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SCOTT DOUGLAS JACOBSEN

# In-Sight Publishing

# Book of Stuff 3

# IN-SIGHT PUBLISHING

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**Scott**



## **PLACE 1: CORNELIUS PRESS**

## New Church in Celebration of Alcohol

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Religion News Service* reported on the new church in Orange Farm, South Africa. A clergyperson poured whiskey into a cup to anoint a man.

The congregation of the Gabola Church swig beer and dance. A rite of passage initiated for the newcomer. Less than one-year-old, Tsietso Makiti, said, "We are a church for those who have been rejected by other churches because they drink alcohol.

Those drinkers get seen as sinners, who Makiti helps save. The line of argumentation amounting to the Holy Spirit through drinks. Other South Africans claim Gabola Church does not qualify.

It does not amount to a church. Archbishop Modiri Patrick Shole said, "They are using the Bible to promote taverns and drinking liquor. It is blasphemous. It is heresy and totally against the doctrines."

Gabola Church is a non-member of the South African Council of Churches. No affiliations exist with the church. It stands alone as the whiskey-chalice and beer-congregation church.

56 million people live in South Africa. Approximately 80% of the population identify as Christian: Catholic and Protestant. Some other sects sprinkled in the mix.

30 worshippers, recently, held a service in an Orange Farm township bar. It is south of Johannesburg. That service had a pool table as an altar with, of course, whiskey and beer.

Six ministers blessed cold beer bottles. Other alcoholic beverages included brandy, whiskey, and others. Hymns got sung. All in praise of drinking and its good side.

Makiti said, "Our aim is to convert bars, taverns and shebeens into churches... And we convert the tavern-owners into pastors." The churchgoers get encouraged to drink in a responsible, mature manner.

# Saudi Activist Ghada Ibrahim on the Islamic Educational System

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Ghada Ibrahim is a Former Muslim and Saudi Activist. In particular, the rights of women in Islam. Her emphasis in activist work comes to women's rights in Islam and talking about her former faith. Here we talk about the Islamic educational system in Saudi Arabia, the use of fear, and the religious mental health system in education.*

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** If you look at the Saudi Arabian educational system, how does this system look to you? How does this rank in international metrics?

**Ghada Ibrahim:** I can only speak to what I have been exposed to. I was in the education system until 2006. I watched as the girl's education merged with the boy's education in the Ministry of Education (before, there was General Administration for Girl's Education. It was run by a group of religious fanatics who wanted to control what girls were exposed to in the school system.) Even after the merger, there were distinct differences. For example, girls were not allowed a physical education class and were not permitted to study geology, whereas the boys did.

The education system was government owned and distributed. All schools, public and private, had to teach the same core courses. The only difference was "Extracurricular" classes such as additional English language classes, physical education, and computer classes. These were not counted as part of our GPA.

The classes we took were heavy on religion. We began with 3 main religion classes from 1st to 3rd grade (Quran, Theology, and Jurisprudence). Afterwards, more classes were added. These were: Hadeeth (The sayings of the prophet), Tafseer (The interpretation of the Quran), and Tajweed (The preferred method of reading the Quran). We also took science and math (Physics, Chemistry, biology), English, Arabic (This included literature, writing, grammar, etc.), History (Mostly Islamic history and the history of Saudi Arabia), and Geography. The only thing I can honestly say was good in the education system was math and Arabic. Everything else was extremely poor or religion classes. After graduating from high school and going to college in the US, I felt how useless those religion classes were. We could have had more time in literature (Arabic or English), more emphasis on research and writing, more science, but that would take away from the religious studies, wouldn't it?

**Jacobsen:** If you look at the educational system in South Africa, as an example, most South African Muslims are Sunni Muslims. How would this then compare the educational system in Saudi Arabia and in South Africa?

**Ibrahim:** I am not aware of what they teach in South Africa, but most Muslims in Saudi Arabia are Sunni Muslims. Saudi Arabia is also the birthplace of Wahhabi Islam. This is what we were taught in our religion classes. We were taught the most extreme version of an already extreme religion, including that the punishment for apostasy is death, the punishment for stealing is cutting off limbs, and the punishment for fornication is lashing.

**Jacobsen:** How early does the indoctrination start in Islamic schools in Saudi Arabia?

**Ibrahim:** Grade School. I remember some of the "rhymes" we were taught back then. "Man rabbuk" (Who is your god?) "Man nabiiyyuk" (Who is your prophet?) "Ma deenuk" (What is

your religion?) This was taught to us at 6 or 7 years old. Then we are taught what is halal (permitted) and haram (Not permitted) and also that there is a group of people called Kuffar or infidels that are not Muslim and they are not our friends. During this time, we also begin to memorize the short chapters in the Quran and also learn how to pray. Some of the "group activities" that we did when we were children was go to the bathroom together to perform "Wudu" or ablution before prayer then going to the prayer room and praying together.

Once girls reach 4th grade, they are required to wear the black cloak or "Abaya". After they reach middle school, not only are they required to cover their hair with a hijab, they are required to cover their faces. As the years progress more religious studies are imposed on us. "You can't love a non Muslim" is a big thing they taught us pre-9/11. It mysteriously disappeared afterwards. I saw it disappear from my younger siblings books. We were also taught to hate capitalism, communism, socialism, nationalism, and ism that isn't Islam.

**Jacobsen: How is fear used to intimidate the children into the belief system?**

**Ibrahim:** Oh boy, how does it not? Imagine this with me. You're maybe 11 or 12, just starting to mature, and every week in the morning you have a morning assembly lecture from a religious teacher or a visiting religious scholar. What is today's lecture about? Positive thinking? Don't bully? Be good to your neighbor? No. It is about punishment in the grave for those that miss prayers. Cautionary tales of how an otherwise good person died, but every time they dug a grave, they found a huge snake. Finally, they decided to bury him despite the big snake. Afterwards, the people in cemetery heard bones crushing and a blood curdling scream. That is the punishment for missing prayer. A snake will crush your bones after death. Also as punishment: Your face will be as black as coal (don't get me started at how extremely racist this notion is) and that your body will reek after death. In contrast, if you were a pious Muslim that prayed on time, you will smell like Musk after death, your face will be glowing and white (again, the racist undertones), and no snake in your grave. This is just one of many scare-tactics.

Other tactics used: Scaring girls into hijab by telling them that they will be held by their hair in hell. Scaring people who listen to music by telling them that molten lead will be poured into their ears in hell.

**Jacobsen: How does the religious mental health system deal with modern knowledge about depression and the real cases in the young?**

**Ibrahim:** I don't think it does at all. The religious, whether it be Muslim or otherwise, look at depression as a sign of a weakened faith. Depression is dealt with by more prayers, reading more Quran, and return to the faith. I've struggled with depression for a long time and every time I mentioned feeling down, the answer was always the same: Read the Quran. At first, that was exactly what I did and it never worked. I prayed. I recited. But nothing. Seeing a mental health professional was frowned upon and a HUGE taboo in my culture. Only "insane" and "crazy" people go to a mental health professional.

What was even worse is the state of mental health institutions. I have known people that were put in institutions and medical professionals that worked in them and it is atrocious. There is no real definition of mental illness in there. A friend was put in there for being gay and her "treatments" were memorizing the Quran. The same can be said for patients with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other serious diseases. Orderlies regularly abuse patients. It is horrific.

**Jacobsen: What impact does this likely have on the mental health of children?**

**Ibrahim:** Children that have actual mental health needs do not get the help they need. This isn't just about depression, but also learning disabilities. Everything is taboo. Children with learning disabilities are called stupid for not being able to catch up to their peers, which in turn, cause other harms such as low self-esteem and fear of expressing themselves. This has profound effects on building one's self. In addition, children with depression or anxiety disorders are completely dismissed instead of addressing the very real disease they are suffering from. Untreated depression and anxiety only intensifies with time.

**Jacobsen: Any feelings or thoughts in conclusion?**

**Ibrahim:** As I said, I can only speak of the education system as I had gone through it and from the girls' side only. Everything is segregated in Saudi Arabia. The girls' schools are surrounded by tall cement walls and there is always a guard that prevents girls from leaving between classes and who makes sure everyone is covered up appropriately. The curriculum has changed and I believe is still changing to try and meet international standards. I have seen the sciences improve from my time to my siblings. Religion classes are not as emphasized, or at least I hope they aren't. The new generation doesn't care as much about religion, thanks to social media, the internet, and their parents who traveled and took them outside of the country with them.

**Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Ghada.**

## Dialogue with Mandisa Thomas: Founder, Black Nonbelievers, Inc.

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Mandisa Thomas is the Founder of Black Nonbelievers, Inc. One of, if not the, largest organization for African-American or black nonbelievers or atheists in America. The organization is intended to give secular fellowship, provide nurturance and support for nonbelievers, encourage a sense of pride in irreligion, and promote charity in the non-religious community. Here we talk about the recent transition from full-time work to full-time activism for Thomas and building community.*

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** If you look at the American context of religion and the level of religiosity, how seriously people take their faith, and if you look at the South African case on similar factors, what do you see as similarities in terms of the state of religion and the level of religiosity?

**Mandisa Thomas:** Unfortunately, through colonialism and the indoctrination and imposing of religion among the people of color, particularly black folks and Africans on the continent, it is similar.

Colonialism and Christianity was a force among the Indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, it has taken on a life of its own in both areas, where many African-Americans are highly religious due to the historical nature of the church and the role it played during and after slavery and before and after the Civil Rights movement.

I also think Evangelical Christianity has taken over the continent of Africa as well. Certainly, in the eastern part of Africa Islam dominates there. But there is certainly a similarity in the way it was imposed on blacks in America and Africa.

**Jacobsen:** Regarding the effects of the ways in which religion is represented on the continent of Africa and in southern Africa in particular, how does this lead to human rights violations, whether wittingly or unwittingly used to enact violations of human rights?

**Thomas:** It has been a tool to get the oppressed to accept their oppression. That God or Jesus will deliver you from oppression, will come and save you. We will go to heaven once we die.

Unfortunately, it has allowed many people to accept this idea of suffering or oppression as [Laughing] something like God's Will.

**Jacobsen:** [Laughing] Do you think that culture of "accept your suffering, take it, and you will have a better life in the hereafter" is taken seriously by most people who identify as Christian or Muslim in the continent of Africa?

**Or do you think they take it more as a marginal belief that doesn't necessarily influence their day-to-day lives?**

**Thomas:** I think it is a mixture. I think people have been conditioned to believe that because there are many believers who live their lives like everyone else, except when it comes to going to church on Sunday.

Or if they go to church, they just don't believe, but a huge factor of that is fear. Many are scared to not believe. It is an insurance policy. They may not know for sure that it is real, but, just in case, they will err on the side of belief because they do not want to be wrong and end up on that wrong side once they die.

So, fear is often a huge factor when it comes to espousing the belief or truly believing it.

**Jacobsen: When it comes to the case of South Africa or southern Africa generally, it is not only fear about a hereafter as an insurance policy motivation. It is a fear of being socially unaccepted. You are cast out of the group simply by not taking on the label of "Christian" or "Muslim" or attending mosque or church on a particular holy day.**

**Thomas:** Absolutely, people do have this fear, ostracism. I think in the Muslim faith or the secular Muslim faith. You are considered an apostate, and the punishment is death. So, many people fear for their lives.

If they break away from the religion or the temple and such, in Christianity, there might be the sense of exorcism. In the continent of Africa, I think people fear more for their lives. People definitely face social outcasting from their churches or their communities if they stop believing.

Unfortunately, it does lead to a sense of alienation because you feel that you cannot relate to the people that you once socialized with. It is very uncomfortable for many who break away.

**Jacobsen: Not only on the personal and social aspects, what about professional life? Does this make potential professional life difficult? Could these impact promotion opportunities, the ability to get certain types of employment, if you do not hold a particular faith, whether in the United States or in other places?**

**Thomas:** I do absolutely believe that to be true. There are many nonbelievers here in the United States who are business owners or entrepreneurs. They absolutely cannot say they are atheists or nonbelievers because they would alienate their Christian clients.

I have seen a shift in our members, where they are speaking about it more. But they still do fear that loss of livelihood. They also feel the loss of families, but also in the professional world; it could possibly hinder progression if you come out and speak openly about your non-belief.

In the US, there are employment discrimination laws that should prevent that, but I am not sure about the continent of Africa. Certainly, in the US on paper, there are laws to prevent that. That doesn't mean it doesn't happen.

**Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Mandisa.**

**Thomas:** No problem! Thank you.

# Call to Action on Noura Hussein Hammad from Sodfa Daaji

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Sodfa Daaji is the Chairwoman of the Gender Equality Committee and the North Africa Coordinator for the Afrika Youth Movement. Here we talk about Noura Hussein Hammad's urgent case. The hashtag: #JusticeForNoura. Daaji's email if you would like to sign: [daajisodfa.pr@gmail.com](mailto:daajisodfa.pr@gmail.com).*

*Hammad has 15 days to appeal the decision for her execution.*

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is Noura Hussein Hammad's current crisis?**

**Sadfa Daaji:** Ms. Noura is a 19-year-old Sudanese woman who, on 10th of May 2018, has been sentenced to death penalty according to Sharia Law. Today was her last trial, and the family's husband decided for *Qasas* (death) instead of *Deia* (payment, and consequently forgiveness). Noura is condemned under the article 130, for intentional homicide, and from now we have 15 days to appeal and to try to save Noura's life.

Noura is a victim of forced child marriage, as her father got her to get married with her relative, and no one of her relatives heard her refusal. Noura managed to escape to her aunt's house, but her father tricked her, and she has found herself married against her will. Ms. Noura is a victim of rape, as on the fifth day of her honeymoon, after refusing to have any intercourse with her husband, she has been raped by him with the help of his brother and his cousins, who held her.

Noura is also a victim of gender-based violence and domestic violence, as her husband threatened her with a knife, and she has on her body scars made from his bites and his violence.

We are urging Sudanese authorities to take in consideration the multiple factors, and to treat Noura as a victim of violence, who is psychologically affected by her earlier experience, and she is now facing the misery of being condemned to death.

**Jacobsen: What is the purported crime? What may be the punishment for this?**

**Daaji:** Noura is formerly accused of intentional homicide, under the article 130 of the Sudanese Law. According to Sharia Law, the punishment is *Qasas* (death) or *Deia* (payment of the loss to the family and some time to spend in prison).

The decision is made, at the ending, by the family of the husband. And today the family has decided for death, even if the judge recommended them to take in consideration the opportunity to forgive her and to make her pay a fine.

The family has not accepted the advice from the judge, and according to our volunteers, at the end of the trial the husband's family was clapping and celebrating outside the courtroom for their decision.

**Jacobsen: How can she be helped?**

**Daaji:** We are now running against the time, and we are trying to catch the attention of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, but also the head of States of African Union. Who wants to



support us can join our official hashtag #JusticeForNoura and find on twitter further information.

Thank you for the opportunity.

**Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Sadfa.**

# Marieme Helie Lucas on Noura Hussein Hammad

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** *Cornelius Press* is located in South Africa. It is the first progressive publication, as far I as I am told, in South Africa and Southern Africa for that matter.

**Noura Hussein Hammad** has been given the death penalty for murdering a husband who she was forced to marry and who raped her within the marriage. How common is this story the MENA region? Does this tend to extend within the fundamentalist religious group in general, e.g. those found in Southern Africa too?

**Marieme Helie Lucas:** First of all, it is not just a marital rape, it is also a gang rape insofar as she was held down by several of the husband's male relatives on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of their legal marriage, after steadily refusing first of all to get married to him and then to have sex with him.

She did not sign her marriage contract and was given in marriage by her matrimonial tutor or *wali*, - in this case, her father. It is only the day after this first rape, when he attempted again to rape her that she stabbed him in self-defense. I think we need to spell out these horrendous circumstances.

Now, marital rape is common the world over and women and rights defenders – always - had to struggle for a long time before having it criminalized. It is neither specific to a region, nor to Islam or to a school of thought in Islam.

However, it is true that bad practices and ultraconservative interpretations of Islam that legitimize patriarchy in all its forms are on the rise everywhere and facilitate the extension of the worst cultural practices: for instance, the concept of *wali*, which was unheard of in many predominantly Muslim countries, is now being propagated in the name of Islam; so is FGM, an Egyptian practice of sexual mutilation of women that predates Islam (as it originates in Ancient Egypt), which fundamentalist preachers, right now, are trying to expand to South East Asia and the Maghreb in North Africa where it was unknown till recently.

**Jacobsen:** Hammad has less 15 days to appeal the case. What external pressure can come from other countries in order to change the highly punitive and gender discriminatory legal system found in many Islamic theocracies or Muslim majority countries for that matter?

**Helie Lucas:** First of all, there is internal pressure, both from within Sudan where women's rights and human rights defenders are on high alert and from within predominantly Muslim countries where progressives started defending Noura and her lawyers.

It is essential that external pressure come in support to those progressive forces from within, and in alliance with them. Ignoring the high level local protest would be totally counterproductive, and will amount to putting such a blatant denial of fundamental human rights – self-defense in a case of rape - into a political context of 'good West' against 'bad Islam'.

The so-called Muslim world is very far from being homogeneous, hence marriage laws range from granting no rights at all to women within the marriage to granting equal rights – and responsibilities - to both spouses in more democratic countries.

In all countries, whether predominantly Muslim, Christian, other or secular, democratic forces struggle long and hard in order to defend fundamental human rights – especially but not exclusively for women.

**Jacobsen: If Hammad dies, what will this symbolize as with other potential tragedies in loss of life simply fighting for their well-being and dignity?**

**Helie Lucas:** I do not want to believe for one second that we, the progressive forces the world over and especially those within Muslim contexts, will allow for death penalty to be applied to such a young woman, a victim of child marriage, forced marriage, rape, and many other violations of universal rights.

We should just keep actively fighting for her rights till her life is saved. Appeals for pardon have already been sent to the Sudanese president, petitions have popped out on Aawaz and on Change; they are massively signed. There is a very active and courageous Sudanese website in defense of Noura.

Vocal progressive theologians of Islam started speaking up. Sudan's Constitution and international human rights treaties that Sudan signed should be called upon to protect Noura's life.

**Jacobsen: Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Marieme.**

# **In Conversation with Dr. Leo Igwe on South Africa, Humanism, Mandela, Africa, and Critical Thinking**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** South Africa in particular and Southern African, in general, seems more known than other parts of the world to the entire world, especially with the history of individuals such as Nelson Mandela in South Africa and apartheid.

Of course, religion continues to play a role in the existence of the country after the death of Mandela. However, the legacy continues onward for the country and religion continues to influence the nation insofar as I understand it. Others know the situation better than me.

**What seems like the progression of the liberalization of religion in Southern Africa and increase in space for those who do not have a religion in live safely and healthily in South Africa?**

**Dr. Leo Igwe:** Post-apartheid South Africa has a mixed religious and cultural heritage and that leaves an ample space for a healthy mélange of cultures, religions, and philosophies. It is against this background that the progress in terms of liberal religion in South Africa could be understood. In spite of the region's progress, supernaturalism continues to play an overbearing role in the lives of South Africans, especially among black South Africans. This is evident in the reports of witchcraft accusations, witch persecution, and killings in the provinces. Abuses by South African pastors who spray insecticide on their church members or order them to eat grass have made international headlines. Questionable medicinal claims by traditional healers, called Sangoma abound. However, it must be noted that the government of South Africa has taken measures to combat religious abuses. It constituted a committee that inquired into the commercialization of religion. Some of the erring pastors have been sanctioned. However, time will tell if contemporary South Africans will build on the secular legacy of Nelson Mandela or allow those hard-won gains to be eroded by magico-religious beliefs. So while progress has been made to further the liberalization of religion, a lot of work needs to be done to stamp out religious exploitation and abuses in Southern Africa.

**Jacobsen:** How are other regions of Africa in terms of the freedom for the people to be able to find their own way within the continent and to be able to live free from religion if they so choose?

**Igwe:** The situation varies across the region but is quite dire in the north of Africa where Islam is the dominant religion or in other parts of the region where de facto or de jure sharia law holds sway. Interestingly, African countries have constitutions that guarantee freedom of religion or belief. But in actual fact, there is no freedom of religion in much of these places. In muslim dominated areas, what applies is 'freedom' to profess and practice Islam or some other nationally recognized religions. Those who are born into Muslim families are not allowed to change their religion; they cannot leave the faith of Islam because apostasy is a crime that is punishable by death. So in regions across Africa freedom from religion is not an option and without freedom from religion, the right to freedom of religion or belief makes no sense. It is utterly meaningless.

**Jacobsen:** Does science education tend to moderate or religious belief in African education?

**Igwe:** Actually religion is hampering science education in schools because religious owners and managers of the educational system treat science with suspicion and mistrust. The impression is that much scientific knowledge is corrupting. It will make students to become atheists. So to prevent this from happening, religious controllers of schools disallow or water down aspects of scientific knowledge that they consider to be in conflict with their religious teachings and traditions. So schools produce scientific illiterates. They graduate scientifically half-baked students, who believe that the dogmas of their various religions are superior to scientific explanations. Simply put, religious belief trumps science in Nigerian schools. And I think this applies to many schools across Africa. The irony is that while Christian and Islamic religious zealots who manage these schools limit science education, they send their children to study in western countries where there is a better delivery of science education. African masses need to wake up to the hypocrisy of their ruling elite and demand an optimal delivery of science education in schools.

**Jacobsen:** How often is critical thinking encouraged in Nigerian formal education? For example, we have some trouble in Canada as far as I know, but the general tone is one of critical thinking as good about certain topics. Religion tends to be off-limits for deep criticism.

**Igwe:** Critical thinking is not expressly encouraged in the Nigerian educational system because of the potential of applying the skills to forbidden topics such as religion. So Nigerian students become critical thinkers by default. With the advent of the Internet, the trend will continue as the religious grip on the educational system loosens.

**Jacobsen:** As you are in your fifth decade of life, you have seen many changes in Nigerian culture and education. What have been the most prominent changes in the educational system there?

**Igwe:** The most prominent change is the Internet, the attendant massive flow of information and the liberation of students, seekers and learners from the tyranny of teachers, clerics and other custodians of knowledge, truth, and wisdom. It is most liberating to know that today people who seek knowledge or answers to some basic questions don't have to wait till they go school; they don't need to consult a priest, a diviner or an Imam. Learners and seekers don't have to rely solely on what they were told or taught, they only need some Internet access. For me, this is one prominent change that will drive other educational and cultural changes in the years to come.

**Jacobsen:** Thank you for the opportunity and your time, Dr. Igwe.

# Abortions Legality Does Not Necessitate Safe Abortion Use in South Africa

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*The Guardian* reported on the need to consider more than the pro-choice laws in South Africa in order to prevent unsafe abortions for women, which can lead to the death of women. Abortions have been legal in South Africa since 1997.

There are advertisements for abortion in Johannesburg. However, the experts on the subject matter think about half of the terminations in South Africa occur external to the safe abortion areas. That is, the safer places known as the designated health facilities.

One doctor, Dr. Tlaleng Mofokeng, talked about being an abortion provider for as long as being a qualified medical doctor. However, in the previous five years as a doctor and abortion provider, Mofokeng's email, social media, and calls have been from many women, from every area of life, desperately requesting help from Mofokeng.

"I will never forget one young woman who came to the public clinic in the West Rand township near Johannesburg, panicking about massive blood loss from her vagina. It was only after some prompting that she and a family member admitted to using abortion pills purchased outside a shopping centre. She bought the pills after being denied an abortion by the local clinic, where health workers told her 'We don't do those things here,' and shamed her for being young and sexually active," Mofokeng stated.

The paramedics had come by and then the woman needed resuscitation. She was then transported to a close by private hospital. A couple hours later, the 17-year-old woman went into the operating theatre. She underwent a hysterectomy because of sepsis and haemorrhage. This was in South Africa. Abortion was liberalized 21 years prior, as noted in 1997.

Mofokeng used this as a warning of the referendum victory in Ireland. By which Mofokeng means, the laws can be passed. However, the implementation of those laws can be another hurdle off the books rather than on them – so to speak.

"The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act (Ctop) came into effect in South Africa in February 1997, with hopes it would promote female reproductive autonomy by providing free access to abortion. It has been described by the Guttmacher Institute as 'one of the most liberal abortion laws in the world' and secured all South African women – and minors – the right to decide to have an abortion," Mofokeng explained.

The Act was seen as a historic moment for women. Nonetheless, the reality remains different on the ground, especially with the example provided before. One main factor comes from the lack of access to information. It creates a layered problem. Women have the right in the law. However, the information exists without access to the information.

