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The B-MINCOME project. Municipal innovation on guaranteed minimum incomes and active social policies

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In recent years there has been a growing interest in implementing more effective public policies to improve the living conditions of people in vulnerable situations. To design and implement these policies they need to be backed up with evidence that facilitates well-informed decisions. This need has given rise to B-MINCOME, a pilot project for fighting against poverty and inequality in the city's deprived areas developed by Barcelona City Council. In contrast to other, similar projects based on money transfers (in Finland or the Netherlands, for example), the B-MINCOME project consists in testing the efficiency and effectiveness of combining a cash benefit (Municipal Inclusion Support) with active social-work inclusion policies in the Eix Besòs area. For the purposes of the study, 1,000 households have been selected and divided into different treatment groups and another 1,000 as a control group. The project started at the end of 2017 and is planned to last two years. Once it has finished, the results of the different treatment groups will be contrasted with those of the control group. The conclusions should provide information on which policies are the most effective for ensuring economically vulnerable and socially excluded people improve their situation (economic, educational, emotional, health, state of mind, etc.) and manage to cover their basic needs, while becoming more independent and reducing their dependence on other benefits.

1. Municipal opportunities and limitations: inequality and governance

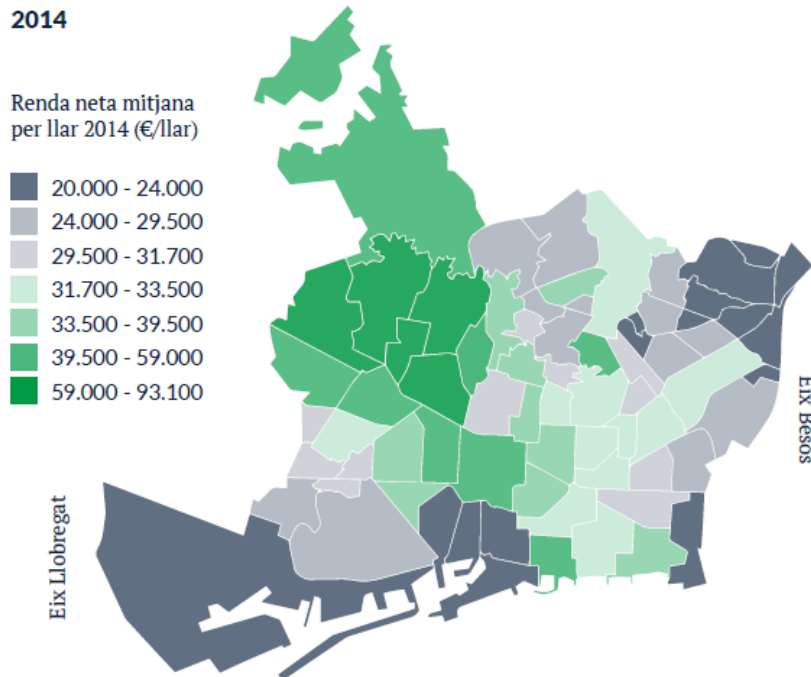
The Spanish welfare system's capacity for redistribution has always been limited and the 2008 crisis has reduced this even further. While in 2013, the set of fiscal policies and monetary transfers managed to reduce inequality by 3.16 points on the Gini Coefficient; two years later, it only managed to do so by 2.52 points. Above all, this trend is due to structural deficiencies. Firstly, a taxation design which finds it increasingly difficult to reduce primary inequality generated in the market. Secondly, although the redistributive effect of the range of monetary transfers reduces inequality by around 27%, nearly 80% of its aggregated effect is due to retirement and unemployment benefits (Fedea, 2018: 4). Therefore, this shows that the monetary transfer system is excessively concentrated on contribution-based benefits which, as a whole, limit and render insufficient the other non-contribution-based, welfare and last-resort benefits. In accordance with various research studies conducted in this area (Buendía and Molero Simarro, 2018; Fernández-Albertos and Manzano, 2012), this bias in favour of contribution-based benefits is the result of the excessively dual nature of the social protection system and the job market that tend to compensate certain groups (insiders) at the expense of others (outsiders)¹.

These structural deficiencies are also due to Spain's multi-level governance design, which reinforces the fragmentation of the social benefits portfolio and generates a very complex, barely-integrated design (Arriba, 2014), characterised by a lack of coordination, solidarity and subsidiarity between Central Government, autonomous communities and city councils (Ayala, 2018). Therefore, while the former exclusively assumes the range of contribution-based benefits (unemployment and retirement which, as mentioned above, have a greater redistributive capacity), the autonomous and local governments have to fund all other non-contribution-based benefits and the range of welfare allowances, emergency aid and last-resort benefits, which are much more limited, both in terms of their quantity and their redistributive capacity².

Traditional contribution-based state benefits, designed in a context of labour market expansion and the consolidation of the welfare state, have an ever-diminishing capacity to respond to current forms of poverty and widespread insecurity. It is for this reason that "local bodies, and specifically, their basic social services, become the main point of access and the last level of social protection for the general public, thereby recovering its most caring aspect" (Porcel & Navarro-Varas, 2016: 1). In this scenario, the growing lack of protection encountered by the most vulnerable groups leads to the appearance of multiple emergency subsidies and benefits created *ad hoc* by municipal governments in order to counter the "new forms of urban poverty (Gutiérrez, 2014) and "new social risks" (Rodríguez Cabrero, 2014)³.

In the city of Barcelona, inequality has two basic components. On the one hand, the persistence of great swathes of structural poverty, which has never been eradicated, even during periods of economic growth, concentrated in the most vulnerable groups (immigrants, people with low educational levels, elderly women, single-parent families, etc.). On the other, a growing dynamic of economic and residential segregation and polarisation in certain urban and metropolitan areas. The progressive occupation of the city's central neighbourhoods by a new population with average and high incomes, leads to the most vulnerable population being pushed out and they end up concentrated on the outskirts of the city and the metropolitan urban sprawl (Porcel, 2016), particularly in the Eix Llobregat and Eix Besòs areas. As shown in Figure 1, while the average disposable income for the city's 73 neighbourhoods in 2014 was around €35,000 a year, it did not rise above €24,000 a year in hardly any of the neighbourhoods in these two areas.

