

JOURNAL

PROJECT

B-MINCOME -
Combining guaranteed
minimum income and
active social policies in
deprived urban areas

📍 Barcelona, Spain

TOPIC

Urban poverty

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EXPERT

The B-MINCOME Project ZOOM-IN

See on UIA
website



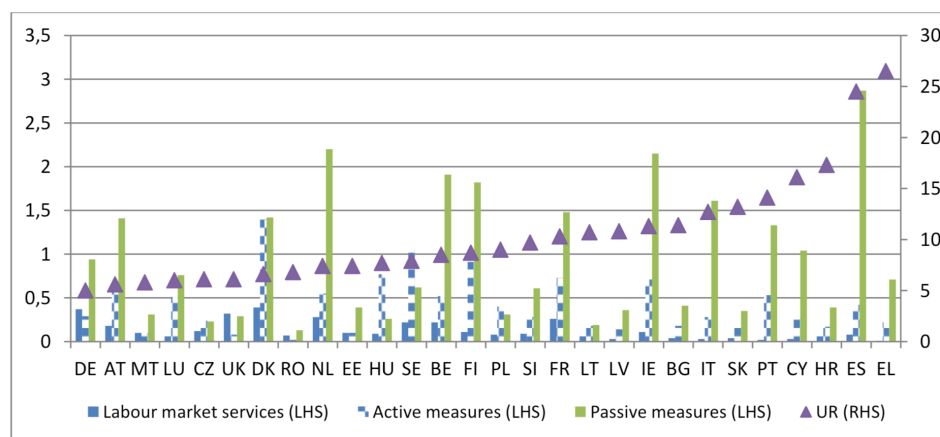
In this first Zoom-in, Laura Colini, UIA Expert for B-MINCOME, shows the approach taken by the project of combining the Guaranteed Minimum Income to different Active labour Market policy. A closer look is given to the Community participation programme, with whom B-MINCOME aims to involve the residents of the Besòs neighborhood and improve their social relationships and interactions, employability, development of projects and decision making, social responsibility and contribution to the common good.

Introduction to Active labour Market policy

The provision of passive policies of welfare has a longer history in Europe (Esping-Andersen, 1990) challenged today by waves of crisis (Hemerijck, 2012, Andreotti & Mingione 2016). During the early 1990s, the promotion in Europe of active labour market policies (ALMPs), has introduced a new feature in the design of welfare support. Active Labour Market Policies are mainly focused on increasing labour supply and reducing unemployment by improving the “employability” of the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the labour market (European Commission, 1993; OECD, 1994^[1]). Often managed by different institutions at local level, their combination with passive policies varies from country to country^[2]: active and passive policies pursue different goals that are implemented according to different national welfare systems.

Passive measures (e.g. unemployment benefits) are regulated in most countries at national level, while activation measures (e.g. requalification training) are usually regulated locally. However, both passive and active measures can be local, regional and/or national. Federal countries such as Germany and Austria, but also countries with an important role of Regional administrations, such as Italy and Spain, have their intermediate levels playing an important role in designing and implementing active measures. (Colini 2017).

According to the report country specific recommendation 2017^[3], Member States with high unemployment spend relatively small shares of their GDP on labour market services and active measures (notably Bulgaria, Slovakia, Cyprus, Croatia and Greece). At the same time they can have comparatively high spending on passive measures such as unemployment benefits (as in the case of Spain see the figure below showing “Expenditure on labour market services, active and passive measures (% of GDP; left-hand side) and unemployment rates (right-hand side) by Member State, 2014” source : Ibid.)



Source: Eurostat, LMP database (Note: Labour market services refer to LMP database category 1, active measures to categories 2-7 and passive measures to categories 8-9 (Out-of-work income maintenance and support, early retirement). LMP data for Greece and the United Kingdom are for 2010, for Cyprus for 2012 and for Ireland and Spain for 2013)

The success of any different approach on active policies does not depend only on the amount of expenditure, but most importantly on the design of the measures and the way they are implemented. [4] Member States have adopted different approaches and tools for active policies. The comparison of design and implementation among Member State is a challenging exercise for scholars in welfare policies. In order to understand these varieties, Bredgaard proposes a useful analytical framework distinguishing into three approaches: 1) the supply-side approach, 2) the matching approach and 3) the demand-side approach.