It amounts to a socio-cultural restriction on the reproductive rights of women regarding safe and equitable access to abortion. Women and young women deserve the right to equitable and safe access to abortion as a human right. Then if someone has a religious objection, they can have access while not having to use it.

Mofokeng described, “The formal health system does as little as it can to comply with the law. A recent survey by Bhekisisa, the Mail & Guardian newspaper’s health journalism centre, found that less than 5% of public clinics and hospitals offer the procedure. The National Department of Health’s website fails to list any information on abortion and neither do its four mobile apps.”

Women will acquire an abortion with or without the abortion access. One 2017 study noted that approximately 1/3 of South African women do not know that abortion is legal in South Africa.

“Illegal abortion flyers have become recognisable on many lamp-posts across the country, including at the entrance of the Department of Health. They promise same-day abortions, which can include an indiscriminate concoction of pills and procedures that risk incomplete abortions, sepsis and even death,” Mofokeng stated.

Little political will exists for the upholding of the law, especially with the lack of information among women in the community. By implication, the authorities will not take measures in order to control or prosecute the provision or advertisement of illegal, or mostly unsafe and illicit, abortion services.

The Minister of Health, Aaron Motsoaledi, was named a champion within the She Decides movement, which is, obviously, a progressive movement. However, there has been concern about an unresponsiveness to the concerns of women in the last decade.

Mofokeng stated, “As a doctor, I have seen what lack of access to abortions means: too many South African women suffer needless complications and preventable deaths. But I cannot get much more specific than that, as the Health Systems Trust said in its 2011 report that the government’s abortion statistics are ‘increasingly unreliable.’”

With the United States’ Global Gag Rule, this has impacted the ability of South Africa to develop its abortion services as well. “Trump’s expansion of the rule further restricts NGOs to using their own funds to save lives. This will lead to preventable deaths and life-long ill health from complications due to unsafe procedures,” Mofokeng explained.

Mofokeng concluded with a question about the things that will be needed for the country to step up to the plate.

# Restrictions on Tobacco in South Africa

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to *eNews Channel Africa*, there will be further restrictions on tobacco consumption in South Africa. Aaron Motsoaledi, the South African Health Minister, published a new tobacco control bill. If this bill becomes a law, then this will restrict the means by which cigarettes and tobacco products are sold and regulated in South Africa.

Catherine Egbe was asked about the implications for tobacco control. The article reports, based on a question-and-answer with The Conversation Africa's Health and Medicine Editor Candice Bailey, that the implications are for five areas.

One is the targets of a smoke-free policy, plain cigarette packages, regulation of e-cigarettes, “points of sale marketing,” and then the removal of the vending machines for cigarettes. Some, reportedly, as already covered within the current tobacco control law of South Africa.

The nation does not comply with the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which was signed by South Africa signed in 2005. One example of implementation is the smoke free public areas.

With the current laws around tobacco control, there are designated areas to permit smoking. The WHO convention states the need for 100% smoke-free public spaces in order to protect the non-smokers of the world.

There is a ban upcoming on the advertising of cigarettes at tills and for their being sold at vending machines. There are health warnings on the packages too.

“So the new law mandates standardised packaging with graphic health warnings to make tobacco packages less attractive to new smokers and to discourage old smokers from continuing to smoke,” Egbe stated, “The bill is also significant because it attempts to regulate e-cigarettes for the first time in South Africa. To date e-cigarettes have been freely marketed and sold anywhere to anyone, including children.”

With the question about the evidence for the efficacy of the planned interventions by Bailey, Egbe stated that there is a “great deal of evidence from the rest of the world,” which means a tremendous amount of evidence to support the increased set of restrictions of the sale, marketing, and distribution of tobacco in South Africa with examples internationally.

Egbe explained, “Let’s start with smoke-free policies. In countries like South Korea and the US where they are in place, research shows that they led to an overall improvement in health, particularly children’s health. Incidents of smoking-related cancers went down and there was a reduction in childhood smoking.”

More smokers wanted to quit too. If you discourage smokers to quit, then this can discourage young people from wanting or desiring to smoke in the first place. Then there are the cases of the standardized and simple packaging such as those introduced in Australia in 2012.

E-cigarettes may encourage young people to start smoking cigarettes, unfortunately. 18 studies point to no quitting rate increases of smoking. They may reduce the numbers of those who do quit smoking if they have a desire and intent to quit smoking in the first place.



“There are 83 countries that regulate e-cigarettes and about 27 that have completely banned their sale. These include Brazil, Singapore, Uruguay, Seychelles and Uganda,” Egbe explained, “The advertising, promotion and sponsorship of e-cigarettes are regulated or prohibited in 62 countries.”

The importance of the legislation comes from tobacco smoking being the single most preventable cause of death in the entire world, which makes this especially incredible and important. Much of the world is working to implement the WHO recommendations.

It seems well within the ability of South Africa to do the same. In fact, Egbe notes that smoking makes the TB and HIV outcomes far worse. However, 37% of men and 6.8% of women in South Africa use tobacco.

“Before the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, South Africa was a leader in tobacco control in Africa and across the world because of strong tobacco control legislation it had put in place. But the laws weren’t updated according to current WHO’s standards and the country now lags behind some other African countries,” Egbe opined.

The big pluses from interventions like this include the helping of people to live healthier lives, to discourage young citizens from starting smoking, protecting millions of South Africans from second-hand smoke, and the prevention of young people being manipulated by the tobacco industry.

Egbe concluded, “Once the bill becomes law, the health minister will have to draw up several regulations to guide its implementation. These will ensure that the law is interpreted correctly and not manipulated by the tobacco industry and that the potential gains of the legislation are not watered down.”

# Cardinal Argues for Negotiation with Terrorists

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to *Religion News Service*, John Onaiyekan, a Nigerian cardinal, made a proposal. It caused some controversy.

The proposition is to negotiate with the terrorists. Onaiyekan is the archbishop of Abuja. He has been working to have some talks with the violent Islamist – political Islam – group called Boko Haram. This would happen in the northern parts of Nigeria.

Numerous governments in Africa are against any negotiations with terrorist groups, including Boko Haram. The fear is the backlash from any discussions and so further violence and militancy on the part of the terrorist groups.

Onaiyekan said, “My position is no matter how extremist a person is, there must be somebody who can talk to them and others... Then eventually talking will start taking place. That will be an easier way of handling grievances than guns.”

He has argued that Muslim groups can help with this effort as they share the same faith tradition. Even though, Boko Haram takes a rather extreme interpretation of the faith.

A Kenyan homeland security consultant and counterterrorism expert, Richard Tutah, explained, “We cannot negotiate with terrorists as long as they continue to use violence to achieve their motives... They are terrorists because they use violence to terrorize civilians, whether they base it on their religion or otherwise.”

Tutah stated one of the only times for negotiation is in kidnapping situations or when the terrorist groups are open to putting down their weapons. Boko Haram, for nearly one full decade, has been bombing churches, mosques, and government installations in West Africa.

Women, boys, and girls have been kidnapped. The Quran is cited as a source for these attacks and kidnappings. Now, the group is spreading to the north of Nigeria, and Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Boko Haram has killed thousands in its work to establish fundamentalist Islamic law as the law of the land regardless of the borders.

President Muhammadu Buhari, in 2015, stated that 10,000 have been killed by Boko Haram, which is a tragic number. It has been widely using girls as suicide attackers or bombers. “Roman Catholic Church figures estimate more than 5,000 Catholics have been killed in Nigeria’s predominantly Muslim northern region. More than 900 churches have also been destroyed, according to the Christian Association of Nigeria,” *Religion News Service* stated.

The government of Nigeria has been reluctant to have any negotiations with the Islamic terrorist group while also have some discussions at some points. There was a negotiation of the release of 276 kidnapped schoolgirls in April of 2014.

“Onaiyekan painted the Nigerian government’s response as primarily a military bombardment that has cost millions of dollars, some of which came from foreign assistance funds,” the reportage stated. The cardinal argued for better use of the funds for better relationships and the improvement of dialogue between the terrorist group and everyone else.

Onaiyekan stated, “The aim is not to kill all Boko Haram, but to arrive at reconciliation so that people can go home to their families.” Based on the analysis of the African Union’s Continental

Conflict Early Warning System, 31 conflicts are rooted in the unresolved colonial past of Africa, e.g. “interethnic wars to Islamist campaigns, border disputes and civil wars.”

The leaders of religious movements are often the targets with as many as 30 ordained clergypersons killed in South Sudan in since only December of 2013. The Central African Republic had four church leaders murdered since January of this year.

The general secretary of the African Council of Religious Leaders affirmed, “Unless we confront that past, we shall not resolve these conflicts... Religion is part and parcel of that.”

The deputy chief Kadhi and Sheikh Rashid Omar, as well as the higher ranking religious judges in the Islamic courts of the country, argued for the need to comprehend the religious texts of the other faiths. This may help with interfaith understanding, provide a basis for talks, and so peace.

The cooperation between African Christians and African Muslims is not strong. Bishop Alfred Rotich said, “We must have the voice and prophesy, but first we must work on our inner selves... Once we are comfortable, we must strongly speak against violence.”

Much of the conversation is by and from religious leaders and religious lenses. In some ways this is not helpful, and in other ways this can be helpful, it can assist with the cross-belief understanding for those who speak the language and metaphor of the holy books when they talk with extremists because they have a firmer foundation upon which to do so.

## South Africa's Third UN Security Council Seat

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Humanist Rights Watch (HRW) reported on the secure position at the security council for South Africa.

The seat at the council offers South Africa to restore a human rights-based foreign policy. The next term will last from 2019 to 2020.

This is the third time South Africa secured a seat as a non-permanent member on the United Nations Security Council. At the January Summit, the African Union endorsed the South African seat at United Nations Security Council.

South Africa Remains the only country supported and endorsed by the African Union for the UN Security Council. The nation of South Africa declared its intent of peace and security on the African continent.

However, there is an uncertainty of the backing of a variety of tough measures for countries that violate human rights. The former South African prime minister Jacob Zuma had military cooperation with the South Sudan government including the use of child soldiers.

For its first two terms on the UN Security Council, South Africa went away from the Mandela hope of "human rights will be the light that guide our foreign policy."

Africa in its first term on the UN Security Council in 2007 voted against a resolution for the cessation of military attacks against various ethnic minorities in Burma.

China and Russia also vetoed the decision in its second term during 2011, South Africa abstained from every vote in relation to the global south. It was criticized "championing a Western agenda" when it voted to authorize a no-fly zone in Libya.

100 years after the birth of Mandela, South Africa may have the possibility for the creation of a new Legacy respecting human rights on the UN Security Council.

## Julius Malema Claimed to Make Racist Remarks

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Julius Malema made remarks. Now, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) will examine the remarks. Malema, the Economic Freedom Fighters Commander-in-Chief, in the Constitutional Court submitted an application.

The application submitted was intended to make a bid to impeach President Jacob Zuma on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March last year. With Cope, the UDM, and the EFF joining forces, they filed an application to “order the Speaker of Parliament to institute disciplinary proceedings against Zuma.”

The SAHRC will investigate the DA complaint lodged against Julius Malema based on statements deemed racist. The reportage stated, “The DA took exception to two statements made by the leader of the EFF. One relates to a recent address during Youth Day, whereas the other relates to Jujū’s language towards Nelson Mandela Bay Mayor Athol Trollip.”

With the complaint Floyd Shivambu was brought into it, the red berets’ deputy leader stated that Ishmail Momoniat undermines African leadership. It was seen as a racially charged remark by the DA.

Malema is under scrutiny from the SAHRC. During the EFF Youth Day rally, he exclaimed, “The majority of Indians are racist, and we must never be scared to say that. They are racist. The same thing applies to so some of the coloured brothers.”

With the unseating of Athol Trollip as mayor, Malema declared the intention to “slit the throat of whiteness.”

“The DA strongly condemns these remarks and we are of the view that these utterances by Malema and Shivambu are prejudiced, divisive and have no place in a democratic society,” Luyolo Mphithi, to the Commission, said, “No South African should ever have to face the humiliation of such an assault on their dignity and it is now becoming evident that the EFF is not ready to govern a diverse society, such as South Africa.”

The SAHRC will be making the decision soon. The decision will be decided on whether or no the issue is within the purview of their mandate. If this is not successful, the DA will work to “pursue another legal organisation to hear their complaints.”

