of basic income was 560 euros per month. This corresponded to the monthly net amount of the basic unemployment allowance and the labour market subsidy provided by Kela (the Social Insurance Institution of Finland). Two thousand persons aged 25–58 years who received an unemployment benefit from Kela in November 2016 were selected for the actual experiment. They were selected through random sampling without any regional or other emphasis.

In June 2018 the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and Kela agreed on the evaluation of the basic income experiment. Kela is responsible for the evaluation of the experiment and carries out the evaluation together with its cooperation partners.² The scientific director of the study is Programme Director (Strategic Research Council) Olli Kangas, from the University of Turku, and the administrative director is the head of the research group, Research Professor Jaana Martikainen, from Kela.

This report is the first research publication on the effects of the Finnish basic income experiment. It includes a preliminary register-based statistical analysis of the employment effects of the experiment for 2017. The register data covering the whole period of the experiment will be ready for scientific analysis at the end of 2019. The survey-based analysis focuses on the effects of the experiment on the wellbeing of the basic income recipients. For reasons of time limitations, only some of the key results of the survey are reported in this publication.

The statistical analysis of register data was carried out by Kari Hämäläinen (VATT Institute for Economic Research), Ohto Kanninen (Labour Institute for Economic Research), Miska Simanainen (Kela) and Jouko Verho (VATT Institute for Economic Research). The following persons have participated in the reporting of the survey results: Olli Kangas (University of Turku), Minna Ylikännö (Kela), Miska Simanainen (Kela), Signe Jauhiainen (Kela), Merja Komu (Kela), Annamari Tuulio-Henriksson (University of Helsinki), Mikko Niemelä (University of Turku), Helena Blomberg (University of Helsinki), Christian Kroll (University of Helsinki), Markus Kanerva (TÄNK) and Maarit Lassander (Finnish Association for Mental Health). The research

² VATT Institute for Economic Research, University of Turku, University of Helsinki, Labour Institute for Economic Research, Finnish Central Association for Mental Health, TÄNK

group wishes to thank Kristiina Dammert from Kela for her expert help in gathering the survey material and Milla Ikonen from Kela for preparing the report for publication.

1.2 Scientific evaluation of the effects of the basic income experiment

So far, only limited scientific evidence has been available regarding the effects of basic income in Western societies. The Finnish basic income experiment is a unique project, and the data it generates can be used when reforming current social security systems. Despite its deficiencies, the Finnish experiment is exceptional from an international perspective in that participation in the experiment was compulsory and it was designed as a randomised field experiment.

The research project evaluating the effects of the basic income experiment comprehensively investigates the effects of the basic income experiment by utilising register, survey and interview data. Reports on the results of the different substudies will be presented in stages during the research project in 2019–2020.

The primary aim of the Finnish basic income experiment is to study the effects of the basic income on the employment and income. These effects are studied by utilising register data gathered in official registers on employment, taxable income and participation in employment-promoting measures, as well as on benefits provided by Kela for the target population. The register data includes information about all participants in the basic income experiment (2,000 persons) and about the control group (173,000 persons).

The research project also studies the effects of the basic income on the wellbeing of the recipients of basic income. For this purpose, a survey was conducted in October–December 2018. The survey was targeted at the 2,000 recipients of a basic income and at 5,000 persons in the control group,³ and it included questions about social and financial wellbeing, subjective health, job-search activity and employment, as well as about attitudes towards basic income. The survey included questions from the European Social Survey (ESS 2016 and 2018) and other standardised population surveys (International Social Survey Program, European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions, MHI, ATH), which enables a comparison with other unemployed people, other Finns and other Europeans. Some of the questions were tested in a

³ The control group was selected through random sampling of 5,000 persons among the persons who in November 2016 received unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from Kela.

phone survey at the beginning of 2017 targeted at unemployment jobseekers who received unemployment benefits from Kela.⁴

The survey was carried out as a phone interview during the period 17 October – 14 December 2018.⁵ As shown in the following table, the response rates were rather low for both the test group and the control group. However, this is not exceptional in survey studies. The survey results will later be combined with the register data for those respondents who have given their consent for such a procedure (82.3 per cent of respondents).

Table 1: Response rates of the survey

Study group	Number of persons reached	Number of successful interviews	Response rate (%)
Treatment group	1,869	586	31.35
Control group	5,161	1,047	20.29
Total	7,030	1,633	23.23

⁴ Aarnio, J. (2017): Korkea subjektiivisen hyvinvoinnin taso ja työttömyys: Tutkimus perustyöttömyysturvan saajien subjektiivisesta hyvinvoinnista. TOPSOS Licentiate thesis, University of Turku. <http://tutkimusblogi.kela.fi/arkisto/3884>

⁵ The phone interview material was collected by Taloustutkimus Oy, as commissioned by Kela.