1) The supply-side approach, most popular in Europe, has the objective “to make jobseekers ready to (re)integrate into the ordinary labour market by addressing their (assumed) lack of qualifications or motivation, otherwise known as human capital and work-first approaches” (Bredgaard 2018). This is mostly supported by ESF funds by tools in the field of education and training, job search assistance to improve the qualifications or motivation of jobseekers.

2) The matching approach aims at linking labour supply (jobseekers) and labour demand (employers). The function is to “match” and secure an efficient flow of information among job seekers and employers. The tools adopted foresee the involvement of public and private sectors to re-organise information databases, promote job fairs through outreach and community/neighbourhood based initiatives and work experience programmes.

3) The third policy approach, the demand-side approach, targets “the recruitment practices and personnel policies of employers, and aims at preventing the direct and indirect discrimination of ‘disadvantaged’ jobseekers. [...] The demand-side approach may use obligatory instruments (such as quota schemes and anti-discrimination laws) as well as voluntary instruments (such as campaigns and persuasion)” [5].

Each of these approaches pose challenges highlighted by the disciplinary literature which focus on the individual features of national welfare systems.

[1] The OECD defines ALMPs as follows: “Active labour market programmes includes all social expenditure (other than education) which is aimed at the improvement of the beneficiaries' prospect of finding gainful employment or to otherwise increase their earnings capacity. This category includes spending on public employment services and administration, labour market training, special programmes for youth when in transition from school to work, labour market programmes to provide or promote employment for unemployed and other persons (excluding young and disabled persons) and special programmes for the disabled.”

[2] ISSUES EMERGING FROM COMBINING ACTIVE AND PASSIVE MEASURES FOR THE LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED – THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF SINGLE POINTS OF CONTACT ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=16863&langId=en

[3] (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_active-labour-market-policies_en.pdf)

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

B-MINCOME Active policies

The UIA BMINCOME pilot is experimenting four types of active policies that support the allocation of Guaranteed Minimum Income to the selected families since end of 2017^[6]. These policies are:

Policy n1. A program of certified training and municipal employment plans in projects of collective interest for beneficiaries of working age and unemployment registered in the Employment Service of Catalonia.

Policy n2. Program for the promotion of the cooperative, social and solidarity economy through the implementation of collective social entrepreneurship plans.

Policy n3. Housing reform program allowing owners to rent rooms and thus obtain a performance that improves the available rent.

Policy n4. Community participation program. It is aimed at supporting the participation in community activities, collective projects or initiatives of common interest.

Generally, active policies present challenges often regarding the coordination of actions: first, the efficient coordination of the various administrative levels designing and providing a service; second, the coordination between passive and active measures; third, the coordination of public/private/or NGO actors involved in the delivery of the service which mostly happens locally.

In terms of results, considering the specificity of BMINCOME and its co-productive attitude of all municipal departments dealing with social issues, all the BMINCOME proposed active policies tend to narrow the distances between the actors involved in the design. Secondly, BMINCOME is designed as pilot to test the combination of passive and active policies from the outset, and finally, the BMINCOME pilot is place-based and has the potential advantage to favour tight-knit networking in a specific geographical area, being this one potentially a less dispersive approach than at city level.

Moreover, using the Bredgaard approaches summarised in the previous chapter, at first glance BMINCOME tools seems to be fitting the most common “supply-side” approach especially for the policy dedicated to training. However, none of the four BMINCOME policies completely fit into that sole approach. Beside the training, BMINCOME offers a series of tools that are innovatively testing the design of active policies by creating new demands and therefore creating new working opportunities measured on the needs of the neighbourhood and their inhabitants. By creating policy instruments that encourage solidarity-based care for public spaces, community gardening, and solidarity-based economies through the establishment of local cooperatives, BMINCOME supersedes the difficulty of matching individual competences and skills and jobs already on the market. The latter of the four policies in particular is dedicated to creating social competences for enabling the spirit and conditions of collaboration among the inhabitants in the targeted areas. All active policies have been launched by the beginning of 2018, but are fully developed starting from June 2018, the month in which the citizen's currency Citizen's Economic Resource (REC) will also begin to circulate.