## **George Mayor Melvin Naik Argues Pride Parade Against His Christian Principles**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

According to *AllAfrica*, George Mayor claimed the Gay US choristers are considered against his personal religious beliefs or his religion more generally.

Nonetheless, the pride march will continue onward. The Georgia Gay Pride march will be singing “Hallelujah” and “When the Saints Go Marching In.” This will be a first for South Africa, as far as I know.

George Mayor Melvin Naik made the statements about the homosexual pride parade being against his personal Christian principles.

“I simply wanted to bring the point across that just because the municipality supports an event, people must not take it for granted that that support reflects my own personal beliefs,” Naik stated, “As mayor, in my official capacity and personally, I support the Constitution and its values completely, but personally, as a Christian, I hold certain beliefs regarding LGBT people.”

He further states that this means he does not necessarily discriminate against them but, rather, views everyone as God’s children who remain loved equally by his Christian God.

DA Provincial leader Bonginkosi Madikizela said, “His utterances do not represent the views of the party. Therefore, the federal executive chairperson, James Selfe, will be referring this matter to the party's federal legal commission (FLC) for further investigation... You can't use your position in public office and make the kind of comments Melvin did.”

# The Possible Decriminalization of Sex Work in South Africa

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Skye Wheeler in *Human Rights Watch* reported on sex work in South Africa.

It remains a political and social hard issue for the public and the politicians because of the wide variety of extreme reactions in response to the possibility of its decriminalization. A decriminalization, of course, would be different than a legalization in some ways.

A decriminalization would remove the blanket penalty for it. While the legalization would permit what was not there or be in effect after the decriminalization; however, this amounts to a straightforward decriminalization possibility.

As stated by Wheeler, “South Africa’s Law Review Commission late last year recommended that sex work remain fully criminalized, i.e. a criminal offense to both sell and purchase sex. Now, eyes are on the justice ministry to see whether it will follow this recommendation or whether a radically new approach and law are needed.”

There was a panel on sex work entitled “Is it work, and is it a choice?” The was convened by the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office and the Hanns Seidel Foundation. The event happened on June 21 in Cape Town.

The individuals who took part were “South Africa’s Deputy Minister of Justice and Correctional Services John Jeffery; former UN Human Rights Commissioner and judge Navi Pillay, a global luminary of women’s rights; and long-time warrior for South African sex worker rights, Kholi Buthelezi.”

The issue of sex work and its ethical implications are hard problems around the world. Do we outlaw it? Do we legalize it fully? Do we do a bit of both depending on issue? This remains a quandary around the world. Is it a violation of women’s rights? Or is it an example of women’s economic and social self-empowerment? I have heard many views. As with any complicated matter, I note legitimate ethical and moral precepts in each view.

However, the principles conflict and the dialogues are needed to suss them out for the values of the country. What seems appropriate for most people most of the time in a democratic society?

“Sex work is a contentious issue everywhere, tearing the global women’s rights movement in two. One side believes sex work – they prefer the term “prostitution” – is inherently abusive and should be eradicated through criminalizing the purchase of sex,” the article stated, “At the panel, the group Equality Now shares this view. The other side believes sex work as a whole should be decriminalized to better enable sex workers to avail of protection of the law from beatings, harassment, rape, and other abuse (a position held by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International). At the panel, South African sex worker organizations Sisonke and SWEAT hold this view.”

The reportage talked about 40 sex workers being interviewed during the month of publication. Where the obvious answer to them is not pure criminalization; also, the arrests for simply standing around in “hot spots” should stop too.

It forms the basis for legitimizing police harassment of civilians. The sex worker has some hard conditions in which they work. In fact, the majority of the sex workers supported the full decriminalization of sex work.

The article concluded, “Public discussion like this panel is crucial. But more crucial is the direct involvement of sex workers themselves who need to be consulted and whose needs, realities, and perspectives should be taken fully on board. Such an informed discussion should lead to decriminalization of sex work.”



## South Africa Among the Most Inclusive Nations

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Business Tech* wrote on how South Africa is one of the most inclusive nations in the world outside of Canada and the United States.

In accordance with this ranking from the Ipsos Global Advisor, the factors incorporated into the overall ranking were the criminal background, gender identity and sexual orientation, political views, religion, and immigration.

The article stated, “Notably, while South Africans are near the top of the rankings when it comes to religion, immigrants and LGBT Inclusiveness – we top the rankings when it comes to being the nation most inclusive of people with criminal backgrounds and extreme political views.”

Basically, the study reflected the Inclusiveness Index of the Ipsos group. In the research study, more than 20,700 people were included from 27 countries, where they asked questions of about 28 “types” of people.

The questions about the different types were correlated with the level of inclusion of that person into the society. Where the person is seen as a real “[fill in the blank nationality],” that became a test for the level of inclusion with the research.

The final constructs for the research were religious inclusiveness, naturalized-citizen inclusiveness, second-generation inclusiveness, LGBT inclusiveness, criminal background inclusiveness, and extreme political views inclusiveness.

With these average, one arrived at the score of inclusiveness within the Inclusiveness Index. In that, South Africa is among the inclusive societies in the world.

# Choice of Women Versus Religious Conscience in Healthcare

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*AllAfrica* wrote a wonderful piece on religion and women in healthcare considerations.

The three points of contact for the reportage centered on religion, women's bodily autonomy, and the Constitution of South Africa. There is the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act, which legalizes voluntary abortion for different stages of a pregnancy.

It is seen as a liberal law. However, it has not been given a pervasive and consistent implementation or access for women who want to terminate their pregnancies. One reason comes from the health providers and facilities not treating women who need or want the abortion.

The article states, "Within South African law, specifically the termination of pregnancy Act, no health care provider - irrespective of the category - is ethically allowed to refuse to provide emergency treatment and care."

The International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) published a report entitled "Unconscionable." It notes the increase in the global refusal of healthcare providers to provide abortions in particular, and sexual and reproductive healthcare in general.

South Africa is the same as the rest of the world in the violation of the ethical precept of "do no harm."

"Historically, the United Nations has defined a conscientious objector as an individual who refuses to perform military service on the grounds of freedom of thought, conscience, or religion. This moral stance against military service has been recognized not only by the UN Human Rights Council but also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," the articles states.

The idea of a conscientious objector had a prior meaning and context. Now, this is being utilized by the anti-choice movements to refuse provision of basic human rights via sexual and reproductive rights or sexual and reproductive healthcare.

The article continued, "In South Africa, those who refuse to provide terminations of pregnancy do so in terms of section 15 (1) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion."

However, the refusal to treat women who want to acquire abortions becomes a freedom of conscience and religion, and belief, issue against the right to dignity and equality given in the South African Constitution for women. Religion and rights conflict here.

# Lilly Singh and Bullying in Classrooms

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

A UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Lilly Singh, went to South Africa in order to meet with children who are working to speak out call out, and reduce bullying and violence in the classroom.

Singh is a Canadian. She led a discussion with students aged 13 to 19. This was in Johannesburg, so she could hear the stories and narratives of the children. Their personal experiences of violence and bullying inside and outside of the classroom.

Singh stated, "I met with children and young people who have experienced a range of violence, from bullying and physical attacks to corporal punishment, sexual assault and harassment... No child should have to face violence at school, a place where they should feel safe and protected."

This event with Singh was the first to start for UNICEF of the *#ENDviolence Youth Talks*. These are a collection of student-led dialogues on their experiences of violence and bullying in the classroom.

There is a collective effort – not only in South Africa but also around the world even the advanced industrial economies - to tackle the problem of bullying and violence related to the classroom: on and off the campuses. Who better to know about it than from the young people experiencing it?

There are a variety of organizations devoted to this cause including "UNICEF, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, DFID and UNESCO, and others in different ways.

They will help inform the work of global leaders with a set of recommendations. More than half of students in South Africa have reported being bullied or subject to some form or peer-to-peer violence – mean age of 15. There are even many who report sexual abuse by their peers.

"In my work with UNICEF, I continue to see first-hand how this generation is coming up with creative and innovative ideas to help end violence in their own schools and communities, through forming peer-led groups, as well as speaking out and creating safe spaces for students to tell their stories," said Singh. "As I listened to the children and young people, it underscored how vital it is that we involve them in problem-solving and continue empowering them to use their voices."

The Government of South Africa including the Department of Education along with several partners are working to reduce the level of bullying and violence the young experience at their schools.

The Department of Education founded the *Girls Education and Boys Education Movement (GEM/BEM) clubs* to help curb the level of bullying and violence experienced by students. There have student-led clubs through these programs devoted to more than 2,000 schools with 975 trained club members.

Their emphases are the promotion of both dignity and mutual respect between the girls and the boys on each school campus. The students are then encouraged to not only to identify but to call out the various forms of discrimination against their peers and themselves that may arise for them.

This seems important as this may precede some action to the violence and bullying of the young.

The article concluded, “UNICEF and Lilly Singh are encouraging young people around the world to use the hashtag #ENDviolence to share what they need to feel safe in and around school. Comments will inform a set of recommendations to global leaders.”

# David Mabuza on Women's Rights

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

David Mabuza, the deputy president of South Africa, talked about women. He wrote an article in News 24.

The parliamentary questions in recent weeks have noted the concern for women. Mabuza pointed to the ANC government emphasis on the "full emancipation of women."

Mabuza described the patriarchal structures and sexism in society. The violent deaths of women by intimate partners. He asks a question from Katrine Marçal, who is a feminist writer.

In Adam Smith's market fundamentalist text, *The Wealth of Nations*, he asks: Who puts dinner on the table? Smith argues the "economic man."

Mabuza thinks "our grandmothers, wives, sisters and the girl-child." He points to childbearing by women and work in the home. That these drive the wealth of nations, "for free."

Mabuza talks about the *Women's Charter*, too, from 1954. It states that women stretch the dollar for the children, hear the children's cries. That women bear the burden of caring for children.

The land too, when men are gone, are women's domain. Mabuza points to the civilised and democratic nature of a society. That it relates to the social and economic liberation of women.

"It depends on how we empower women to demand their inherent rights to take the advantages," Mabuza explained, "responsibilities and opportunities of a civilised society."

Mabuza considers women paying the highest price far above any of us as mothers. "Freedoms we have earned freely on their unpaid labour," he notes.

In his opinion, we need to view women as special. That women are complete human beings and treated and respected as such.

In the South African Constitution, it says, "Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms."

Though "racial hatred and discrimination, sexism and patriarchy," are present, we can develop. The Constitution, according to Mabuza, provides that basis.

Any discrimination and violence against women violates the spirit of the Constitution. Mabuza sees violence against women as a violation against the founding principles of South Africa.

He said, "A nation that undermines the aspirations of women and oppresses them can have no peace, no social cohesion and no development."

He points to the extreme prejudice against black women based on class, gender, and race. Mabuza points to the "omnipresent [patriarchy] in our language, idioms, metaphors, stories, myths and performances."

Mabuza argues that we have to make internal changes, to our individual selves. Those changes helping free women from sexism and oppression, and discrimination.

However, those biases come packaged, individual alterations can help with women's emancipation. That radical revolution comes with the emancipation of women through individual change.

He notes the ANC is for gender parity "as a precondition of the economic freedom in our lifetime." He describes how men are "absconding from parental responsibility, yet are available for power, leadership and economic opportunities."

How do we close that gap, reduce those biases unbalanced benefits? He states women have to work and make a home together. Mabuza argues for a reordering of social relations in order for equality, parity.

One "that castrates the power, income and class of men from having an overriding influence on women's choice of sexual partners."

Mabuza considers this the foundation of a society with mutual respect and equality.

## #TotalShutdown

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

According to IOL, the South Africa Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) spoke in support of a large number of women and non-gender conforming people who will be marching. It is a march in South Africa against gender-based violence.

The SAHRC stated:

*Gender-based violence violates the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution, especially the right to equality, dignity and freedom. The commission urges all South Africans to recognise the constitutionally-entrenched right to protest peacefully, acknowledging how this right is inextricably linked to other rights in our Constitution...*

*The commission calls on the government to implement its obligation under section 7(2) of the Constitution to particularly vindicate women's rights to life, dignity, equality, bodily integrity, freedom of movement and freedom from violence.*

It further emphasized the need for the Government of South Africa to work with immediate and decisive steps to tackle violence against women within the nation. Because women deserve and reserve the same right to enjoy a happy and fulfilling life as the men without harm to health or well-being.