2 Employment effects for the first year of the basic income experiment

Kari Hämäläinen, Ohto Kanninen, Miska Simanainen, Jouko Verho

In this chapter we report on the first results based on administrative register data. One undeniable advantage of the register data is that it covers every person in the experiment. Thus, non-response bias cannot distort the results. The downside is of course the delay in the availability of the register material. The register data of the Finnish Tax Administration and the Finnish Centre for Pensions (Eläketurvakeskus) are available towards the end of the year following the calendar year under review. At this stage we can thus only report on the experiences for the first year of the experiment.

Measuring employment on the basis of register data is not straightforward. Often a person can have long employment spells with very low annual income. It is not very clear for what periods a person who has signed a so-called zero-hour contract, for example, should be considered as being in employment and for what periods he or she should be considered unemployed. In this report, the problem of definition was tackled through several measurements: employment spells in the open labour market which exceed a certain wage level, the share of persons who have had any earnings or income from self-employment during the year, as well as total earnings and income from self-employment.

2.1 Differences in employment status and receipt of benefits from Kela between the treatment group and the control group

The results for the first year of the experiment are presented in Table 2, which shows averages for employment status and the most important benefits paid out by Kela to those who received a basic income and for the control group. Owing to randomisation, the differences in these averages give a reliable estimate of the effects on employment status for the first year of the experiment.

Table 2. Employment status and benefits paid out by Kela on average in 2017

	Treatment group	Control group	Difference	p-value
Employment status				
Days in employment (number of days)	49.64	49.25	0.39	0.87
Persons with earnings or income from self-employment (%)	43.70	42.85	0.85	
Earnings and income from self-employment, total (€)	4,230	4,251	-21	
Benefits provided by Kela (€)				
Unemployment benefits	5,852	7,268	-1415	
Social assistance	941	1,344	-403	
Housing allowance	2,525	2,509	16	
Sickness allowance	121	216	-96	
Number of observations	2,000	173222		

Note: (i) The days in employment are based on data on accrual periods from the Finnish Centre for Pensions. Days of employment are defined as periods in the open labour market for which the calculated daily wage amounts to at least 23.74 euros; (ii) The percentage who have received earnings or income from self-employment and their number is based on data from the Finnish Tax Administration; (iii) The data on benefits provided by Kela is based on data from Kela's benefit register; (iv) The p-value shows the level of significance at which the equality of the averages for the treatment group and the control group can be cancelled out. Typically the difference between the groups is considered statistically significant when the p-value is 0.05 or smaller.

The employment variables in Table 2 give an indication of the difficult labour market situation of the target population for the basic income experiment. Of the persons who in November 2016 received an unemployment benefit from Kela, 57 per cent had no earnings or income from self-employment in 2017. The figures also reveal that the average income of those who had been in employment was only around 9,920 euros. The annual incomes earned from the open non-subsidised labour market are even smaller, since the taxable earnings also include earnings during periods of wage subsidy programmes.

Table 2 shows that the experiment did not have any effect on employment status during the first year of the experiment. The number of annual days in employment for the group that received a basic income is on average about half a day higher than for the control group. Overall, receipt of any positive earnings or income from self-employment, either from the open labour market or the subsidised labour market, is about one percentage point more common in the treatment group. However, resulting earnings and incomes from self-employment turned out to be 21 euros smaller.

When planning the evaluation phase of the basic income experiment, the primary outcome was defined to be the number of days in open employment. For this reason, we report the statistical significance test only for the main response variable. This helps us to avoid any corrections for multiple hypotheses testing, which would

otherwise be necessary. Table 2 reports a p-value that is far from significant, i.e. the treatment group did not find it statistically significantly easier to find employment than the control group.

More significant differences between the treatment group and the control group occur when considering benefits provided by Kela. As regards unemployment benefits, this was expected, since the aim of the basic income was to replace specifically the unemployment benefits provided by Kela. It is more surprising to note that the amount of the unemployment benefits paid to the treatment group is in fact only about one-fifth smaller than the amount of the benefits paid to the control group. This is a direct consequence of the Act on the basic income experiment, according to which unemployed persons must apply for unemployment benefits just as before if they are entitled to unemployment benefits that are higher than the basic income. In this way, especially families with children who received a basic income were forced to apply for unemployment benefits in order to receive child increases. According to the research group that planned the experiment, the child increases should have been included in the basic income, whereby the basic income would have also been a truly unconditional benefit for families with children. It did not turn out this way, however. This feature of the experiment means that a majority of individuals in the treatment group did not benefit from the lower bureaucracy and the fact that active labour market measures were non-compulsory due to choosing to apply for the standard unemployment benefit.

There is a clear difference between the groups also as regards the receipt of social assistance. As a starting point, the receipt of social assistance should be similar in the treatment group and the control group for equivalent levels of employment and earnings. However, Table 2 points out that the treatment group received on average 400 euros less in social assistance than the control group in 2017. A possible explanation for the difference may to a large extent be computational. The basic income was also paid to persons who had found employment, and therefore their disposable income was higher than for persons in the control group with equivalent income. The basic income was considered as income when determining social assistance, in which case there was less need for social assistance for those who received a basic income, at least for those who found employment. It should also be noted that the basic income experiment started at the same time as the administration of the basic social assistance scheme was transferred from the municipalities to Kela. The backlog in the processing of applications for social assistance due to the transfer may have decreased the willingness to apply for social assistance to a larger extent in the group that received a basic income.