Figura 1. Distribució de la renda mitjana disponible per llar a Barcelona, 2014



Font: Ajuntament de Barcelona. Àrea de Drets Socials. Departament de Recerca i Coneixement

Traditionally, state governments have used employment and work policies to reduce primary inequality. However, these policies and the various minimum incomes have proven to be insufficient for mitigating the growing economic inequality and new forms of poverty (such as the working poor) both on an international scale (Dwyer, 2016; Titmuss, 1958) and in Spain (Ayala, 2000; Ayala, 2018; Fernández, 2013; De la Rica and Gorjón, 2017). Similarly, while the mechanisms available to Central Government are insufficient, municipal governments, such as Barcelona City Council, have even greater limitations. Considering job creation as a municipal priority, the City Council does not have the capacity to create the almost 100,000 jobs needed to eliminate unemployment in the city. For this reason, it is becoming increasingly important to develop alternative or complementary policies to those which are geared exclusively to fostering access to salaried employment as a mechanism for reducing inequality.

There is empirical evidence showing that, in order for people to be able to look for a decent job or adequate training, they need a certain amount of economic security so they are not forced to accept any job they are offered, especially if it is under precarious conditions or in the underground economy⁴. In this framework, a basic income is presented as one of the options for providing this stability, something that would allow its recipients to design their own life plans under better conditions and with more freedom (Casassas, 2018; Laín, 2015; Raventós, 2007). However, beyond the necessary political agreement, Barcelona City Council does not have either the capacity for funding it or the political power to implement it, as it is only permitted to offer social emergency or welfare benefits that are complementary or subsidiary to the other state or regional income policies (Bergantiños *et al.*, 2017)⁵.

Given these legal and economic restrictions, Barcelona City Council is trying out new strategies for reducing poverty and inequality, by means of income policies, which include the B-MINCOME pilot project, in the European Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) programme. This project aims to evaluate the effectiveness (in relation to the expected impact) and the efficiency (in relation to its cost) of combining a minimum income with active social and labour market integration policies in a

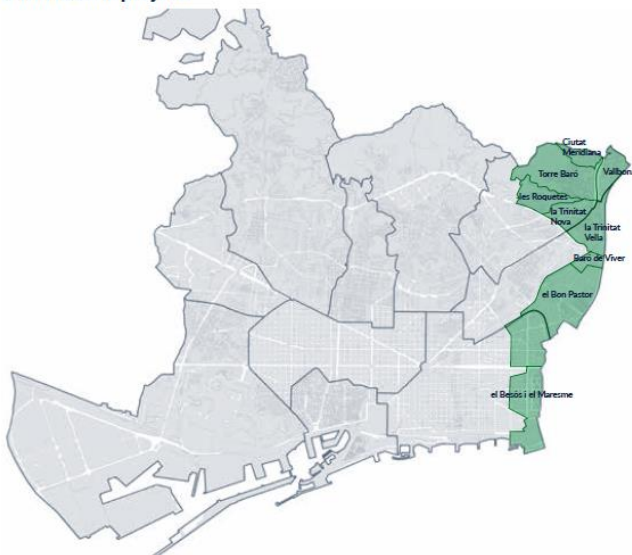
disadvantaged area of Barcelona, the Eix Besòs.⁶ The project is led by the Area of Social Rights as part of a consortium formed by The Young Foundation, Novact (International Institute for Non-violent Action), Ivàlua (Catalan Institute for Public Policy Assessment), the IGOP-UAB (Institute of Government and Public Policies) and the DAMA group from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. The overall budget is nearly €17 million, 5 million of which is provided by the UIA programme and 12 by the City Council. The project lasts for 24 months (from October 2017 to September 2019) and over 1,000 vulnerable households living in Eix Besòs are taking part⁷.

The objective of this article is to give a detailed presentation of the B-MINCOME project. The following section explains the characteristics of the participating households and underlines the similarities and differences in relation to households in the city as a whole. The third section focuses on presenting the project's comprehensive, innovative design in two sub-sections: the first, which defines the passive policy —the Municipal Inclusion Support (SMI)—, and the second, which analyses the particular features of active social-employment inclusion policies. The fourth section reflects on the ways in which these active and passive policies are combined, while the fifth section centres on the evaluation strategies for these policies and the project as a whole. Finally, the conclusion outlines the project's challenges.

2. Characterising the participating households

The B-MINCOME project is specifically aimed at people in a situation of severe economic vulnerability. In order to demarcate the pilot project, a specific territory in Barcelona with a high concentration of households meeting this profile was identified. The chosen area is a group of ten neighbourhoods that border each other in the districts of Nou Barris, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí, whose populations have similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The chosen neighbourhoods make up what is known as the Eix Besòs: Ciutat Meridiana, Vallbona, Torre Baró, Les Roquetes, La Trinitat Nova, La Trinitat Vella, Baró de Viver, el Bon Pastor, and el Besòs i el Maresme.

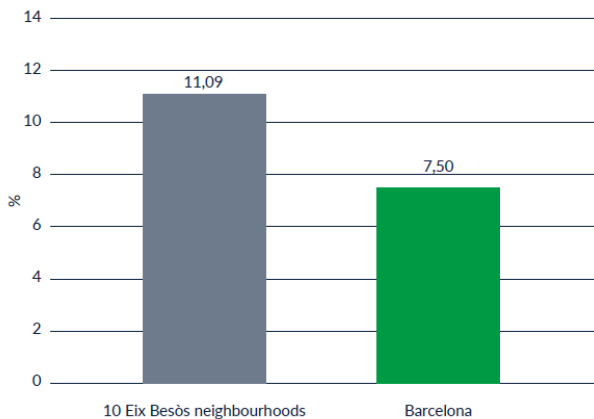
Figure 2. Location of the 10 Eix Besòs neighbourhoods chosen for the B-MINCOME project.