[6] <http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/bmincome-journal-1-hear-projects-uia-expert-how-it-implementing-its-bold-solution>

Community participation

At the beginning of the summer 2018, 3,761 people from 950 units living in neighbourhoods of the Besòs axis already receive direct income through “municipal inclusion support” (SMI) which will last until December 2019. Of them, 270 family units participate in the policy n. 4 favoring the active involvement of the beneficiaries in their community, with the aim to increase their skills and empower families. The goal is to improve: a) social relationships and interactions (communication, reciprocity, help mutual, networks); b) employability (professional skills, group work, personal responsibility); c) development of projects and decision making; d) social responsibility, contribution to the common good, promote ethical values, etc.

Two NGO's have been assigned to implementing the first reception phase of this policy: Art&Coop and Transductores. The first is a cooperative of social workers promoting “artistic productions for individual and collective transformation, through the values of cooperative creative processes”^[7]. Art&Coop marries the teaching of the Brazilian director Augusto Boal, founder of Theatre of oppressed, and Paulo Freire^[8] with

different communication languages such as cinema, plastic production, contemporary dance and physical theatre etc. to work with people on expressing individual and collective feelings and acquire capabilities for personal, social, political change. Two videos produced as closure of the first reception phase shows the outcome of this approach in which youngsters and their families participated in several workshops areas of Trinitat Vella[9] and Baró de Viver i Bon Pasto[10], Verneda-La Pau[11], Besòs i el Maresme[12] creating occasion for encounters, sharing of ideas, knowledge while learning more about the place they live in.



The techniques adopted are pretty traditional, including community based participatory planning methodologies such as the “Gulliver mapping”, that is the collective drawing of large scale mapping of the neighbourhood onto which participants can add information about the places they live in; “transect walk”, a tool used by groups undertaking observation-based walks in a determined area using pictures and other forms of recordings;

self-representation through photography, performance of handycraft works sharing stories united to moments of conviviality with food sharing.

The other NGO Transductores is an “interdisciplinary platform that carries out research and mediation projects with three main areas of interest: collective pedagogies, collaborative artistic practices and modes of intervention in the public sphere”[13]

In the frame of BMINCOME Transductores has carried out 12 work sessions in 5 areas that have allowed the creation of ad hoc activities in response to the interests of the participants and in relation to the neighborhood where they live. The results are collective performative microprojects of investigation and exploration of the territories such as: participatory videos promoting a park as a community asset for women, popular print graphic campaigns to represent the identities of two neighborhoods, videos and postcards of gestures and movements that define neighborhoods, or photographs and community memories.



Memories and places, Trinitat Nova Campaign for the neighborhood, Torre Baró / Vallbona

The Trinitat Nova workshop has explored significant places and spaces in the neighborhood, connecting them with the memories of the participants. Photographs taken in these places, are combined together with sentences sampled during the experiences shared by the group.

Roquetes flowers. A park of common interests. The Roquetes workshop explores the common interests of the participants, to address them in a community way. The Rodrigo Caro park, better known as “Parque de las Flores”,

responds to one of these common objectives: to know the open and natural spaces of the neighborhood to enjoy as a family.^[14]

I explain my neighborhood, Ciudad Meridiana. The workshop of Ciudad Meridiana has worked around to generate a positive account of the place. From the experiences of the group, this story is articulated through 5 concepts: "active", "connected", "panoramic", "diverse" and "shared". The result is a video showing Ciudad Meridiana through a choreographic tour of the neighborhood and some postcards with images that represent the aforementioned concepts, presented successively in collective spaces of the neighbourhood.