The treatment group received the same amount of housing allowance as the control group. The result is in line with the effects on employment status, even though one

would expect to find the same computational effect for both housing allowance and social assistance. In a similar way to other benefits, the basic income was considered as income for the purposes of the housing allowance, in which case one might expect that the benefit amount would be smaller for the group that received a basic income if their disposable income has increased. We will study the criteria for granting benefits and the claims processes in more detail, among other things, at a later stage in the research project.

The sickness allowance paid by Kela is on average markedly smaller than the other benefits referred to above. The difference of 100 euros between the groups is fairly large in relative terms. The difference should not, however, be interpreted as being directly due to changes in the occurrence of illness since the basic income recipients do not have a need to claim sickness allowance corresponding to the control group. The basic income in itself amounts to approximately the same as the sickness allowance, and the basic income recipients do not need to change to another benefit in order to avoid activation measures, for instance.

2.2 Background variables for the treatment group and the control group and the balancing of these

The recipients of a basic income were selected through simple random sampling. The aim of the study design was to find two groups that only differed as regards the basic income. This was made possible through randomisation since such a procedure distributes all possible factors on average evenly between the groups. In such a situation, factors related to motivation, health, life management, etc. that cannot be observed and that have proven problematic in typical evaluations of effects do not systematically distort the evaluation of the effects of the basic income experiment. Achieving this aim depends to a significant degree on the size of the study group. Only as the number increases will different background factors start levelling out between the groups. Contrary to the recommendation of the research group, the size of the treatment group in the basic income experiment was set at only 2,000 persons. Based on the background factors selected, Table 3 shows how well it was possible to construct a treatment group and a control group that correspond to each other for the basic income experiment.

Table 3: Averages for the response and background variables chosen for the year preceding the experiment 2016

	Treatment group	Control group	Difference
Response variables			
Days in employment (number of days)	23.83	24.00	-0.17
Earnings and income from self-employment (€)	1,864	1,896	-31
Unemployment benefits provided by Kela (€)	8,063	8,068	-6
Background variables (%)			
Benefit category			
Labour market subsidy	87.15	84.63	2.52
Basic unemployment allowance	12.85	15.37	-2.52
Sex			
Female	47.75	47.48	0.27
Male	52.25	52.52	-0.27
Age			
25–34	33.50	35.12	-1.62
35–44	27.45	27.14	0.31
45–59	39.05	37.74	1.31
Number of observations	2,000	173,222	

As regards the response variables, the employment and income history of the treatment group and the control group for the year preceding the experiment correspond quite well to each other and the differences are not statistically significant. As regards classifying background factors, the balancing out is not quite as complete. When looking at benefit category, the groups even differ significantly from each other at the standard significance level of 5 per cent. In the group that received a basic income, the proportion that received basic unemployment allowance is 2.5 percentage points lower than for the control group. Converted into the number of persons, we are talking about a deficit of about 50 recipients of basic unemployment allowance in the group that received a basic income. On the basis of the preliminary observations, this would seem to be just a question of bad luck, however. In the world of probabilities, even significant differences between similar groups as regards individual variables may occur when we are studying many background variables. However, on the whole the randomisation resulted in a treatment group and a control group that correspond to each other quite well.

3 Wellbeing effects of the basic income experiment

Helena Blomberg, Signe Jauhiainen, Markus Kanerva, Olli Kangas, Merja Komu, Christian Kroll, Maarit Lassander, Mikko Niemelä, Miska Simanainen, Annamari Tuulio-Henriksson, Minna Ylikännö

This part of the report presents the preliminary survey results for some key indicators representing different aspects of personal wellbeing. Later reports will contain more extensive analysis of the survey data, including questions not reported in this publication. To start with, we describe the test group and the control group according to the background variables. After that we compare the groups with respect to different aspects of wellbeing. At this stage, the analysis is descriptive and only the distributions of the variables are reported. The statistical differences between the groups are tested through a simple khi2 test (χ^2). For assessing the reliability of the results, we have tested to what extent the results are maintained when controlling for the demographic background factors of the respondents.

3.1 Background information on the respondents

The final data for the respondents does not show a statistically significant difference from the target groups originally selected for the study. As shown in Table 4, the groups of respondents do not differ statistically significantly as regards sex, age or education. However, the groups differ according to the structure of the household: the number of persons in the households of the respondents who received basic income is larger and the households more often include children than in the control group. The groups also differ according to personal annual income:⁶ those who received basic income have on average higher income than those in the control group. The aforementioned statistically significant differences and their possible effects on the results are not investigated in more detail in this preliminary report. The observed background characteristics are controlled for and the effects are reported on a general level.

⁶ Subjective estimate of personal gross income per year.