Source: Barcelona City Council. Social Rights. Research and Knowledge Department.

According to Barcelona City Council data, in January 2017, the population of these ten neighbourhoods accounted for 7.05% of the city's total population. This population has some distinctive characteristics. If we take into account their nationality, there is no significant difference between the chosen neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. However, a higher proportion of the population does not have Spanish nationality: 19.3% in the ten chosen neighbourhoods and 17.6% in the city as a whole. There is also a greater concentration of people with disabilities: 10.6% compared to 8.2% for the population of Barcelona. In terms of the *per capita* disposable household income index (AFI)⁸ of the ten chosen neighbourhoods, all of them have a low or very low level of income (nine of the ten neighbourhoods are under 63 points, 100 points being the baseline for the city). This data is correlated with the unemployment rate registered for the population aged 16-64: in the Eix Besòs neighbourhoods unemployment is on average 3% higher than in Barcelona as a whole. This data confirms the appropriateness of selecting these neighbourhoods for the B-MINCOME project, as there is a high concentration of households in a situation of greater economic vulnerability or joblessness.

Graph 1. Percentage of unemployed people aged 16 to 64, for Eix Besòs neighbourhoods and Barcelona, 2017



Source: Barcelona City Council statistics (data for January 2017).

Once the neighbourhoods had been selected, 4,858 households were defined and identified as candidates for participating in the project. 2,524 of them (52%) applied for the project. A randomised draw of these households was carried out, resulting in the selection of the 1,000 households participating in the pilot programme (treatment group) and the 1,000 households in the control group. The initial group was selected from among the people using social services, receiving municipal subsidies or taking part in the Labora programme. According to data provided by the Social Action Information System (SIAS) and by using the inter-operability process, a check was carried out to see which people met the requirements for taking part in B-MINCOME, which are detailed below:

1. **Census-residency:** All members of the household must have been continually registered in Barcelona since 30 June 2015 and they must be residents of one of the ten Eix Besòs neighbourhoods. It is also necessary for them to accept the commitment of effectively residing there without interruptions from 1 October 2017 until September 2019, when the project finishes.
2. **Social Services users:** The applicant, who is the subsidy recipient, has to be a service user with an open case file at a social services centre at the time of the campaign; or to have requested and complied with the requirements for receiving the allowances for children and adolescents aged 0 to 16 in the 2017 campaign; or to be a participant in the Labora programme at the time of the campaign or to have been a participant in the 12 months prior to the campaign; or to be a user of the Social Insertion Service (SIS).

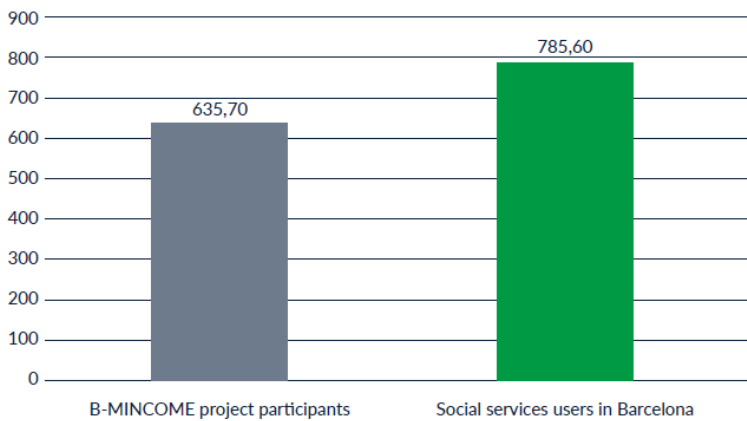
3. Age: At least one member of the household must be aged between 25 and 60 on 31 July 2017. If the applicant is not aged between 25 and 60, the beneficiary will be the oldest person among those registered with social services (or the services established in the previous point).
4. Cohabitation: All the members of the household must effectively live together throughout the project. Demographic or legal changes due to death, separation, divorce, adoption, emancipation, etc., will modify the amount of the subsidy.
5. Acceptance: It is necessary to sign a voluntary acceptance document concerning the conditions for providing the subsidy in the adjudicated modality, including both the financial aid and any active policies that may be assigned; accept the payment of 25% of the subsidy in citizen's currency, and take part in the programme's activities and obligations, in order to monitor its impact.
6. Commitment: It is necessary to sign a commitment document that allows the City Council to obtain socio-economic information about the households in the treatment group and the control group, in order to assess the effects of the project. This monitoring involves taking part in various processes for obtaining the information established in the assessment and accepting indirect, non-invasive monitoring through public-administration data bases under current legislation.
7. Income and assets: Households where the family-unit have personal property worth over four years of the value of the estimated subsidy are excluded. This includes real estate (cadastral value), financial assets (accounts, deposits or financial assets) or sumptuary assets (vehicles worth over €20,000, jewellery, works of art, antiques, etc.) discounting debts and without taking into account the main dwelling and a parking place. If the household members generate additional income from economic activities that are not subject to a work contract during the project, they must sign a commitment to provide information about this.

These requirements define the profile of the possible recipient households, which leaves a target population of households with a high level of economic vulnerability and with one household member available to participate in active policies. However, these requirements have been a barrier for some households that applied to take part (51% of the applications were excluded, mostly because they surpassed the established income threshold).

The fact that applicants had to be social services users made it possible to compare their characteristics with the data from the Living Conditions of Social Services Users Survey (ECVUSS), produced in 2015. It was therefore possible to analyse whether the profiles of the social services users were homogeneous or if they tended to be more, or less, vulnerable. The data shows that among the project participants there is an over-representation of the high or severe vulnerability profiles. According to ECVUSS data, among the most vulnerable population in Barcelona, 17.1% own their property outright, with no outstanding payments, while 5.3% live in the property free of charge. By contrast, among the households participating in the B-MINCOME project, these figures are substantially lower, at nearly 7.9% and 4.7% respectively.

