



Redefining Value Canvas ©Me-we-world

Beyond Basic Income: Redefining Value for Human Flourishing



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ArtMotivator | a medium for interactions, to crystallise change

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When I read [Kelsey Piper's recent piece](#) on basic income, I found myself nodding.

The findings are striking: multiple large-scale experiments show that giving people money often improves stability a little, sometimes boosts employment, but doesn't reliably transform wellbeing, stress, or health in the long term.

Some take this as evidence that unconditional basic income “doesn’t work.” I see something else: cash alone was never designed to carry the full weight of life quality.

The Limits of Cash

The randomised controlled trials Piper cites are robust. They show that while cash helps, the improvements are smaller or shorter-lived than many advocates predicted. That matters. But it also points to a deeper issue: we are still measuring and imagining “value” in narrow monetary terms.

As I put it in our *Redefining Value* work:

⚠ Beyond Cash = Beyond Value-as-Money Studies suggest cash transfers alone often yield limited long-term benefits. This isn’t proof that basic security doesn’t matter—it shows that money is too narrow a definition of value.

Donella Meadows & Mental Models

Systems thinker Donella Meadows argued that the most powerful way to change a system is to shift the paradigm—the mental model—from which it arises. Adjusting policies or incentives matters, but it’s the mindset that sets the rules of the game.

So long as we equate *value with money*, any intervention—including basic income—remains bound by the same logic that created our current crises. The real leverage lies in reimagining what we count as value.

What Really Counts as Value?

At *Me-We-World*, we work with a framework we call S.T.U.A.R.T.: six life qualities that underpin true human flourishing:

- Safety
- Trust
- Understanding
- Awareness
- Relaxation

- Tenderness

This isn't meant as dogma—it's an invitation to think beyond income. You can call them whatever resonates. What matters is recognising that wellbeing and social resilience live in these deeper qualities.

Evidence backs this shift:

- Safety: Universal healthcare adds +3–5 years to life expectancy.
- Trust: Societies with stronger welfare systems report higher civic trust.
- Understanding: +1 year of schooling → +10% lifetime earnings and better health outcomes.
- Awareness: Environmental regulations cut air pollution, saving tens of thousands of lives annually in the EU.
- Relaxation: Finland's UBI pilot saw a 9% increase in life satisfaction and a stress reduction.
- Tenderness: Paid parental leave improves maternal health and child development.

New Tools for a New Paradigm

If value is more than money, we need new infrastructures to recognise and exchange it. That's where emerging tools come in:

- Digital Identities (DID/VC): anchor rights and entitlements to people and communities in a secure, portable way.
- Impact Tokens: make ecological and social contributions visible and tradable.
- Commons Governance: empower communities to manage shared resources through trust and reciprocity.
- Regenerative Finance (ReFi): channel investment toward ecosystem and community regeneration.

- Wellbeing & ecological indices: measure progress in terms of health, knowledge, and planetary balance, not GDP.

These aren't silver bullets. But they can help us move toward a shared reality of value that includes ecosystems, communities, and future generations.

From Survival to Flourishing

As Einstein reminded us, today's problems cannot be solved with the same thinking that caused them. If we keep measuring life only in cash, we will keep running into the same limits.

The challenge—and the opportunity—is to redefine value itself. To shift from *extrinsic survival incentives* ("earn your right to live") toward *intrinsic contribution and care*. To take small, local steps that ripple out, as complexity and chaos theory remind us, into systemic change.

This is the vision we're exploring with the [Redefining one-pager](#) and the [Redefining value Canvas](#): tools to help individuals, organisations, and communities reimagine what truly matters.

If unconditional basic income shows us that *cash alone isn't enough*, perhaps that's the invitation we need. Because the future calls us not just to redistribute money, but to rewrite the meaning of value itself.

The Me-We-World website has been updated. Check our new website:

<https://me-we-world.com/>