Table 4. Background information on the respondents for the treatment and control groups (percentage distribution and statistical significance of the differences, χ^2)

	Test group	Control group
Sex; $\chi^2 = .758$		
Female	47.4	48.2
Male	52.6	51.8
Age; $\chi^2 = .222$		
-34	25.4	22.4
35-44	27.5	26.3
45-54	27.6	27.9
55+	19.5	23.4
Education; $\chi^2 = .198$		
Basic education	16.6	18.3
Vocational education	40.6	39.4
Upper secondary school	6.3	8.9
Middle tertiary education	10.4	10.8
University of applied sciences	10.8	10.6
University	15.4	11.9
Structure of household; $\chi^2 = .037$		
Living alone	41.1	45.6
Couple without children	16.6	19.3
Other type of household with adults	8.7	6.7
Household with children	33.6	28.4
Personal annual income; $\chi^2 = .009$		
-EUR 10 000	34.3	41.2
EUR 10 001 - EUR 15 000	22.5	24.3
EUR 15 001 - EUR 30 000	24.6	21.0
over EUR 30 000	7.5	5.1
cannot say	11.1	8.5
Greater area, $\chi^2 = .549$		
Southern Finland	21.8	24.9
Helsinki and Uusimaa	26.8	25.2
Western Finland	27.5	26.3
Northern and Eastern Finland	24.0	23.6

3.2 Trust and satisfaction with life

From previous research on wellbeing we know that the factors that explain general wellbeing are related to the person's self-perceived assessment of his or her happiness and life satisfaction, trust in other persons and in central institutions in society as well as overall confidence in the future.⁷

Previous studies have shown that one of the best individual measurements of wellbeing is satisfaction with life. Satisfaction with life was measured by a variable where the value 0 on a scale from 0 to 10 means very high dissatisfaction with life and the value 10 very high satisfaction with life. In the test group the average value for satisfaction with life was 7.32 and in the control group 6.76. The difference is statistically highly significant ($p < .0001$). The difference remained significant even when we controlled for the background variables: gender, age, education, structure of the household and income. The same applies basically to all statistically significant differences between the groups presented below.

Table 5 compares the test group and the control group as regards trust in other persons, the legal system and politicians. Trust in other persons refers to so-called generalised trust, which according to previous international studies is high in Finland and the other Nordic countries.⁸ One explanation for the high level of trust has been the universal way of delivering benefits and services in the Nordic welfare states.⁹ Furthermore, the perception of a sufficient level for social security benefits is connected to a higher level of trust.¹⁰

In this study, all three dimensions of trust are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 10 where the value 0 indicates total distrust and the value 10 the highest possible level of trust.

⁷ Layard, Richard (2006): *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*. London: Penguin Books; Diener, Ed & Biswas-Diener, Robert (2008): *Happiness – Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*. Oxford: Blackwell; Veenhoven, Ruut (1984): *Conditions of Happiness*. Dordrecht: Riedel; Veenhoven, Ruut (2002): *Why Social Policy Needs Subjective Indicators?* *Social Indicators Research*, Vol 58, Issue 1, 33-45; Putnam, Robert (1993): *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Putnam, Robert (2000): *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster; Fridberg, Torben & Kangas, Olli (2008): *Social Capital*. In Ervasti, Heikki, Fridberg, Torben, Hjerm, Mikael & Ringdal, Krister (eds.): *Nordic Social Attitudes in a European Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 65-85.

⁸ Rothstein, Bo & Uslander, Eric M. (2005): *All for All: Equality, Corruption, and Social Trust*. *World Politics* 58 (1), 41-72.

⁹ Rothstein, Bo & Stolle, Dietlind (2008): *The State and Social capital – An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust*. *Comparative Politics* 40 (4), 441-467.

¹⁰ Kouvo, Antti, Kankainen, Tomi & Niemelä, Mikko (2012): *Welfare Benefits and Generalized Trust in Finland and Europe*. In Heikki Ervasti, Jørgen Goul Andersen, Torben Fridberg & Kristen Ringdal (eds.): *The Future of the Welfare State. Social Policy Attitudes and Social Capital in Europe*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, 195–213.

In a population survey carried out by Kela in 2017, the average level of generalised trust for the whole population was 7.4. Table 5 shows that the level of generalised trust is lower than for the whole population in both the test group and the control group. However, in the group that received basic income, trust in other persons is at a slightly higher level than in the control group.

Table 5. Trust in other persons, the legal system and politicians

	Trust in other persons		Trust in the legal system		Trust in politicians	
	Test	Control	Test	Control	Test	Control
Avg	6.68	6.30	6.62	6.30	4.28	3.80
Standard deviation	2.33	2.50	2.58	2.61	2.70	2.69
Statistical significance	.0030		.0183		.0007	

Previous research on institutional trust has shown that people's level of trust varies from one institution to another. Institutions that enjoy a high level of trust are often institutions for which there are no alternatives – often we are talking about established societal institutions such as the defence forces, the police or the legal system. Then again, political institutions – which people can influence directly – are least trusted. Such institutions are, for instance, Parliament, political parties and the Government.¹¹ According to previous studies, the average level of trust among Finns in the legal system was 6.9 and the level of trust in politicians 5.23.¹²

Table 5 shows that the results for the test group and the control group are in line with previous studies in that the level of trust in the legal system is considerably higher than the level of trust in politicians. In both the test group and the control group, the level of trust in the institutions studied is lower than for the whole population, however. Similar differences between the groups can be seen when generalised trust is analysed. In the test group, the level of trust in the legal system and in politicians is slightly higher than in the control group.