The average number of household members in the project is 4 people, while in the ECVUSS survey it is 2.6. In other words, in ECVUSS, 26.8% of the households have 4 or more members, while this figure is 63% for the project households. According to ECVUSS, the average income of social services users is €785.6 a month, while the average income in the B-MINCOME households is €635.7. 1.9% of the households in the ECVUSS declare that they have no income, while 26% have a monthly income of over €1,000. By contrast, the B-MINCOME households show a greater economic vulnerability, as 6.4% of them declare they have no income, while only 23.8% have over €1,000 a month.

Graph 2. Average monthly income for social services users in Barcelona and for B-MINCOME project participants



Source: Living Conditions of Social Services Users Survey and data for B-MINCOME project participants

In summary, the data shows that there is an over-representation of the city's most vulnerable population in the B-MINCOME project, taking into account that the participating households have a higher number of members, lower incomes and that household expenses signify a higher cost.

3. Innovative comprehensive design: the combination of active and passive policies

The B-MINCOME project's design is ambitious and complex. Unlike income projects such as those in Finland or Utrecht (Netherlands), the Barcelona pilot project includes a *passive* policy (a monetary transfer) and various *active* policies (social and labour market insertion). Altogether, this represents an innovative plan that attempts to go beyond partial —non-comprehensive— public-policy approaches that aim to combat poverty situations, which are distributed unequally in the territory. At least one dilemma arises from this scenario: in order to reverse this situation, what should public intervention focus on? On the individual —and their household—, or on their areas of residence; neighbourhoods that have physical and social conditions that are in equally deteriorated conditions?

Policies that were originally well-intended can lead to unwanted consequences or external effects that shift them away from the objectives they were designed for. There have been policies focused on improving facilities, services and public areas in a certain neighbourhood, resulting in that neighbourhood increasing in value, with higher housing prices and the expulsion of local residents due to the influx of others with higher levels of income. There have also been policies focused on improving the living conditions of people in a vulnerable situation —by increasing their human capital and level of income— which have led to those people improving their situation and deciding to move to other urban areas with higher levels of well-being. This means that the original neighbourhood still has the most vulnerable population, thereby increasing territorial and economic segregation and polarisation.

The B-MINCOME project aims to reduce poverty and inequality while avoiding these kinds of negative consequences. For this reason, the project design has a more comprehensive perspective: it combines a passive policy (in the form of an economic benefit) and four active policies. Therefore, overall, the project aims to invest in the people (through an individual approach) and in their communities and local areas, which are the ultimate beneficiaries of activities associated with active policies.

3.1. Towards a new income policy: the Municipal Inclusion Support

The first cornerstone of the project's architecture is a monetary benefit in the form of the Municipal Inclusion Support (SMI). The SMI is a social-emergency economic subsidy for the household as a whole, which is complementary and subsidiary to other benefits and incomes (such as the guaranteed citizen's income, the active insertion income, unemployment benefit, pensions and

employment income). It is not a subjective right, it is temporary (for the two-year duration of the project) and it is aimed at covering basic needs (food, clothing, education, housing, transport, etc.). The distributive principle behind the SMI is not “egalitarianism” but “sufficiency”, the aim of guaranteeing a decent way of life for everyone who receives it.

The amount of the SMI benefit is calculated according to two variables: the sum of the countable income of all the household members and the number of household members. Therefore, this amount is subject to any changes that the household may experience, in terms of the volume of income and the household's composition. The final amount of the subsidy is the result of the difference between the “basic threshold” established by the project (considered as the monetary cost of covering a household's basic needs and housing) and the net income of all the household members (income provable through income tax, taxation earnings not included in the Spanish Tax Authority [AEAT], benefits exempt from taxation and other public subsidies).

In order to establish this “basic threshold”, the monthly monetary cost of covering the basic needs of a Barcelona household had to be calculated. This calculation was designed by taking into account leading studies (Daleph, 2017; KSNET, 2016; Penne *et al.*, 2016) and data from City Council administrative registers, and then adding the pertinent variations, considering the type of policies fostered by B-MINCOME, budgetary availability and the socio-economic reality of the participating neighbourhoods. Therefore, the resulting “basic threshold” (Table 1) has two components: the amount for a household's basic needs in these neighbourhoods and the amount for housing needs (considered to be sufficiently singular to be counted separately). Therefore, a scale of equivalence has been established with the aim of adjusting the amounts according to the household's composition.

Table 1. Benchmark basic threshold for the B-MINCOME project

Basic needs (excluding housing) including basic utilities (energy and water).	€402.6 a month for the first adult person
	€148 a month for each additional member
Housing needs (minimum value between the real monthly expense and the objective indicator for housing expenses according to the number of members in the cohabitation unit)	€260 a month for the first adult person
	€110 a month for the second member
	€40 a month for each additional member

In Table 1, the benchmark “basic threshold” is calculated for each household according to the number of household members. The resulting SMI for the household, taking into account the monthly income and real expenses for the main dwelling (rent, mortgage, property tax and community expenses) gives the amount needed to reach the established threshold. It must be considered that in order to calculate the housing needs, the minimum value between the real expenses and the amount based on what the table indicates is used as a reference. For example, according to the table, a household with three members has housing needs of €410 (260 + 110 + 40). If you have housing expenses of €600 a month, the previous amount of €410 is used to calculate the basic threshold, but if the expenses were €400, this last amount would be used.

The maximum amount of SMI that a household can receive is €1676, which is double the 2016 risk-of-poverty threshold for Catalonia. The amount of the subsidy is subject to periodic review—in terms of both possible changes in the household's composition and its income—with the aim of adjusting it to the household's reality at all times. The payment is made using a specific project pre-payment card. Furthermore, the subsidy beneficiaries have a mobile application for photographing the receipts of any expenses paid and for keeping a digital copy (a procedure which is required in order to justify an emergency subsidy like the SMI).