Campaign for the neighborhood, Torre Baró / Vallbona. The Torre Baró y Vallbona group has generated a local campaign for the two neighborhoods based on slogans and photographs. These elements have been stamped on various supports (shirts, bags, fabrics, etc.) with the aim of promoting an image of identity and pride of neighborhood, and offer it as a gift to several people in the neighborhood and entities.

From the first data analysis in June 2018, women and young population seem to be the highest share of beneficiaries (84% of the 950 selected family units have a woman as a reference; 40% of the participants are under 15 years old^[15]).

Fernando Barreiro, local expert of BMINCOME for the municipality of Barcelona, affirms that so far this active policy combined with the distribution of the Guaranteed Minimum Income has been very welcomed by the beneficiaries, showing positive outcomes already in this reception phase. In an interview available online one of the BMINCOME participants Rikia Larfa, mother of three children assures that the distribution of SMI has helped their family "at least with this we breathe a little" and that active policies meant a new discovery: "I lived here for about 6 years and this is the first time I see the face of my neighbourhood".^[16]

^[7] <http://www.artandcoop.org/qui-som/>

^[8] Freire, P. (2005). Pedagogía del oprimido. Siglo xxi. (orig. 1970)

^[9] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwokiewM-W0&feature=youtu.be>

^[10] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrdL4Rxu59c>

^[11] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW65qXRJwwM&t=176s>

^[12] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-wagcA-oyc&t=138s>

^[13] <http://transductores.info/que-es-transductores-2/>

^[14] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXcmaqPi4Lc>

^[15] The data is updated monthly. The number of families varies: since the start of the program 27 of them have ceased to be active, because they have improved their economic situation, have resigned or have not fulfilled any condition.

^[16] <https://beteve.cat/economia/renda-inclusio-municipal-eix-besos/>

Key figures

- 3,761 people from 950 units living in neighbourhoods of the Besòs axis already receive direct income through "municipal inclusion support" (SMI) which will last until December 2019.
- 88 000 of them live alone

References

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Colini (2017) Welfare, innovation and the role of cities in Europe: a dialogue with Prof. Yuri Kazepov. Available at <http://urbact.eu/welfare-innovation-and-role-cities-europe-dialogue-prof-yuri-kazepov> (accessed 12 June 2018)

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogía del oprimido*. Siglo xxi. (orig. 1970)

EU COM 2017 EUROPEAN SEMESTER THEMATIC FACTSHEET ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_active-labour-market-policies_en.pdf

EUROSTAT http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion (link is external)

Hemerijck, A., 2013. *Changing welfare states*. Oxford University Press

On site information

The referents for the Action 4 have not been available for interview and special thanks to Marina Martínez Torrent Equip B - Mincome d'Acció Comunitària.IMSS. Àrea de Drets Socials for the links to the press conference and videos utilised in this report.

Press conference:

- <http://beteve.cat/renda-inclusio-municipal-eix-besos/>
- <http://www.ccma.cat/tv3/alcanta/telenoticies-comarques/barcelona-posa-en-marxa-un-pla-pilot-de-renda-municipal-dexclusio/video/5768899/#.Ww7FqvMr8FI.twitter>
- <http://www.lavanguardia.com/local/barcelona/20180529/443934498181/la-prueba-de-renda-municipal-de-barcelona-llega-a-950-familias-de-barrios-del-besos.html>
- <https://www.aldia.cat/catalunya/noticia-prova-renda-municipal-barcelona-arriba-950-families-barris-besos-20180529190752.html>

videos produced for local exhibitions or closing acts of the reception phase.

- Trinitat Vella: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwokiewM-W0&feature=youtu.be>
- Baró de Viver i Bon Pastor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrdL4Rxu59c>
- Verneda i La Pau <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UW65qXRUwwM&t=176s>
- Besòs i el Maresme: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-wagcA-oyc&t=138s>
- Ciutat Meridiana: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YinZ_NYji8Q
- Roquetes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXcmaqPi4Lc>

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