On the whole, the results show that the level of trust is slightly higher among basic income recipients than in the control group. The statistical significance of the

¹¹ Niemelä, Mikko & Pajula, Hanna (2014): Kansalaisten ja yhteistyökumppanien mielikuvat ja arviot Kelan toiminnasta 2000-luvulla. Sosiaali- ja terveysturvan selosteita 88/2014. Helsinki: Kela.

¹² Bäck, Maria, Kestilä-Kekkonen, Elina & Söderlund, Peter (2016): Suomalaisten poliittinen luottamus ja siihen vaikuttavat tekijät. In Kimmo Grönlund & Hanna Wass (toim): Poliittisen osallistumisen eriytyminen – Eduskuntavaalitutkimus 2015. Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 28/2016. Helsinki: Ministry of Justice.

differences in level of trust between the groups is maintained as regards trust in other persons and in politicians after standardising for the demographic background factors.

The proponents of basic income¹³ have emphasised its emancipatory nature: the basic income gives people the possibility to be creative, is empowering and diminishes financial insecurity. In the same manner as regards the generalised level of trust, the basic income has been said to increase people's level of confidence not only in their own financial situation but also in their own capabilities and their own future. Table 6 presents results for the test group and the control group concerning the question of the extent to which confidence in one's own future, one's own financial situation and one's own ability to influence societal issues has been satisfied during the previous year

Table 6. Self-perceived estimate of change during the previous two years in the level of confidence in one's own future, one's own financial situation and one's own ability to influence matters

	Confidence in one's own future (%)		Confidence in one's own financial situation (%)		Ability to influence societal matters (%)	
	Test	Control	Test	Control	Test	Control
Poor	6.8	9.8	13.0	19.4	16.0	25.1
Rather poor	7.8	13.2	11.8	16.8	19.5	22.6
Moderate	25.8	30.1	32.4	32.4	31.1	26.5
Quite strong	34.8	30.0	26.3	19.4	17.1	15.5
Strong	23.4	16.2	15.9	10.9	11.8	7.1
Cannot say	1.4	0.7	0.7	1.1	4.6	3.2
χ^2	<.0001		<.0001		<.0001	

The results shown in Table 6 indicate that the level of confidence in one's own future is considerably higher in the test group than in the control group that did not receive a basic income. Table 6 also analyses the level of confidence of the respondents in their own financial situation, which also – maybe unsurprisingly – was stronger in the test group than in the control group. The income of the basic income recipients was after all slightly higher than the income of those in the control group (Table 6).

¹³ Davala, Sarath, Jhabvala, Renana, Mehta Soyma & Standing, Guy (2015): Basic Income. A Transformative Policy for India. London/New Delhi: Bloomsbury; Standing, Guy (2017): Basic Income and How We Can Make It Happen. London: Pelican Books, s. 248-278; van Parijs, Philippe & Vanderborght, Yannick (2017): Basic Income: A Radical Proposal. Harvard: Harvard UP.

One key criterion for full-fledged citizenship is that people feel that they can influence decisions that concern them. One-third of the test group and half of the control group replied that their ability to influence these matters is either poor or rather poor. Correspondingly, almost 30 per cent of the basic income recipients and slightly over 20 per cent of the control group felt that their ability to influence societal issues is quite strong or strong.

3.3 Health

Good health is a prerequisite for good functional ability, employment and wellbeing.¹⁴ In this first report we study the respondents' own assessments of their mental and physical health status and their functional ability. Slightly over half of the respondents (54.8%) in the test group and slightly less than half in the control group (46.2%) considered their state of health to be very good or good (Table 7). In addition, slightly less than one-third of the test group (30.0%) and over one-third of the control group (36.0%) considered their state of health to be fair. Less than 15 per cent of the test group and almost every fifth person in the control group (17.2%) considered their state of health to be poor or very poor.

Table 7. Self-perceived assessment of health

	Health (%)	
	Test	Control
Very good	14.8	10.4
Good	40.6	35.8
Fair	30.0	36.0
Poor	10.1	13.2
Very poor	4.1	4.0
Cannot say	0.3	0.6
χ^2	.0073	

In the survey, the respondents were asked to assess their recent ability to concentrate on things. A total of 66.7 per cent of the basic income recipients reported that their ability to concentrate is either good or very good (Table 8). In the control group, the corresponding percentage was 55.7 per cent. One in four of the test group (24.9%)

¹⁴ Johansson, Sten (1970): Om levnadsnivå undersökningen. Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget; Johansson, Sten (1979): Mot en teori om social rapportering. Stockholm: Institutet för social forskning; Kawachi Ichiro & Kennedy Bruce P. (2006): The Health of Nations: Why Inequality Is Harmful to Your Health? New York: New Press; Kawachi, Ichiro, Subramanian, S. V. & Kim, Daniel (2008): Social Capital and Health. New York: Springer.

and slightly less than one-third of the control group (31.4%) considered their ability to concentrate to be satisfactory. Less than one in ten of the test group (8.2%) and about 13 per cent of the control group considered their ability to concentrate to be poor or very poor.