With the aim of multiplying the subsidy's local impact, from September 2018, 25% of the SMI for each household is paid in REC (citizen economic resource), which is Barcelona's citizen currency. The aim is to guarantee that this part of the SMI is used for buying goods and services offered by those local commercial establishments in the Eix Besòs neighbourhoods that accept payment in

this currency. Exchange systems based on social currencies, like the one being attempted with the REC, are seen as an alternative to the dominant globalised economic and monetary system. They aim to favour small businesses, build real relational links, increase the perception of security and trust, and generate and reproduce local wealth (Lietaer, Rogers and Kennedy, 2015).⁹

3.2. Towards inclusive active policies: the logic of co-production

As has already been mentioned, the second big cornerstone of the project are the four inclusive, active social-employment policies that aim to have a positive impact on the social and physical environment of the Eix Besòs neighbourhoods. As we will see below, not all of the people connected to the B-MINCOME project take part in these policies and, furthermore, those who do take part don't all do so in the same way. The type of participation that includes receiving the SMI, together with joining one of the active policies, means going one step beyond the usual models for providing economic aid. What is provided is a *set of monetary and non-monetary resources* aimed at improving living conditions.

1) The first policy consists of a mixed programme of professional training and employment aimed at 150 people between the ages of 25 and 60, who are unemployed at the start of the project. The Barcelona Education Consortium offers training courses linked to subsequent work experience lasting one year, through a Barcelona Activa municipal employment plan, working on projects of collective interest divided into six main themes: 1) Ordering and maintenance of public areas; 2) environment and sustainability in recycling and energy efficiency; 3) promoting the local economy: productive activity and commerce; 4) encouraging sports and cultural activities, social-cohesion activities and the prevention of conflicts to favour community life; 5) sustainable provision of food and raising awareness about good habits, and 6) community care services to prevent the isolation and exclusion of people who are elderly, have disabilities, are ill or have mental disorders. Both the cornerstones and the projects are the result of work that took over a year, in which all the stakeholders involved took part. An initial information session open to local social organisations allowed strategic ideas to be identified. With this foundation, technical staff from the Area of Social Rights, the Eix Besòs districts, Barcelona Activa's Operational Department of Comprehensive Projects and the Education Consortium confirmed the real intervention needs and identified the most appropriate project types. As a result of the meetings held with these stakeholders, the six thematic areas cited above were defined, along with their corresponding areas of action. A number of projects were assigned to each area, and a number of participants and an intervention district were assigned to each project. 22 occupational projects were outlined, with between 5 and 14 participants assigned to each one. Later, the terms and conditions of a competition by lots were drawn up, with the aim of adjudicating a specialised support service (both socio-educational and technical-professional) for each of the 22 projects, which guaranteed the participants effective work experience that would improve their social and labour market inclusion. During the four-sided work meetings between the successful social organisations, district officers, Social Rights and Barcelona Activa, the specific project activity to be developed, the work plans, the locations, the work tools and the appropriate materials were all jointly designed. Similarly, the implementation of each project was shared among the parties, under the singular leadership of the District.

2) The second active policy aimed to foster social entrepreneurship in social, solidarity and cooperative economy projects (SSCE). The group of organisations forming the SSCE can offer their own socio-economic framework (linked to territorial and community roots, eco-social commitment, covering the needs of local residents and decent-employment and internal democratic participation schemes) so that 100 participants in the B-MINCOME project could find appropriate tools to initiate their own projects, of a social-business or social-community nature, in order to escape from their situations of poverty and social exclusion. With this objective, the programme includes the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as support services to coordinate projects that can lead to self-employment, which have continuity over time and are able to generate income for the people involved. For people who do not show any manifest

interest or skills, there are two alternative itineraries on offer. The first, the work-placement itinerary, consists of collaborating with SSCE-sector organisations that are already operating in the Eix Besòs area (without a contract, but with training). This collaboration should enable the acquisition of knowledge about how these organisations work, and by extension, the overall reality of the SSCE. It should also favour a more intense medium or long-term link between the participants and these economic sectors. The second itinerary involves the training of socio-economic action groups, the aim of which is to revitalise the economic side of projects that local social or local-resident organisations are currently undertaking. Among the 100 people participating in this policy, there are currently 6 entrepreneur projects under way which include most of the participants. Regarding alternative itineraries, there are 16 participants in the work-placement itinerary and nearly 15 linked to the socio-economic action groups. In accordance with this trend, this second policy has been designed and implemented with Barcelona Activa's Operational Department of Socio-economic Innovation and four training, revitalisation and support cooperatives from SSCE projects operating in the city.

3) The third policy consists of a programme of subsidies for renovating housing. It is conceived as a subsidy for 24 households who own their dwellings, so that they can rent out one or various rooms, permanently and at a regulated price. This policy allows participating households to obtain financial gain that improves their monthly disposable income. These households are offered up to €3,600 for making the necessary alterations to the rooms to be let or to communal areas in the dwelling, such as the kitchen or the bathroom. This project was designed by the Area of Social Rights, in collaboration with the Municipal Housing and Renovation Institute. The Institute's technical staff, with the collaboration of the team of social workers assigned to the B-MINCOME project, is responsible for finding and selecting the potential lodgers for these rooms. They attempt to find profiles that are suitable for the dwelling's owners. Similarly, this team also carries out the monitoring and evaluation of their cohabitation arrangement and is responsible for producing the technical report that accredits the state of the dwelling and the alterations needed in order to make the rooms suitable. Unfortunately, various administrative and bureaucratic obstacles have made it impossible to implement the policy as it had been planned. All in all, it is now thought that it can be initiated at the beginning of 2019.