The #TotalShutdown march will occur in nine provinces on August 1. The organizers of the march are planning to shut down the major cities in order to make explicit statements with numbers about the need to reduce and eliminate the violence against children and women, and gender-based violence in general.

The article concluded, "Trade union organisations such as Federation of Unions of SA (Fedusa), SA Federation of Trade Unions (Saftu) have also pledged their support. The ANC Women's League (ANCWL) said earlier this month that it would march alone and will not be joining the #totalshutdown marches after organisers banned it from taking part."

# Potential Changes to the South African Constitution

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to *Bloomberg*, South Africa's government made a decision around a change to the constitution of the nation.

It is reported the African National Congress, or the ANC, has decided to amend the national constitution with regards to the laws of the land. The purpose is to further explain the conditions upon which land can be expropriated and then have no compensation for it.

The ANC becomes closer to the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in this sense. The ANC will only do this under the condition that this does not harm the economy, agricultural sector, or the food security of the nation because these could be consequences of any amendments related to land.

As reported, "The purpose of the amendment is to promote redress, advance economic development, increase agricultural production and food security, the ANC in an emailed statement after a meeting of its National Executive Committee in Pretoria, the capital."

Legal experts are working on the processes necessary for alterations to the constitution as we speak. The idea was and is to speed the process of giving black people more land. More access to land is one symbol of inequality between members of the nation along the racial lines.

President Cyril Ramaphosa stated, "...it has become patently clear that our people want the constitution be more explicit about expropriation of land without compensation, as demonstrated in the public hearings."

The proposals now are bringing forth concerns for investors and others about the potential for a radical land-reform strategy and then the fear that there may be Zimbabwe-style farm seizures. The ANC will be contesting national elections starting next year with the first ballot since the time of the opposition winning several municipalities deemed "key" by the reportage. That include Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The Executive Director of the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution, Lawson Naidoo, stated, "This is a surprising and premature announcement by the ANC because parliament is still in its review process on changing the constitution... Parliament still has to gather and evaluate the many submissions that have been made. We are in a pre-election phase and the ANC announcement is part of that."



# Cardinal Argues for Negotiation with Terrorists

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to *Religion News Service*, John Onaiyekan, a Nigerian cardinal, made a proposal. It caused some controversy.

The proposition is to negotiate with the terrorists. Onaiyekan is the archbishop of Abuja. He has been working to have some talks with the violent Islamist – political Islam – group called Boko Haram. This would happen in the northern parts of Nigeria.

Numerous governments in Africa are against any negotiations with terrorist groups, including Boko Haram. The fear is the backlash from any discussions and so further violence and militancy on the part of the terrorist groups.

Onaiyekan said, “My position is no matter how extremist a person is, there must be somebody who can talk to them and others... Then eventually talking will start taking place. That will be an easier way of handling grievances than guns.”

He has argued that Muslim groups can help with this effort as they share the same faith tradition. Even though, Boko Haram takes a rather extreme interpretation of the faith.

A Kenyan homeland security consultant and counterterrorism expert, Richard Tutah, explained, “We cannot negotiate with terrorists as long as they continue to use violence to achieve their motives... They are terrorists because they use violence to terrorize civilians, whether they base it on their religion or otherwise.”

Tutah stated one of the only times for negotiation is in kidnapping situations or when the terrorist groups are open to putting down their weapons. Boko Haram, for nearly one full decade, has been bombing churches, mosques, and government installations in West Africa.

Women, boys, and girls have been kidnapped. The Quran is cited as a source for these attacks and kidnappings. Now, the group is spreading to the north of Nigeria, and Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. Boko Haram has killed thousands in its work to establish fundamentalist Islamic law as the law of the land regardless of the borders.

President Muhammadu Buhari, in 2015, stated that 10,000 have been killed by Boko Haram, which is a tragic number. It has been widely using girls as suicide attackers or bombers. “Roman Catholic Church figures estimate more than 5,000 Catholics have been killed in Nigeria’s predominantly Muslim northern region. More than 900 churches have also been destroyed, according to the Christian Association of Nigeria,” *Religion News Service* stated.

The government of Nigeria has been reluctant to have any negotiations with the Islamic terrorist group while also have some discussions at some points. There was a negotiation of the release of 276 kidnapped schoolgirls in April of 2014.

“Onaiyekan painted the Nigerian government’s response as primarily a military bombardment that has cost millions of dollars, some of which came from foreign assistance funds,” the reportage stated. The cardinal argued for better use of the funds for better relationships and the improvement of dialogue between the terrorist group and everyone else.

Onaiyekan stated, “The aim is not to kill all Boko Haram, but to arrive at reconciliation so that people can go home to their families.” Based on the analysis of the African Union’s Continental

Conflict Early Warning System, 31 conflicts are rooted in the unresolved colonial past of Africa, e.g. “interethnic wars to Islamist campaigns, border disputes and civil wars.”

The leaders of religious movements are often the targets with as many as 30 ordained clergypersons killed in South Sudan in since only December of 2013. The Central African Republic had four church leaders murdered since January of this year.

The general secretary of the African Council of Religious Leaders affirmed, “Unless we confront that past, we shall not resolve these conflicts... Religion is part and parcel of that.”

The deputy chief Kadhi and Sheikh Rashid Omar, as well as the higher ranking religious judges in the Islamic courts of the country, argued for the need to comprehend the religious texts of the other faiths. This may help with interfaith understanding, provide a basis for talks, and so peace.

The cooperation between African Christians and African Muslims is not strong. Bishop Alfred Rotich said, “We must have the voice and prophesy, but first we must work on our inner selves... Once we are comfortable, we must strongly speak against violence.”

Much of the conversation is by and from religious leaders and religious lenses. In some ways this is not helpful, and in other ways this can be helpful, it can assist with the cross-belief understanding for those who speak the language and metaphor of the holy books when they talk with extremists because they have a firmer foundation upon which to do so.

## South Africa Among the Most Inclusive Nations

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*Business Tech* wrote on how South Africa is one of the most inclusive nations in the world outside of Canada and the United States.

In accordance with this ranking from the Ipsos Global Advisor, the factors incorporated into the overall ranking were the criminal background, gender identity and sexual orientation, political views, religion, and immigration.

The article stated, “Notably, while South Africans are near the top of the rankings when it comes to religion, immigrants and LGBT Inclusiveness – we top the rankings when it comes to being the nation most inclusive of people with criminal backgrounds and extreme political views.”

Basically, the study reflected the Inclusiveness Index of the Ipsos group. In the research study, more than 20,700 people were included from 27 countries, where they asked questions of about 28 “types” of people.

The questions about the different types were correlated with the level of inclusion of that person into the society. Where the person is seen as a real “[fill in the blank nationality],” that became a test for the level of inclusion with the research.

The final constructs for the research were religious inclusiveness, naturalized-citizen inclusiveness, second generation inclusiveness, LGBT inclusiveness, criminal background inclusiveness, and extreme political views inclusiveness.

With these average, one arrived at the score of inclusiveness within the Inclusiveness Index. In that, South Africa is among the inclusive societies in the world.

# Choice of Women Versus Religious Conscience in Healthcare

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*AllAfrica* wrote a wonderful piece on religion and women in healthcare considerations.

*When religion trumps science in medicine, women's bodies and Constitutional rights may be caught in the crossfire.*

South Africa's Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act legalises voluntary abortion at different stages of pregnancy. Although viewed as a generally liberal law, the Act has not effectively enabled broad and consistent access for women seeking to terminate their pregnancies.

One of the reasons has been some health providers' and facilities' refusal to treat women who need abortion care.

Within South African law, specifically the termination of pregnancy Act, no health care provider - irrespective of the category - is ethically allowed to refuse to provide emergency treatment and care.

On Tuesday, the health and human rights non-profit the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) and partners released a report, titled "Unconscionable". The research argues that there is a growing trend globally, including in South Africa, of health care providers who are refusing to deliver abortion and other sexual and reproductive health care. This phenomenon violates the ethical principle of "do no harm," the coalition argues.

Historically, the United Nations has defined a conscientious objector as an individual who refuses to perform military service on the grounds of freedom of thought, conscience, or religion. This moral stance against military service has been recognised not only by the UN Human Rights Council but also in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

But the term "conscientious objector" has recently been co-opted by anti-choice movements to refer to health care providers who refuse to provide abortions.

In South Africa, those who refuse to provide terminations of pregnancy do so in terms of section 15 (1) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion.

But health workers' refusal to treat women seeking abortions pits their right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief against a woman's Constitutionally-enshrined right to equality and dignity.

Constitutional rights are guaranteed to everyone, which means that rights must co-exist. Healthcare providers' right to freedom of religion should not negate women's right to access health, equality and dignity. To the extent that these rights cannot co-exist, then a balancing exercise must weigh up, for instance, the impact of refusing abortion services on women versus the consequence of providing abortion services to religious values. This calculus should also factor in healthcare providers' ethical and legal obligations - something that too few within our healthcare system have been trained on, shows the IWHC's latest report.

There is a similar death of education regarding the fact that Constitutional rights are not absolute and can, therefore, be limited for a number of reasons.

At the same time, medical students' training in abortion provision is often inadequate, reveals the coalition's latest research. In South Africa, we have received reports from students noting that they are sometimes taught how to avoid performing abortions instead of about their ethical and professional obligations under the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act.

In a clear violation of the Act, some medical students object to learning how to treat women who need life-saving emergency care after incomplete abortions.

Meanwhile, workers' refusal to treat is mostly based on non-verifiable personal beliefs, usually religious, that posit life begins at conception, argue researchers in a 2017 article published in the European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Reproductive Biology.

In some instances, the refusal to treat is premised on the notions that women must always want to be mothers, and when they fall pregnant, they must cheerfully embrace the opportunity to raise a child even though this may not be something they want.

Read more: [Why it pays to watch your words when reporting on abortion](#)

The national health department has not taken any action to counter the negative implications of introducing religion into medicine, which significantly undermines clinical best practices that depend on scientific evidence and medical ethics. The department's human resource strategy outlines its responsibility to ensure capacity at national, provincial and district levels to develop human resources that meet government needs and improve health care access for all.

The national health department must, therefore, take decisive and adequate steps to ensure that all the healthcare providers it employs work towards achieving this.

It is undeniable that the impact of conscientious objection has dire consequences for women in need of abortions - for some, it is the difference between life and death.

This is not acceptable by any standard.

Read more: [Government to get tougher on doctors with moral objections to abortion](#)

All healthcare professionals - doctors, midwives and nurses - should be aware of their responsibility to provide safe and beneficial care. The first principles of "do no harm" and offering the best care possible should guide every health provider.

When continuation of a pregnancy poses a grave danger to the life or health of women or fetus, regardless of gestational age, health workers cannot recuse themselves from duties to provide safe and legal health care.

A healthcare worker cannot legally or ethically object to rendering care in cases of life-or-death emergencies associated with abortion whether procedures were lawfully performed or not.

Facility managers must ensure that their clinic or hospital is designated to provide abortion services, measures must be taken to ensure staff can competently offer those services.

Should the facility not be able to provide abortions, management must ensure that the patient is provided with the necessary support to reach an alternative service provider and planning needs to guarantee services become available. Health facility managers need to be stewards of the

health system to ensure there is consistent access to health, referrals of services are effective and timely, and that patient-centred care is provided at all times.

Our health department is currently severely challenged but leadership, such as that envisioned in its human resources strategy, is crucial to assuring that healthcare workers are trained to become competent providers of reproductive health services, including abortion. This kind of leadership extends to the national health minister and director general.

We cannot continue to allow women to be forced out of facilities after being refused access to safe abortion and walk straight into the care of informal and dangerous providers. To do so is a severe reproductive injustice.

What are we saying to poor black women who are disproportionately affected by the refusal of service providers to offer abortion care? It is time that the department of health and abortion services providers stand up and show them that they too matter and that their bodies and needs will be taken seriously.

Marion Stevens is the chairperson of the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition. Follow her on @marionwish. Mandi Mudarikwa is an attorney with the Legal Resources Centre.

## **George Mayor Melvin Naik Argues Pride Parade Against His Christian Principles**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

According to *AllAfrica*, George Mayor claimed the Gay US choristers are considered against his personal religious beliefs or his religion more generally.

Nonetheless, the pride and the march will continue onward. The Georgia Gay Pride march will be singing “Hallelujah” and “When the Saints go Marching In.” This will be a first for South Africa, as far as I know.