Table 8. Self-perceived assessment of recent ability to concentrate

	Ability to concentrate (%)	
	Test	Control
Very good	14.7	9.5
Good	52.0	46.2
Satisfactory	24.9	31.4
Poor	7.0	9.9
Very poor	1.2	2.8
Cannot say	0.2	0.2
χ^2	.0001	

An indication of a less positive state of mind is an inability to enjoy things that previously were considered enjoyable. About a quarter of the treatment group (24.7%) and more than every third in the control group (33.8%) had experienced this kind of feeling during the previous year (Table 9).

Table 9. Self-perceived assessment of loss of interest in things that previously were considered enjoyable during the previous 12 months

	Lost interest in things that previously were considered enjoyable (%)	
	Test	Control
Yes	24.7	33.8
No	72.5	64.6
Cannot say	2.7	1.6
χ^2	.0003	

3.4 Labour market status

Part-time work is often involuntary when there is no full-time work available. In such a situation, the income level is also lower than desired. Since in the Finnish basic income experiment, the income from work did negatively affect the amount of basic

income, it is interesting to see whether there is an increase in part-time work and whether the basic income has any effect on the overall willingness to work part-time.

Table 10 shows that 184 persons in the group that received a basic income (31%) were employed at the time of the survey. Seventy persons in this group, which is more than one in three (38%), were working part-time.

In the control group, 261 respondents were employed at the time of the survey (25% of the respondents) (Table 10). In this group, 79 persons (30%) were working part-time, which is a slightly smaller percentage than in the test group. There is no statistically significant difference between the groups, so any effect of the basic income experiment on part-time employment cannot be reliably verified without an analysis of the register data.

Table 10. Full-time and part-time employment and a wish to work full-time instead of part-time

	If a wage earner, is currently in (%)	
	Test	Control
Part-time employment	38.0	30.3
Full-time employment	62.0	69.7
χ^2	.0870	
	If working part-time, would rather work full-time (%)	
	Test	Control
Yes	68.6	58.2
No	31.4	41.8
χ^2	.1931	

The respondents who worked part-time at the time of the survey were asked if they would rather work full-time. A total of 69 per cent of the basic income recipients and 58 per cent of those in the control group wished to work full-time instead of part-time (Table 10). There seems to be a slight difference between the groups in the willingness to accept full-time work, which cannot be reliably verified by statistical testing. In this case, the reason may however be the small sample size.

Of the basic income recipients, 56 per cent thought they would find employment within the next year if they were unemployed at the time of the survey or were to become unemployed (Table 11). The corresponding percentage in the control group is 45 per cent. The difference between the groups is statistically significant, which means that the basic income recipients have a stronger confidence in their chances of finding employment than the control group.

Table 11. Self-perceived assessment of one's own possibilities of finding employment

	Believes that will find employment within the next 12 months (%)	
	Test	Control
Yes	56.1	44.8
No	28.3	43.0
Cannot say	15.5	12.2
χ^2	<.0001	

3.5 Financial wellbeing

Table 12 shows an assessment of the test group and the control group regarding the financial wellbeing of their household. A total of 12.5 per cent of the test group and 16.8 per cent of the control group consider that they are barely getting by on their income, and 26.1 per cent of the test group and 31.8 per cent of the control group consider that it is difficult to make ends meet. The percentage that considers that they are barely getting by or that it is difficult to make ends meet is smaller in the test group than in the control group. The differences between the groups are statistically significant, and the statistical significance is maintained when the background factors, such as earnings, are taken into account.

Table 12. Self-perceived financial wellbeing of household at current level of household income

	Current level of household income (%)	
	Test	Control
Living comfortably	11.9	7.4
Doing OK	48.1	43.5
Difficulty making ends meet	26.1	31.8
Barely getting by	12.5	16.8
Cannot say	1.4	0.6
χ^2	.0002	

Long-term stress has an extensive effect on both wellbeing and functional ability.¹⁵ Economic stress, as one main aspect of stress, has been observed to have a

15 Lazarus, R. S. (1999): Stress and Emotion: A New Synthesis. New York, NY, US: Springer Publishing Co.

significant impact on health status.¹⁶ The predictability of the basic income is thought to reduce the level of stress due to less bureaucracy and more certain flow of income.

Table 13. Perceived level of stress

	Currently feels stress (%)	
	Test	Control
Not at all	22.2	19.7
Only to a small extent	32.6	25.9
To some extent	28.7	29.1
To a quite high degree	11.8	16.2
To a very high degree	4.8	8.8
Cannot say	0.0	0.3
χ^2	.0005	

Table 13 shows that the basic income recipients experienced considerably less stress than the control group. A total of 17 per cent of the respondents in the test group and 25 per cent of the respondents in the control group experienced quite a high degree or a very high degree of stress. Then again, clearly more than half of the basic income recipients experienced no stress or only to a small extent. The corresponding percentage in the control group was 46 per cent.