4) The fourth active policy is a community-participation action which consists of linking 276 of the participating households, in a non-remunerative way, to various social, neighbourhood and community activities and projects which are designed and executed by the Department of Community Action, from the Area of Citizens Rights, Participation and Transparency. The objectives of this policy include fostering local social relationships and becoming established in the territory; detecting and sharing needs and aspirations (both individual and collective, material and symbolic) and mobilising them through projects of common interest based on fostering self-management, autonomy, shared responsibility and increasing skills and abilities, in order to make these unique associative experiences possible, and supported by connections with neighbourhood facilities, services and organisations (local-resident associations, neighbourhood and civic centres, adult training centres, etc.). This policy is divided into five implementation phases: 1) reception of the participants; 2) training of territorial and similar groups in order to train five groups, in accordance with the territorial distribution of the participants; 3) promoting leadership and collective projects; 4) implementing projects, and 5) assessing the tasks carried out and planning future actions. The design of this policy aims to place the participants in a more favourable position, in the medium-term, in order to improve their socio-economic situation (individual and household) and to improve their quality of life. There is a clear wish to directly and indirectly increase their employability and to help them to cultivate not only technical abilities, but also relationship and competency skills.

With the first, second and fourth policies, the aim is to explicitly contribute to strengthening and developing the social-community fabric, which is currently fragile and fragmented in the Eix Besòs. In keeping with this strategic objective, there are elements of these three policies that have been inspired by the logic of the co-creation and co-production of public policies and the construction of

a new public governance (Brandsen, Steen and Verschuere, 2018; Pestoff, Brandsen and Verschuere, 2012). One of the new features of the training and employment policy is that the design and implementation of the employment projects has not been carried out purely from a corporate perspective, but together with social organisations. Similarly, in the policies that foster the SSCE and community participation, there are intervention procedures based on a clear and essential collaboration between the public and associations, which include shared decision-making and appropriate administrative formalisation. The active involvement of participants in the definition of some actions linked to both policies should also be taken into account.

In the end, this kind of collaboration process is considered key to ensuring that the B-MINCOME project's policies are based on wider and better knowledge of the neighbourhood case work and the issues concerned (labour market insertion, SSCE and community action), that they better respond to the needs and aspirations of participants and guarantee them closer ties, and lastly, to ensure the attainment of individual, collective and community results which would be difficult —if not impossible— to achieve with a strictly public intervention.

4. Types of participation: (non) conditioned and (non) limited

The most common public monetary benefits in most welfare systems in our environments are usually minimum, guaranteed or integration incomes. The minimum income benefits, such as the Spanish active integration income (RAD), was designed as the last safety nets for welfare states, aiming to cover the basic needs of individuals or households that have insufficient resources or are in a situation of poverty. In other words, to cover the insufficiency of employment incomes for groups that are becoming more and more insecure (Zalakain, 2014). In most European countries, the minimum income mechanisms are considered to be an essential tool for combating poverty, promoting social integration and preventing these phenomena in the future. In 24 of the 28 EU member states, some type of minimum income is applied, although there are major differences due to their dissimilar degree of cover, the amount awarded, or the disposition of the institution concerned (Laparra and Ayala, 2009).

However, the distinctive features of the RAI mean that it “is far removed from the defined standards at a European level” and so reinforces the idea “ of minimum income models that are strongly based on the tradition of welfare-state assistance in Southern European countries and far from the social protection model focused on the right of citizenship, used by Nordic countries (Bergantiños *et al.*, 2017: 416). As indicated above, the Spanish political-institutional design and the marked contribution-based nature of its welfare system has meant that state (RAI) and regional (RMI and now RGC) non-contribution based benefits are not aligned with the idea of universality, “they don't offer protection from all the risks, but rather respond to contingencies (age and incapacity) already covered in the contribution-based type of benefit; nor do they go beyond the concept of family benefits [...]. They are only a remedy that partially redresses the specific deficiencies of the contribution-based model in a fragmented way” (Pérez, 2003: 108). In this sense, the 2008 crisis revealed that the initial situation of the non-contribution based benefit policies, such as the RAI and the RMI, were scarcely developed or integrated, that the degree of vulnerability and economic and social exclusion made worse by the crisis was forcing autonomous communities to “take palliative measures to improve their income policies, to some extent” (Bergantiños *et al.*, 2017: 414).

Most of these European and Spanish “minimum or guaranteed income” policies are usually conditional and limited in nature. Conditional, or means-tested, policies are monetary-transfer benefits. Like unemployment benefits or the RAI, receiving them is conditioned by the need to meet certain conditions or requirements (being below a wealth threshold, being unemployed, following a labour market integration plan, etc.). For example, in the case of unemployment benefit, you have to be unemployed, registered as looking for work and have paid contributions for a certain period of time. In the case of the RAI, you also have to be unemployed and looking for a job, be under the age of 65 or not have a monthly income of above 75% of the minimum inter-

professional salary. This type also includes non-contribution based pensions for disability when they are combined with income from an additional work or professional activity¹⁰.

In the case of policies that are limited, with a ceiling, their main characteristic is that the amount transferred is complementary and subsidiary to other possible incomes obtained by the person or household, whether they be the result of work activities or from other public benefits. Therefore, the amount is adjusted upwards or downwards until the minimum threshold established by the competent political authority is reached. At an international level, and under the conditioned and limited types of policy, of note are various North American negative income tax (NIT) programmes or the *revenu de solidarité active* (RSA) implemented in France in 2009.

By contrast, it is also possible to find public policies and benefits of the unconditional or non-conditioned and non-limited type. These two types are usually associated with non-contribution based and universal benefits. Examples include the defunct Baby Bond in the United Kingdom in 2003 and the *cheque bebé* in Spain in 2007, which transferred €2,500 to all families that had or adopted a child. Among these non-conditioned and non-limited type of benefit the most notable is the basic income. The best example is from Alaska, where through the Alaska Permanent Fund, all accredited residents of that state unconditionally received between 1,500 and 2,000 dollars a year, regardless of any consideration or personal, family, economic or employment situation.

Similarly, there are other income programmes that combine conditionality and non-limitation, such as the Guaranteed Income Payment (RGI) in the Basque Country, the Bolsa Família programme introduced in Brazil in 2003, or the Cash Transfer Benefits (CTB) introduced in Latin America since the year 2000. Additionally, there may also be non-conditioned income-transfer programmes, but of a limited type, such as the recent case of the Guaranteed Citizen Income (RGC), approved in July 2017 in Catalonia, which replaced the previous minimum insertion income. However, it is debatable whether the RGC is really a non-conditioned policy. Officially, the only condition is not to surpass the established income thresholds, although in practice, there is a set of requirements that have caused over 75% of applications to be denied. Although it is not exhaustive, Table 1 illustrates the combination of these four types of income policies, in accordance with some of the examples mentioned above.