George Mayor Melvin Naik made the statements about the homosexual pride parade being against his personal Christian principles.

“I simply wanted to bring the point across that just because the municipality supports an event, people must not take it for granted that that support reflects my own personal beliefs,” Naik stated, “As mayor, in my official capacity and personally, I support the Constitution and its values completely, but personally, as a Christian, I hold certain beliefs regarding LGBT people.”

He further states that this means he does not necessarily discriminate against them but, rather, views everyone as God’s children who remain loved equally by his Christian God.

DA Provincial leader Bonginkosi Madikizela said, “His utterances do not represent the views of the party. Therefore, the federal executive chairperson, James Selfe, will be referring this matter to the party's federal legal commission (FLC) for further investigation... You can't use your position in public office and make the kind of comments Melvin did.”

## **PLACE 2: BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK (BIEN)**



# An Interview with Tyler Prochazka

October 6, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

## *How'd you get an interest in Basic Income (BI)?*

My interest in BI started back around 2013 after reading a Reason article. It described how a BI would provide a much more efficient social safety net. It intrigued me at the time and over the next couple of years I periodically would seek out the latest research on BI. I was hooked by a documentary on the basic income featuring Guy Standing.

Standing's discussion of the "precariat" and the need to counter the challenges of automatization convinced me of the BI's approach. The day after watching the documentary, I reached out to Standing to see how I could get involved with BIEN. He put me in touch with Karl Widerquist and André Coelho. André was my trainer and his patience and encouragement is what kept me on with the team initially.

## *What makes the BI plan of action unique?*

That is a difficult question because there are many ways to implement the BI. I think what unites the BI movement, though, is that we want to fundamentally alter people's relationship with the market and the government. We *do not* have to have a job in the traditional sense to contribute to ourselves and society. The basic income liberates us to take on the projects or activities that we are truly passionate about, instead of being forced into a certain line of employment.

There are a host of reasons I think this is good for sustainable economic development. But more importantly, this would be a positive development for human happiness. A basic income would also reorient our relationship with the government. Instead of ceding individual choice to government bureaucrats, a basic income provides freedom of choice to everyone. Centralization of power and resources swallows our humanity, and basic income is an enormous step in bringing that power back to the people.

## *What are the most common success stories of BI or similar programs?*

What has been overlooked in the mainstream press (and what I first tell people skeptical of BI) is the recent release of a meta-analysis of 15 years of cash transfer research across 165 studies. It looks at the best research available and determines there is a consistent reduction in poverty from these cash transfers. It also determined there is no real evidence of lowered work hours while showing some evidence that cash transfers may increase work hours and intensity. For BI advocates, I think it is important to get familiar with this meta-analysis.

In the United States, the most famous example of an actual BI-like program is the Alaskan Permanent Fund. This program is funded by Alaska's oil reserves and is provided to nearly every Alaskan resident. The experience in Alaska, and most BI programs, is that the policy rarely creates negative unintended consequences and has a much greater potential to create a positive ripple effect throughout society.

## *What is your work on BI?*

I am the features editor for BI News. I will personally write opinion, interview and news-based articles. I have the privilege of working with and seeking out some amazing writers and thinkers,

helping to edit and post their features articles. When the need arises, I help to train newcomers to BI News, including contributors and editors. I am currently in Taiwan completing a Master's degree where I am working with the Taiwanese Basic Income organization. For the future, I have some ideas to promote basic income in Taiwan that will be forthcoming.

***What are the main lessons for about BI that should be out in the public domain more?***

Everyday around the world there are billions of interactions, transactions and events that would be made simpler by the establishment of the basic income. It helps to take these billions of events and simplify it to one individual to better understand the depth of change this policy would have on everyday life. Among those close to me, I can think of a clear instance where a basic income would dramatically improve a family's circumstances, much more so than traditional welfare.

Think of how a basic income would help the person with a sick mother, the person whose car gets totaled, the person who wants to take more time to raise their child, the person who wants to find a better suited job...All of these situations would be more easily managed with a basic income, especially for those who are of modest means. Perhaps more significant are the new and unpredictable opportunities created by basic income that would otherwise never occur.

***Who are the people to watch – the major BI players?***

Here are a couple that come to mind:

Matt Zwolinski is my favorite libertarian scholar, primarily because of his work on the basic income. He has done a lot to bring on the libertarian side of the political spectrum to consider the basic income. The next generation will have significantly more libertarians than the current generation, so I think the philosophical marriage on this issue with libertarians will be increasingly important as we pursue the basic income's implementation.

Kate McFarland is one of my favorite writers at BI News and a great person to work with. I think she will be a big figure in the BI movement in the coming years because of her non-stop dedication to the cause.

***Any advice for would-be policy makers or activists about strategies for the implementation of BI?***

During this stage, I think it is important that we maintain healthy disagreement in the movement. There are a lot of different motivations behind the BI which manifests in an array of different implementation methods. Despite this, I hope that we can retain this amazing civility that has united people from such diverse philosophical and personal backgrounds thus far.

On the long-term policymaking level, my hope is that in those areas we think must be earmarked (particularly healthcare and education). We will still utilize the basic income framework. For example, universal education savings accounts and health savings accounts (which there is evidence that these two programs are already effective where they are used). The basic income has the potential to really revolutionize the way we think about government services. The government is really efficient at issuing checks to everyone, but it is not great with creating innovative programs. That is why a basic income framework creates an ideal social safety net, as it brings the security of government distribution and the innovation of the market.

# EUROPE: UBI-Europe now crowdfunding its activities

October 9, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Unconditional Basic Income Europe (UBIE), a regional affiliate of BIEN, has begun to raise funds through the crowdfunding platform Open Collective.

UBIE works to secure the implementation of unconditional basic income across Europe.

The organization formed in 2014 after the European Citizens Initiative (ECI) for Basic Income had, in the previous year, brought together people from 25 countries and collected 300,000 signatures in support of the idea.

Since then, UBIE has worked with regional basic income groups to organise public events in Brussels, Athens, Maribor, Budapest, Maastricht and Hamburg. Its members are currently looking forward to their next meeting in Madrid, 14-16 October which will feature a public roundtable with Spanish, French, Swiss and Scandinavian activists and BIEN co-chair Karl Widerquist. The event concludes, fittingly, on the eve of the UN's International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October).

In addition to supporting and exchanging information with regional groups, UBIE is actively engaged in lobbying and research projects. At the moment, UBIE members are writing a response to the EU's Social Pillar proposals, developing ways to practically implement the Eurodividend first proposed by Philippe van Parijs, gathering interested localities into an EU-wide pilot project, researching the potential impact of basic income on local food systems, and organising to make sure another EU-wide ECI for basic income gains even more support than the last.

Despite having existed for only two years, UBIE was mentioned in a recent report by a research group for the European Parliament as one of the 'key civil society organisations' working on basic income in Europe.

So far, UBIE has been run entirely by volunteers working in their spare time. In order to fulfill its ambitions and expand its reach, however, the alliance wants to professionalise some aspects of its work. Money is needed to maintain the 'back office' aspects of the alliance, to help activists travel to meetings, to hire interpreters and, eventually, to staff a small office in Brussels.

Open Collective provides a transparent funding platform where contributors can make regular donations and follow how their money is being spent, while organisations can crowdsource a regular and reliable funding stream.

If you would like to support UBIE's work, please follow this link: <https://opencollective.com/ubie>

# An Interview with Dr. Kate McFarland (Part One)

October 13, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*\*Transcribed from informal Skype chat, content not quoted in full.\**

***How'd you get an interest, and how'd you get involved, in basic income?***

There were two phases. My initial interest came from early on, when I was in my late teens. My involvement started one year ago.

As a teenager, I was interested in Ayn Rand and Libertarianism. I believed in freedom, free markets, no restrictions on the pursuit of self-interest –but I noticed a tension between this view and other things, as a teenager, such as underground music.

I was into certain bands at that time. If bands went to make money in the marketplace, it wasn't something for them to do without becoming 'sellouts'. If you want music artists to pursue *their* own interest, you expect them to not really 'give a rat's ass' and to make great music. This conflicts with selling to the public.

In this one area, I was concerned about it [Libertarianism]. I could see places for people to not make a profit. These ideas conflicted with the Libertarian ideals –this free-market framework.

For a while, I had cognitive dissonance and unresolved tension. That is, a conflict between a 'morally correct economy' and my deeply held conviction of people pursuing art and knowledge for its own sake. They shouldn't have to worry about profit.

At some point, in a random Libertarian publication, I learned about the basic income experiment in Manitoba –the Mincome experiments. This didn't seem like a bad idea: give people enough money for their basic needs, and with these met, people have the freedom to pursue whatever they want to pursue.

I stuck with this for a while. This fulfilled the need for believing in something morally decent to me. It wasn't relevant to college or graduate work. I wasn't politically active at all during my 20s. However, I had this shoved away in the back of my head.

My involvement came about a year ago. The circumstances of this were finishing my PhD in early 2015. I became involved in late 2015. One thing that influenced me was *not* having a basic income. For the first time in my life, I did not have economic security.

All through college and graduate school, I was paid through stipends from scholarships and fellowships, and graduate assistant positions. There were either no work requirements or the connections to jobs (like teaching and grading) were at best rather nebulously defined.

All of a sudden, without ever thinking of education as job training or working a normal job, I was left on my own post-graduation. I still didn't know what I wanted to do. I very much did not want to look for a standard job. Obviously, a basic income would have helped me.

At the same time, we have the rise of the Bernie Sanders movement. Many friends were followers and part of the Fight for '15 Movement. I didn't understand how a living wage would help someone like me.

That is, I work on things that interest me; it seems like a good idea. [But] a \$15/hr minimum wage does not help if you're not in a waged position. There is plenty of good work that needs to get done which is not necessarily suitable for wage labour.

I began thinking again about basic income. It accomplishes the basic goal of eliminating poverty. So, I started mentioning it to people. And it turned out I had friends who had heard of it. I started researching what had been written on it. As it turns out, there were some articles being written, and groups and individuals working on it.

I started subscribing and following these articles and people, respectively. Later in the year, I started following Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) on Facebook. They started putting out calls for reviewers. I reviewed for them and then began writing for them.

From this work from PhD to basic income, it is a passion for you. It takes a lot of time. What is the main passion in this initiative for you to become an activist and devote a tremendous amount time to it? I can look at the number of publications alone.

(Laugh)

There are a few motivations. So, one thing is I enjoy the type of work. It's challenging. I've done work writing for newsletters before. I am continuing to do this. I am doing an annual newsletter for my academic department.

What I do with BIEN is so much more challenging. I learned a couple different software platforms. In addition, I have to keep up on the day-to-day research. I have to do a lot of investigation. I have to find a lead about some topic, new announcement, or new study.

I am coming into this as a non-expert by any means. However, I want to present the information in an accurate way. There is a demand to do research and figure out things that I'm learning for the first time.

Also, I want to represent information without leading readers astray.

(Laugh)

I do not want them to have false inferences or beliefs. I want them to have true beliefs via true information.

I [also] really like the fact that this work is something I can do on my own time in my own place. I don't have to go into an office. I don't have bosses looking over my shoulders, at least directly. If I were to have a job, this is embodying my own ideal. I can sit and write. It is variety and a challenge. It is for a good cause. I deeply believe in this. I work with cool people.

I do not work in an office. I interact via Skype and email. I am totally independent. I can work from my apartment, a coffee shop, and at the bar, whatever. It's like the perfect job, even though it doesn't pay.

I have multiple aspects of work that align with my values, personality, and work preferences. It seems like the perfect fit. If I can continue to afford doing this without relying on a job, and if I keep doing this for the sake of the movement and myself, and if I stick with this, I want to see where this goes.

I'll at least do something that I tremendously enjoy that is a fit for a while. This interview is continued in Part Two, where McFarland discusses her values in news reporting.

# An Interview with André Coelho

October 18, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

***What made you become an activist for basic income, and devote so much time to it?***

A revolution is taking place here and now, and each person has a choice: to be an active part in that revolution (to work for it to succeed), to be a passive part in it (to let it happen, if it must), or to fight against it. For me, the latter is just plain nonsensical. To be passive does not quite go along with my character, so I guess I could only go with the first one.

I identify with this revolutionary course – the implementation of basic income – because it's about recognizing the humanity in us all, of our birth right to a decent living, and enough freedom to actually pursue happiness in this life.