3.6 Experiences of bureaucracy

As a starting point, the basic income should reduce the bureaucracy of the social security system. This is because, for instance, it does not involve the many entitlement criteria related to the unemployment benefits, such as the obligation to register as an unemployed jobseeker. Furthermore, it does not involve the payment delays that occur in connection with benefits that are typically claimed in retrospect. Also, it does not require as extensive exchange of information between the payer and the recipient, since it is not adjusted according to earnings, for example.

In the survey, the respondents were asked whether, during the previous two years, they have thought that there is too much bureaucracy involved when claiming social

¹⁶ Kahn JR, Pearlin LI (2006): Financial strain over the life course and health among older adults. *J Health Soc Behav.* 47:17–31.

security benefits (Table 14). They were also asked whether a basic income would reduce the bureaucracy involved when accepting a job offer.

Table 14. Views on the bureaucracy involved when claiming social security benefits and the effects of the basic income on the bureaucracy involved when accepting a job offer

When you think about the past two years, do you feel that there is too much bureaucracy involved when claiming social security benefits? (%)		
	Test	Control
Yes	58.9	67.8
No	35.5	28.6
Cannot say	5.6	3.6
χ^2		.0009
What do you think about the following statements? The basic income would reduce the bureaucracy involved when accepting a job offer. (%)		
	Test	Control
Strongly disagree	3.6	4.1
Somewhat disagree	5.8	6.4
Neither agree nor disagree	5.5	7.4
Somewhat agree	24.1	35.1
Strongly agree	57.2	37.3
Cannot say	3.9	9.6
χ^2		<.0001

A clear majority of the respondents in both the test group and the control group thought that too much bureaucracy had been involved when claiming social security benefits (Table 14). More often than those in the control group, those in the test group were of the opinion that there was not too much bureaucracy involved when claiming social security benefits (36% of respondents in the test group, 29% of the respondents in the control group). Despite this, 59 per cent of the respondents in the test group still considered there to be too much bureaucracy involved when claiming social security benefits.

However, it should be noted that the target population in the experiment typically receive benefits that supplement the basic unemployment benefits. Such benefits include amounts supplementary to the unemployment benefits, general housing allowance and social assistance. The basic income did not compensate for these benefits in the experiment. The results of the register data analysis concerning the changes in the receipt of unemployment benefits from Kela, general housing allowance and basic social assistance also indicate that basic income only removed

some of the bureaucracy involved when claiming social security benefits. It is also worth noting that studies on the social security systems of welfare states show that, on average, citizens consider welfare states as being rather bureaucratic.¹⁷

A clear majority of the respondents in both the test group and the control group agreed somewhat or agreed strongly with the statement that a basic income would reduce the bureaucracy involved when accepting a job offer (Table 14). In addition, those in the test group more often considered the basic income less bureaucratic (agree somewhat and agree strongly in a total of 81%) than those in the control group (72%).

Those in the test group were slightly more often able to state an opinion on this statement than those in the control group (Table 14). Those in the test group were also more confident than those in the control group that a basic income would make it easier to accept a job offer: of those with a positive attitude to the basic income in the test group, a higher proportion of the respondents agreed with the statement than in the control group.

3.7 Attitudes towards basic income

In previous research, the amount of support for basic income in Finland has been gauged through a general question on whether the person is in favour of a basic income or not. Percentages as high as 70 per cent in support of a basic income have been obtained.¹⁸ When the respondents are informed of the necessary changes to the income taxation in order to finance basic income, the level of support dwindles considerably.¹⁹ In 2017, the level of support varied between 40 per cent and 80 per cent.²⁰ The levels of support obtained from opinion polls are very dependent on the wording of the question and the basic income model chosen (level of basic income, financing model etc.).

In the survey, respondents in both the test group and the control group were asked about their support for basic income and their view on basic income. On a general level, respondents were asked whether a basic income should be introduced as a part of the social security system in Finland on a permanent basis (Table 15). They were

17 Svallfors, Stefan (2010): Public attitudes. In Francis Castles (ed.): The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press.

18 <http://tutkimusblogi.kela.fi/arkisto/2759>

19 <http://tutkimusblogi.kela.fi/arkisto/2942>

20 <http://foresight.fi/ville-veikko-pulkka-perustulon-kannatus-suomessa-20-80-prosenttia/>

also asked whether accepting a job offer would make more sense financially with basic income and whether it would be easier to set up a business.