Table 2. Types and combinations of income-transfer policies

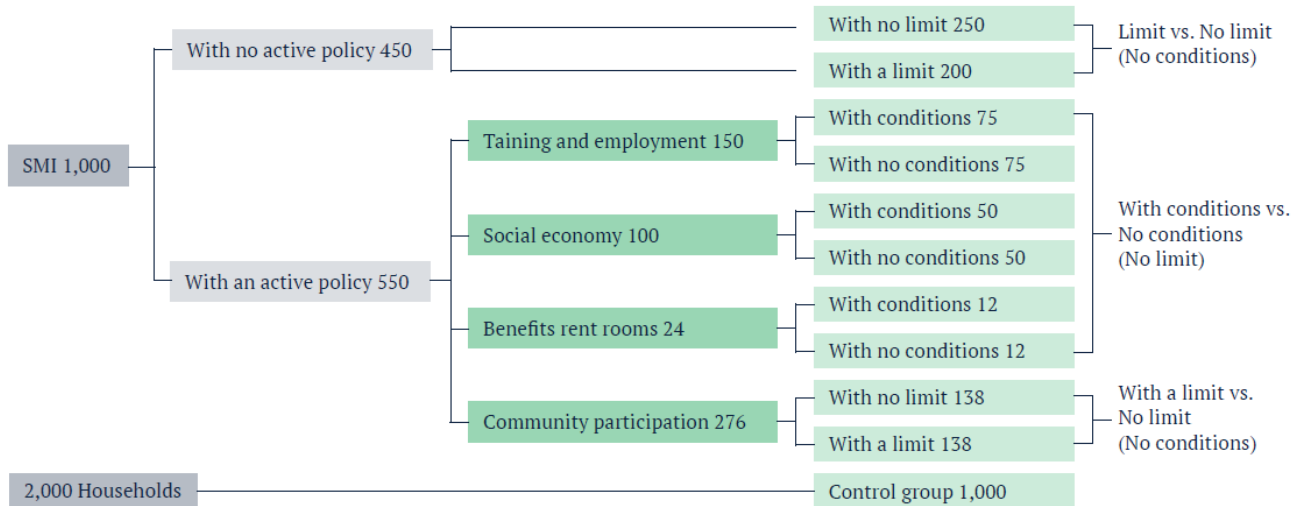
← Limited Non-limited →		
Conditioned and limited	Conditioned and non-limited	↑ Conditioned ↓ Non-conditioned
Current minimum income policies (RAI, RMI, NIT, RSA, etc.)	Guaranteed Income Payment- (Basque Country), Bolsa Família, CTB	
Non-conditioned and limited	Non-conditioned and non-limited	
Guaranteed Citizen Income (RGC Catalonia)	Basic income (Alaska), Baby Bond (United Kingdom), cheque bebé (Spain)	

Source: Own production based on B-MINCOME project data.

The distinctive feature of the B-MINCOME project's experimental design is that these four types (conditioned, non-conditioned, limited and non-limited) can be tested and their results can be compared both internally among the various treatment groups and in relation to other similar Catalan, Spanish and European projects or programmes. The project's distinctive nature and complexity resides in the fact that the SMI the participating households receive in the four

modalities is combined with participation —conditioned or not— in one of the four active social and labour market integration policies¹¹. The ten treatment groups, which the 1,000 participating households are divided into, are formed in accordance with the combination of these four types of monetary benefit with those four public policies. Table 2 shows the project's experimental design, in which the four types of income and the various types into which the ten treatment groups are divided.

Table 3. Experimental design, combination of treatment groups and SMI modalities



Font: Own elaboration based on data from the B-MINCOME project.

In accordance with this experimental design, the aim of the project is to provide informative data in relation to the positive or negative effects of these four types of income-transfer policies, as well as on their differing capacities for reducing poverty and exclusion in disadvantaged urban environments. In this sense, the pilot project's assessment objectives include the willingness to provide responses to the questions related to these four types of benefits. For example, is it true that the non-conditioned and non-limited transfers —as in the case of the Alaskan basic income— encourage the beneficiaries to become inactive? To what degree do the least conditioned but limited benefits —such as the RGC in Catalonia— discourage the search for a job or other sources of income? To what degree do the conditioned or means-tested benefits —such as the RAI or unemployment benefit— generate problems such as “poverty traps”¹² non-take up applications, individual and social stigmatisation, administrative discretion and arbitrariness, bureaucratic stumbling blocks and information obstacles?¹³

The project's experimental design is therefore not limited to testing different types of income policies, but rather that the effects or results that this income may have must be considered in accordance with the active policies that accompany them. The option of launching these active integration policies is a Barcelona City Council commitment for tackling a new urban-poverty scenario that requires an innovative approach to be brought to traditional active policies. The effects of some of these policies will be more difficult to assess than others. In some cases, what will be assessed is the change in the household's income, while in others it will be the increase in community participation and social links and interaction. In the following section, the project assessment model is presented in more detail.