***What are other terms or phrases for ideas associated with, but not the same as, Basic Income (BI)? What characterizes them?***

In most welfare states there are social benefits in place, paid in cash or in the form of tax credits. However, all of them are conditional, usually on income and/or willingness to take up a job. In Portugal, for instance, there is a minimum insertion income (RSI), which is only given to people who clearly show they have no other source of income.

There are also, for example, child benefits, disability benefits, income assistance...a whole set of income redistribution schemes, which always entail some conditionality. The only exceptions I know of, other than basic income pilot projects, are the Alaska and the Macau dividends. The latter two dividends, although unconditional, are not basic (not enough to cover basic expenses).

***What makes the BI plan of action unique?***

If I can put my finger on one main feature, I would say it is its unconditional nature. That's what makes people roll their eyes around. What? Now we're giving all this money to people, even if they don't work? That's just plain unfair.

Well, of course this is a short sighted opinion at best, and a plain lie at worst. It's a limited view on our humanity. Usually people view themselves as active and willing to contribute with their work, but then are suspicious that their neighbours will do the same.

Of course that if everyone thinks this way we'll arrive at an impossible proposition: that everyone is active and willing, while not being active nor willing, at the same time. But apart from our personal sensibilities, results from basic income pilot projects show that people contribute as much or more to society with their work, while receiving a basic income.

And even when slight decreases are observed, these are coupled with investments in education.

***What are the most common success stories of BI or similar programs? Any failures?***

The basic income pilot projects I usually cite are the Namibian, Indian and Canadian experiences. The first two were experiments in very poor, rural contexts, while the Canadian one was both urban and rural, involving the entire local population.

In all these cases, people receiving the basic income did not stop working (clearly the opposite in the Namibian and Indian cases), health conditions improved, as well as education indicators. There were also other benefits, such as reduced crime rates (in Namibia and India).

I think that, in the context of basic income experimentations, there cannot be ‘failures’. If done properly, these experiments aim to widen our knowledge, while temporarily helping the populations in question.

Of course that, as it was the case in the United States experiments, the results can be “spun” in different ways for political purposes. But that is always a risk attached to any experiment, especially those related with social behaviour.

***What country seems the most progressive and forward thinking in implementation of BI?***

According to news information around these days, Finland seems to be the part of the world most willing to formally take up the idea of trying basic income. Finnish officials and partners are developing an experiment, which is setup to start in 2017.

However, I would not say that translates necessarily into greater progressiveness than other regions of the world. The Finnish experiment is already plagued by several shortcomings, even before it has started (although I still think it’s worth it).

The Canadian central and regional governments, and particularly the latter, are also seriously considering experimenting with the basic income. As well as regional Dutch officials, who are already developing their own basic income experiments (similar to Finland’s experiment).

Let’s also not forget the Swiss case, that recently held a national referendum on the subject. And also Spain, particularly in the Basque region. However, the interest in basic income is growing quickly around the world, so who knows who will implement it first?

Activist networks for basic income are also spreading. At this moment, BIEN already has 30 national and regional affiliates, and this is expected to rise in the next few years.

***What is your work on BI?***

At Basic Income News, I do writing, editing, training and coordinating. I also represent BIEN, on occasions, as an advocate for basic income in international meetings (up until now, related to the CO-ACTE project).

Locally, I also participate in some actions for our activist network in Portugal, by writing articles, speaking at venues and organizing events.

***Any advice for would-be policy makers or activists about strategies for the implementation of BI?***

I guess that if I could choose one piece of advice it would be not to consider basic income as a ‘miraculous’ cure for all social problems. Basic income is a helpful tool, even a crucial one, but cannot replace a “systems approach” thinking about society, a holistic view.

Also I would recommend to self-analyse and make clear why each of us is defending basic income, and how we think it should be implemented. Because the devil is in the details, and basic income can get “dirty” when analysed in its implementation depth.

I have been, more than once, challenged by the possibility of a “right-wing” basic income, which would come as a replacement of all other social benefits and welfare state public systems, including health and education.

This approach to basic income is common among the “right-wing” side of the political spectrum. It is dangerous and a real possibility which all activists should be aware of if they really care about the wellbeing of present and future society.

**Thank you for your time, André.**



# Jeff Opdyke – Basic Income Will Kill the Economy

December 21, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

While sitting in his favorite hotel lobby in Bucharest, Romania, Opdyke was looking at his phone for the news for the day, while waiting around for none other than his girlfriend. He found a (supposedly) “non-partisan” article, written by an economist funded by the Economic Policy Institute. In the article, the economist claimed “higher wages are the solutions to America’s expanding reliance on payday lending.” Later, he found another article entitled “This robot-powered restaurant could put fast-food workers out of a job.”

By Opdyke’s estimation, these “two theses are mutually exclusive. They cannot coexist...I can promise, it’s not the position held by the economist.” Opdyke said, “I can also promise that you and I will ultimately feel the repercussions in our paychecks and in our wallets...”

With machines able to create “perfect burgers,” the argument for a \$15/hr minimum makes little sense to Opdyke. Human labour value for fast food will become obsolete in the near future. He considers the possible solution of paying a basic income to all adults (which he defines as a “minimum monthly income on which people can pay for their lives”), but he dismisses the idea as too expensive, at least without a drastic increase in taxes (which he does not seem to favor).

If you want to read more, please see here:

Jeff D. Opdyke (August 24, 2016) “[Basic Income Will Kill the Economy](#)“

# Daniel Häni: Basic income is an initiative against laziness

December 22, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

In a recent interview, Swiss entrepreneur and activist Daniel Häni contends that “the unconditional basic income is an initiative against laziness.”

Häni is well known in the basic income as the co-founder the co-founder of Switzerland’s popular initiative for an unconditional basic income (UBI), which launched the campaign for a referendum to establish a national basic income.

In the interview, he talks about new conceptualizations of work in modern society, the value of time, and implied social changes from a UBI. Häni argues that man is not by nature lazy. He notes that, in contrast, much opposition to UBI comes from the opposite—and false—view that man *is* by nature lazy. Häni also describes the importance of automation (robots) in terms of its relationship to work and humans.

“We have invented the machines and now the robots. We no longer need to be diligent and obedient,” Häni said. “This can make the machines and robots much better. They work around the clock and actually do what we program.” In other words, robots can diligently and obediently perform work programmed into them by humans. By implication, the “unpredictable” (or “human”) work can be done by people, not robots, and the predictable can be done by robots.

Häni cautions against the funneling of the purpose of work that prevails in modern society.

“The narrowing of work on work is outdated and harmful,” he notes. “Labor and income will be separated, at least as far as existence is concerned, or we will suffocate in abundance and starve in abundance. The signs are already there.”

If you want to read the interview (in German), see:

Daniel Häni: „Das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen ist eine Initiative gegen Faulheit.“  
(Pressenza).

## An Interview with Dr. Kate McFarland (Part Two)

December 22, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Earlier in the year, *Basic Income News* reporter Scott Jacobsen spoke to *Basic Income News* reporter Kate McFarland about her background and influences. This is a continuation of Part One.

***You mentioned valuing clarity of writing, for readers to have correct inferences. Any advice for BI writers? That is, those that want clear writing and to avoid the statistical probability of readers making wrong inferences.***

That's a good question. I feel like this is something I do based on instincts from my training in analytic philosophy, especially philosophy of language. It's hard to codify that—those instincts—right off the bat.

I do want to stress that one thing that's special about Basic Income News—sorta in our mission statement, as it were—is that we are clear to make the distinction between straightforward factual reporting and opinion pieces. If you just want the facts, you read one of our news reports, and you don't have to wade through a bunch of the writer's own analysis and commentary to get to them. You'll see a lot of writing that conflates opinion and persuasive writing with reporting the facts, in a way not always conducive to the reader being able to figure out exactly what's going on. Too often the factual reporting seems like an afterthought.

As much as I can, and as much as BI News can, we try to give people the bare facts. We don't want to gloss them over with a bunch of fluff about what we think about basic income. It is not our job in news reporting. Our job is to disseminate the latest information about the basic income movement. It is not to make every one piece a persuasive one. It is not to write exciting stories, fluff, and propaganda.

I would also urge other writers to stick with primary sources whenever possible. When you use quotes, be sensitive to the context. When you talk about data from experiments or surveys, be sensitive to the design of the study and what you can actually infer from it.

Never, ever selectively misquote or misrepresent information by presenting it out of context! Some people do that, which is why I say always stick with primary sources—the original research reports, the full transcripts, and so forth.

Otherwise, my advice is to learn a lot, do you research from the primary sources, but also read some of the fluffy, superficial, often misleading stories on BI in mainstream media. Pay attention to the awful clickbait headlines. Read the comments sometimes even; notice how people are confused. Let it irritate you. You'll develop instincts, I think, to write in a way that strives to avoid that. I think it helped me, anyhow.

***Some things you said suggest mainstream news sources on BI want to persuade one way or another. Does this seem to be the case? It would be in contradiction to journalistic virtues of objectivity and neutrality insofar as they can be achieved.***

Well, I see a lot—I see a lot that's not necessarily to *persuade*, but where there might be, I think there are, values that conflict with just straightforward objective reporting. It might not be to persuade people on whether to support BI. It might be just to excite people, hook people, or write

a catchier piece... As I say, I'm a philosopher, not a journalist; the ideals I have for prose come from there. Maybe journalists want to engage the reader at the expense of laying out the facts in a clear and complete manner. We're just trying to concisely summarize the facts and make everything as clear as possible.

So, for example, if you read a journalistic report on a sample survey—this has just happened recently—you almost never get the details you want to know in order to really know what conclusions to draw. The sample size, sampling frame, selection method, response rate—you don't often get all that. I would want to know that. And I don't really care what a survey says about people's attitudes on basic income if you don't give me the details of the questionnaire design. What exactly is being asked? How it is phrased? I want to know all that before I make conclusions; I think you should make that info available to the reader if you're gonna bother to report on an opinion survey at all. 'Course, I should say I was a statistician before I became a philosopher.

Another thing is quoting out of context. There was an example that comes to mind—I won't name names—of a famous basic income advocate being asked his opinion on when BI would actually happen. The gist of what he said was that we can't predict, but in saying it, he said something like "It could as soon as 5 or 10 years, but it could be much longer." It was clearly just this fragment of a larger point about how we just can't know. But then the journalist just quotes him as saying that BI could happen as soon as 5 or 10 years! Just that! Entirely misleading. Entirely misrepresented his point.

A related phenomenon—a sub-phenomenon, maybe—is jumping on any use of the phrase "basic income" and then quoting the speaker as making a point about what you and I and BIEN call "basic income". But that's really too hasty. There was a recent case of a famous businessman who allegedly came out in support of UBI—he said he supported "basic income" (or "Grundeinkommen", being German)—and people in the media just assumed he meant the unconditional thing. Later, he tweets that he didn't mean the unconditional thing, but by then, the damage is done, as it were.

Sometimes this is [a] tough one, I have to be honest. Maybe, that's another thing for the advice: If you're not 100 percent positive someone means basic income when they say "basic income", then leave what they say in quotes. Say "They said these words..." But don't necessarily disquote if you're not sure what they mean. I mean, equivocation on the phrase "basic income" is a whole other issue—it's becoming a real big thing, I think, with the Canada movement versus US commentators—but maybe we'll get back to that.

Another example with the reporting, I guess, is just being misleading through superficiality or vague weasel words. Like, to make basic income seem exciting, maybe a journalist will give a long list of countries that are "pursuing" BI or "considering" BI or something—but what does that even mean? Or maybe they'll talk about a long list of people who "endorse" or "support" it just because they said something vaguely favourable at one time.

Then you see things—I've been seeing this a lot lately—like "Finland, Ontario, and Kenya are beginning pilots." The problem there a little subtler, but you see it? That suggests, I think, that the governments of Finland, Ontario, and Kenya are all planning pilots. Kenya? They must be thinking of GiveDirectly, a private charity based in New York that happens to be operating in Kenya. I think it's important to keep those private efforts distinct from the government-

sponsored ones. That's an important distinction. It's one sort of thing you often see just casually elided.

I could go on—those are just some examples off the top of my head—but I hope you get the idea. I think that, with most journalism on BI, it's about saying the bare minimum to be interesting and provocative—don't bore readers with too many facts and details and distinctions, maybe—at the expense of saying enough, and saying things clearly enough, to really give a good and accurate sense, knowledge, of what's going on in the world.