Table 15. Attitudes towards basic income

	With a basic income it would make more sense financially to accept a job offer (%)		With a basic income it would be easier to start your own business (%)		A basic income should be introduced as a permanent part of the social security system in Finland (%)	
	Test	Control	Test	Control	Test	Control
Strongly disagree	2.7	3.3	4.1	9.3	3.8	4.0
Somewhat disagree	2.6	5.2	5.3	5.1	3.1	5.3
Neither agree nor disagree	2.7	5.9	5.8	7.2	4.3	6.7
Somewhat agree	20.6	33.7	21.7	23.8	19.6	26.0
Strongly agree	68.4	42.4	50.5	39.4	65.2	49.3
Cannot say	2.9	9.5	12.6	15.3	4.1	8.8
χ^2	<.0001		<.0001		<.0001	

A clear majority of the respondents in both the test group and the control group agreed somewhat or agreed strongly with the statement that with a basic income it would make more sense financially to accept a job offer (Table 15). Furthermore, those in the test group thought that the basic income provided an incentive more often (89 per cent) than those in the control group (76 per cent). A majority of the respondents considered that a basic income would make it easier to start one's own business: 72 per cent of the respondents in the test group and 63 per cent of the respondents in the control group.

Of the respondents in the test group, 85 per cent agreed somewhat or agreed strongly with the statement that a basic income should be introduced as a permanent part of the social security system in Finland. In the control group, 75 per cent of the respondents agreed (Table 15).

A larger percentage of the respondents in both the test group and the control group were able to state an opinion on the statement that it would make more sense financially to accept a job offer than on the statement that it would be easier to start a business (Table 15). However, those in the test group were more often able to state an opinion on either statement than those in the control group. Those in the test group also had stronger opinions: a larger proportion of the respondents in the test group who had a positive attitude towards the basic income agreed strongly with each statement than in the control group.

4 Summary

Olli Kangas, Minna Ylikännö

In this publication we report the preliminary results of the Finnish basic income experiment 2017–2018. According to the agreement between the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, in this first report we analyse the effects of the basic income experiment on employment and wellbeing. The report is based on the analysis of register and survey data. Furthermore, it is based on a comparison of the test group and the control group and on statistical testing of the differences.

The results are preliminary insofar as the register data at this stage only cover the first year of the experiment, 2017. We are thus unable to analyse the effects of the whole experiment on employment and other labour market behaviour. We will return to these questions in the research reports that will be published in 2020.

The survey data covers both years of the experiment, 2017 and 2018. The report contains descriptive analysis of the main aspects of personal wellbeing. In the later stage (2020), we will combine the register data with the survey data, which makes it possible to control for unobserved characteristics that cannot be controlled for on the basis of the survey data alone. In this way we can obtain more reliable results.

According to the analysis of the register data, basic income recipients were no better or worse at finding employment than those in the control group during the first year of the experiment, and in this respect there are no statistically significant differences between the groups. The recipients of basic income had half a day more of employment in the open labour market than the control group. Having earnings from the open or subsidised labour market was more frequent among the basic income recipients than in the control group by one percentage point. Then again, the earnings and income from self-employment were on average 21 euros lower in the test group than in the control group.

There are, however, differences between the groups when considering benefits provided by Kela. Since the purpose of the basic income was to replace the unemployment benefits paid by Kela, it comes as no surprise that those in the control group more often received basic unemployment allowance or labour market subsidy from Kela than the basic income recipients. There were also differences between the groups as regards the receipt of social assistance and sickness allowance: basic income recipients received less of these benefits. As regards housing allowance, there were no differences between the groups.

According to the analysis of the survey data, the wellbeing of the basic income recipients was clearly better than that of the control group. Those in the test group experienced significantly fewer problems related to health, stress and ability to concentrate than those in the control group. According to the results, those in the test group were also considerably more confident in their own future and their ability to influence societal issues than the control group. As regards generalised trust, i.e. trust in other people, there was a similar, but smaller, difference. Whereas there was only a small difference between the groups as regards trust in different institutions, such as the court system and the police, the basic income recipients trusted politicians considerably more than the control group did.

Despite the register data showing no differences in employment status between the groups, according to the survey data, those in the test group were more confident of their employment prospects than the control group. They replied more often than the control group that, with the basic income, it would make more sense financially to accept a job offer and would be easier to start a business. The basic income recipients also replied more often than the control group that basic income would reduce the bureaucracy involved when accepting a job offer. Overall, the recipients of a basic income had a clearly more positive view of the basic income than the control group even though the basic income also had support in the control group.

On the basis of the register data analysis, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups as regards employment. However, the survey results showed significant differences between the groups for different aspects of wellbeing. The results are in no way contradictory. Even if the basic income had no effect on employment status one way or the other, it may still have significant effects on wellbeing, which is also indicated by the results of this study.

The results presented in this report are in many respects preliminary, so one should not draw any firm conclusions about the effects of the basic income experiment on employment and wellbeing. We can report on the real effects of the experiment in a reliable way only when all the data for the evaluation study – register data, surveys, interviews and different combinations of these – have been analysed in more detail and when the effects of the political, institutional and schedule-related parameters that created a framework for the experiment have been evaluated. Then we can make reliable conclusions on the effects that an introduction of a basic income could have on individual labour market behaviour and wellbeing in Finland.



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