5. Research and evaluation

The aim of the B-MINCOME project is to be able to analyse its own evolution and evaluate its results and impact. Its main objective is to offer innovative resources so that participants can find a way out of their situation of vulnerability and socio-economic exclusion. Being able to extract conclusions or indications concerning which policies are the most effective for achieving these ends is the central part of the project. In order to achieve this evidence, it is necessary to carry out a rigorous investigation from multiple perspectives. For this reason, various analytic strategies have been developed, which take into account both the various types of treatment and the comparison with the control group. This is a complex evaluation where there are multiple lines of analysis that can be tackled from different perspectives. For this reason, it is considered useful to collaborate with various research groups and institutions that provide their expertise through various assessment methods and perspectives. In this sense, Ivàlua, The Young Foundation, IGOP and ICTA (the Autonomous University of Barcelona), as well as Barcelona City Council's Area of Social Rights all collaborate on the B-MINCOME project's research. All of these stakeholders are involved in the design and development of the various evaluation methodologies applied, including the following:

- a. Project follow-up survey: Both the individuals in the treatment group and the control group are interviewed for the survey during three phases of the project. They are first interviewed just after the beginning of the project (before the treatment group is selected), there is a second survey after the first year, and then the last survey is at the end of the project (just before it finishes). The aim of this survey is to gather various pieces of information, most notably, the household's living conditions (such as the household's level of privation, its economic situation or the state of the home), the employment situation of household members, and their health and psychological well-being.
- b. Follow-up survey of participants in the community participation policy: As with the project follow-up survey, this is also conducted at three different times: at the start of the programme, halfway through and at the end. In this survey, aspects such as the attitude of people towards participation, their social networks, their trust of other neighbours, solidarity between neighbours and their perception of local public services are all evaluated.
- c. Ethnographic research, interviews and discussion groups: Throughout the project, a series of semi-structured interviews and discussion groups are held with policy participants in order to collect qualitative information about the project. This qualitative work is mostly carried out with the group of participants in the community participation policy.
- d. Administrative registers: To complement the quantitative information collected in the surveys, the various administrative registers available for the study are used. The main administrative information centres and registers include: information on household incomes, the participation of household members in the job market, public subsidies received by the participants, the educational progress of their children, the health of household members and their residential situation.

Through the triangulation of these methodological techniques, the aim is to obtain the necessary information throughout the project in order to more clearly understand how to design and apply the various social policies, so that they are more effective, more efficient and in order to improve social investment. In this sense, the analysis of the project's impact on the participating households can be classified in two aspects: monetary and non-monetary. The methodology used for analysing them is the same. The follow-up survey on the control group members and the treatment group members, as well as the available administrative registers, are used as the main sources of information. Here is a list of the main research questions used over the course of the evaluation, according to the aspect analysed.

1) Monetary dimension. This aspect includes the following research questions:

1.1. Once the B-MINCOME project is finished, how many families are above the basic needs threshold? What part of this change can be attributed to the project? Which profiles benefited most from the SMI, and which benefited the least?

1.2. How many families out of the total number of families with an active policy are above the basic-needs threshold and how many out of the total number who didn't have one? What is the difference between the various active policies? Which is the most efficient type of treatment?

1.3. How many families out of the total number of families with a conditioned active policy are above the basic-needs threshold and how many out of the total number with a non-conditioned policy?

1.3. How many families out of the total number of families with an upper limit on their monetary transfer are above the basic-needs threshold and how many out of the total number who didn't have one? To what degree does the limited modality generate "poverty traps" and discourage looking for other sources of income?

2) Non-monetary dimension. Outside the economic area, there are a series of dimensions that are included in order to establish the level of exclusion, well-being and any possible changes in living conditions produced during the programme. The same four lines of questions raised in the monetary dimension are replicated in order to make an analysis of the other aspects of social exclusion. These aspects are as follows: material privation, housing, health, subjective well-being, education, employment situation, financial situation (focusing on debts), empowerment of women and social capital.

6. The challenges of B-MINCOME

The conclusive results for the B-MINCOME project will not be available until the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020. At the time of writing this article, the project had already passed the halfway point of its implementation. Nearly 1,000 participating households (treatment group) effectively have a *set of resources* to help them develop their lives under better conditions. As has been stated, receiving the SMI —either limited or non-limited, conditioned or non-conditioned— is the central resource, although it is not the only one: some of the households receive it together with the multiple resources they obtain from their participation in one of the four active policies specially designed for the project.

Until the project is finished, the flow of information that this pilot experience generates will be quantitatively considerable and substantially relevant, if we consider what has been observed to date. Due to its experimental nature, the main objective of the B-MINCOME project is to put into practice an innovative minimum income design and carry out the appropriate analysis to extract conclusions about its efficiency and effectiveness. Useful contributions are offered concerning the types of income —including the non-conditioned option closest to the basic income proposal— that are more amenable to helping people get on, to overcome current situations of poverty. There are also conclusions concerning the direct and indirect cost of implementing them. One way or another, the extraction of evidence will lay the foundations for the social policy of our time; a moment characterised by the redefinition of the social welfare model, both in terms of rights and new policies and in terms of the territorial layer of intervention (the necessary role of local governments —and other stakeholders— and their position relative to regional and state governments). Both are elements at the centre of political debate and are also the subject of studies. In this sense, the B-MINCOME project contributes specific evidence to help the City of Barcelona to progress in terms of social integration and the reduction of poverty and inequalities. These contributions necessarily include a debate on other public policy mechanisms and processes (such as the proposed minimum city salary or the basic income) which are also capable of having a considerable impact on the city.

Although, as has been said, it is too early to draw conclusions about the B-MINCOME project, the implementation time that has already passed allows us to look at some inherent challenges that are worth noting. These challenges highlight the underlying nature of a project that is both a scientific study and a set of public policies. The project's architecture is extremely complicated and, in spite of the efforts made, the administrative intensity that the participants and project operators have been subjected to has been significant. One example is the arduous quarterly procedure of recalculating the SMI, tackling the processing of the participants' administrative data while dealing with the impact of undeclared economic activity in the same recalculation. Management difficulties have also been caused by the effects and impact of the random assigning of types of participation and treatment groups, in the framework of a heterogeneous and complex target group. Other implementation challenges concern the pilot project's capacity for covering the limitations associated with other benefits available in Catalonia, or in other places in Spain. Lastly, the B-MINCOME project is not implemented in a vacuum. It is carried out in neighbourhoods where there are other municipal policies and programmes, as well as projects run by social organisations, and therefore the capacity for interaction and integration has been a major challenge from the outset; this is also true of the management of technical support, policy and citizens and the ability of internal and external communications to raise awareness about the project.

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