***Your background in philosophy at the graduate and doctoral level seems relevant to me. It obviously helps with your clarity, rigour, and simplicity to the point it needs to be to present ideas. For BI, it can come along with different terms and phrases, for different ideas associated with, but not the same as, BI.***

Yeah, that's definitely—that's a whole 'nother thing. I try to point to it when it's relevant. And I try to be consistent in my own terms, and of course to keep my uses consistent with the official definition agreed upon by BIEN—a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement.

The US BIG site actually has a pretty good primer on some of the different terms, and I tend to follow its usage for BI and UBI versus BIG and so on. But sometimes it's tricky, especially with the BIG versus BI distinction, which you see conflated a lot these days.

“BI” and “UBI” are both often used to refer only to policies where everybody gets a check of the same amounts—no clawbacks with additional earnings—but sometimes people use them more generally to include policies that include what you might otherwise hear called “guaranteed minimum income” or a “guaranteed annual income” or a “negative income tax”; these are policies where everyone's assured a minimal income floor, unconditionally, but the amount you receive is clawed back as you earn more and more on top of this floor. That's what Ontario's almost certainly gonna pilot next. It won't be everyone in the pilot getting money. It'll be that everyone's *guaranteed* money if their income drops low enough—but, assuming Hugh Segal's advice is followed, it won't be the rich people in the sample also getting the check.

But sometimes you'll see things like “Ontario plans to give all its residents an income boost”—because people hear “basic income”, and elsewhere they hear “basic income” to mean “checks to everybody, even then rich”, and they put two and two together, incorrectly. Sometimes all these policies together are referred to as a “basic income guarantee”, a “BIG”, with the GAI/GMI/NIT and the UBI (or “demogrant” as it's sometimes called) being different types.

I can see this becoming a real problem—confusing these types of “BIGs”, equivocating on the term “basic income”—for people's understanding and interpreting past and present pilots, and understanding how they revolve around the current debate, and I do hope to write a full-length article about it in the new year, if it keeps being problematic.

I'm realizing that what I'm talking about is not so much too many phrases for BI—but the term “basic income” being used to mean too many things. That might actually be the bigger problem, in fact, especially in the States. In addition to this equivocation with “does it entail giving money to the rich”, there's this issue with some people, it seems, thinking that anything called “basic income” *by definition* replaces the whole rest of the welfare state. But that's not true. But writers sometimes talk that way, and it leads to confusion and misconceptions.

And there's also an issue about whether a "basic income" is, by definition, enough to live on. I think writers occasionally go in both ways. They probably sometimes equivocate, which would be bad... There's been some controversy in BIEN caused by precisely this last concern, in fact. I think you can read about it some in Toru's report on the controversy about the definition at the last BIEN Congress.

## UBI – real solution in perfect storm of debt

December 25, 2016

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

A new report from the investment service Wealthify reveals that many Scottish people are unable to save for the future because of “zero hour contracts, insecure work and low pay.” Moreover, according to the report, Scottish women save less than half of the money of men, and 10 times less than some areas of England.

Campaigners have proposed a universal basic income (UBI) in response to this—such as Kirstein Rummery, Professor of Social Policy at the University of Stirling, whom Nathanael Williams interviewed in a Commonsense article about the Wealthify report.

Rummery said, “The only real policy solution would be Universal Basic Income – which would not only mitigate against income insecurity but tackle poverty effectively and lead to a huge economic stimulus.”

She continued, “It is clear that several factors are coming together to make the financial situation particularly precarious for groups of Scots.”

Rummery believes that a UBI might also serve to offset the gender imbalance. Zero hour contracts and pay freezes affect low-paid workers the most, who are mostly women in the public sector. The same for the withdrawal of benefits for the disabled and social care services because of funding constraints. The rise in housing costs exacerbates the situation.

If you want to read more, please see here:

Nathanael Williams. Universal Basic Income can be “real solution” as women and low paid face “perfect storm” of debt. (CommonSpace).

# An Interview with Tim Dunlop (Part One)

January 10, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

*\*Conducted via email with minor edits.\**

***You write on the future of work. What is the future of work? Where will humans find meaningful and fulfilling lives with or without work?***

The future of work will see continued technological pressure on the paying jobs that humans do. This will change the nature of work, it will eliminate many jobs, and create some new ones. Humans will continue to do the things that only humans can do well — being creative, imaginative, empathetic, playful and social — and do less of the things that machines can do better than us. That will include everything from building things, digging things, and driving things, to researching and data crunching.

People are already involved in much meaningful work, and that meaningful work is not always their job. Sometimes it *is*, however, and the loss of such jobs — and therefore meaning — from people's lives will be difficult to deal with. What we have to ensure is that people are financially supported even if they don't have a job so that they can continue not just to exist but to engage in work that is meaningful to them. We have to destroy this notion that you are only a good citizen if you have a job: before it destroys us. I have enormous faith in our ability to find meaning even in a world where technology does a lot of the jobs we do now.

***Your new book, *Why the Future is Workless*, describes a workless future. One powerful collective force (aside from potential nuclear catastrophe and climate change) looms into the immediate future: the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Your book is about technology, and the social and political effects of such technology in a world after work. What probable outcomes will emerge from the Fourth Industrial Revolution by 2025 and 2045?***

We'll see not just a change in the nature of work but in social relations. Services will replace products, something that has already happened with movies and music. This will likely happen with cars too, amongst other things. People will look to have experiences rather than to own things. Many everyday things will become cheaper, almost to the point of being free: zero marginal cost, as the economists say. Technology will get smarter and we will move from dealing with the web via direct questions typed into a search engine to talking with the tech on an ongoing basis, as we are seeing with services like Amazon Echo and Google Home. Whether this will all be a boon or a burden for people will depend on how we deal with these changes politically. We have to make choices to create a fair world: it won't just happen.

***What is happening now, especially with things like Amazon Go?***

We are seeing the start of a lot of this stuff already, as with Amazon Go. So we are right at the bottom of the change curve, entering a change of era, not merely an era of change. The real change will happen when powerful, cheap processors are embedded in things — fridges, sidewalks — and they are all networked. It will be a different world. Again, though, it's important to stress: this might be heaven or hell, depending on how we handle the politics.

***How can automation and machines release human beings from the drudgery of hard labour, whether physical (open to the elements) or mental (repetitive, simple tasks)?***



They will make things cheaper and more ubiquitous. We will move from scarcity to plenty. Technology will turn products into services. It will create enormous wealth. The question becomes: how do we distribute that wealth, especially if a lot of paying jobs disappear.

***How do you propose to deal with growing inequality in the world?***

Via a reinvention of distribution. We will need taxes on global financial flows and the implementation of systems that require corporations to stop freeloading off the social wealth created by governments and citizens (this is an idea put forward by Yanis Varoufakis). Corporations will be required to provide a percentage of their capital value as a kind of common stock, revenue from which is then distributed to all of us, probably in the form of some sort of basic income. We will also need shorter working hours, without loss of pay or conditions.

***Neoliberal economists assume the creation of new jobs as a given, but you disagree. That is, some neoliberal economists assert ‘if jobs go, they will come back’ – while you think this is not necessarily so. Why?***

The nature of the economy is changing. We are shifting from scarcity to plenty, from industrial to knowledge, and from long working hours to short. In such an economy, we simply don’t need as many people doing things — jobs — as we did in the past in order to create the stuff we need. Sure, there will be new jobs, they just won’t need many people to do them. We already have huge populations surplus to the requirements of the economy (as the economists say) and they are refugees, prisoners, the unemployed, the under-employed, and the 800 million people subsisting in the slums on the edges of some of our great cities. Paid employment is already becoming a really bad way of distributing wealth and we should stop pretending that the jobs will “come back” and make everything all right again. We have to come up with a better idea than “jobs”.

## **An Interview with Tim Dunlop (Part Two)**

**January 12, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

*\*Conducted via email with minor edits.\**

***The economy has shifted into high gear for knowledge and ability, the currently labeled Knowledge Economy concomitant with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. How has this affected inequality based on standard metrics of knowledge and ability, such as credentials from post-secondary institutions in relevant disciplines?***

It has pretty much always been the case that an education will help you get a better job, with better pay and conditions. This is still basically true, though we are seeing even amongst the highly educated longer periods of unemployment, a failure to get “good” jobs, and increasing insecurity in the work that they do get. Why? Because we just don’t need the same number of people employed in order to make the economy work. By all means, get a great education, but look at it as much as an investment in developing yourself so that you will have a meaningful life as in getting a good job. Because maybe there is no job to be got.

***You have argued for some form of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as fundamental to the “progressive civic” and “economic reinvention.” What are other terms or phrases for ideas associated with, but not the same as, UBI? What characterizes them?***

There are a number forms of basic income, not all of them universal. A common one is the idea of a negative income tax. So instead of paying tax, you are paid an allowance, but as you move back into work, get a job, the amount you are paid tapers, until finally you are back to paying tax. The real difference between this and a UBI is that it tries to integrate the allowance with the labor market whereas UBI tries to establish an income independent of it.

***What makes the UBI plan of action unique?***

I guess at heart it is the way it has the potential to break the nexus between remuneration and a job. It recognizes that many of the things we do as citizens and individuals fall outside the normal parameters of paid work but that nonetheless those things we do — from caring for children to volunteering with community organizations or political parties or sports groups — are valuable to society and so it makes sense to recognize that contribution. It also empowers workers to be able to say no to crap jobs offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis.

***What are the most common success stories of UBI or similar programs? Any failures?***

Every trial of UBI I know of has been successful in that it has dispelled one of the biggest myths about giving people a no-strings-attached income, namely, that people become lazy and do nothing. Every trial shows almost the exact opposite. One of the most comprehensive trials is the one I talk about in my book, run by UNICEF in India. But similar positive results have been shown in other trials, including the one in New Jersey run by the Nixon Administration.

***What city seems the most progressive and forward-thinking in its implementation of UBI?***

Hard to say. A number of cities, including Utrecht in the Netherlands, are running trials, as are a couple of cities in Canada and Finland. I think this is great. It builds momentum and adds to the data supporting implementation on a larger scale.

***What country seems the most progressive and forward-thinking in its implementation of UBI?***

I guess Finland, but I think there are some issues with the route they have decided to take. They have chosen to test a partial rather than a full version. Still, it is good to see a national government move in this direction, however tentatively.

***Any advice for would-be policymakers or activists about strategies for the implementation of UBI?***

Gather data through trials. With trials, implement them with populations that will receive conservative support. In Australia, that might include rural communities, including farmers. Don't pitch it as "free money" because it isn't. Don't let that description stand. Educate people about the notion of universality and why, in a democracy, it is important that everyone is entitled to certain benefits. Reach out across ideological divides, right and left. Involve business in discussions. Lobby for corporations to set aside a percentage of stock to be held by the government as part of the common wealth. It's going to be a hard sell, so the sooner you start, the better!

And this raises the major piece of advice I would give: don't oversell the idea of Universal Basic Income. As important a tool as it is likely to be for dealing with technological unemployment, it will not by itself solve the various social and economic problems that beset us and we should be careful not to suggest that it will.

## **Jorge Valero (Bruselas), “Gana fuerza el debate sobre la renta básica universal en Bruselas” (Winning debate on universal basic income in Brussels)**

**January 14, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Jorge Valero (Bruselas) reports that digitization is a “recurring theme in Brussels.” He points to the need to adapt the welfare states.

Bruselas says this is part of a public debate around “collaborative economics, advanced robotization, artificial intelligence or the so-called internet of things,” which was previously avoided as a topic in the public. He notes the new public debate is part of a “rethinking of social protection systems” with universal basic income as part of the “most ambitious proposals.”

As the article reports, Marianne Thyssen, employment commissioner of the EU, said, “It is crucial to pay close attention to these changes [in the world of work] and ask ourselves how we can strengthen labor laws, social protection and labor market institutions to withstand the test of the digital economy and support people to seize the best opportunities.”

If you want to read (Spanish) more, here:

Jorge Valero Bruselas. Gana fuerza el debate sobre la renta básica universal en Bruselas. El Economista. November 13, 2016.

## **“Changing employment trends and universal basic income” (The Saturday Paper)”**

**January 17, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Mike Secombe, National Correspondent for *The Saturday Paper*, reported on the recent championing of a universal basic income (UBI) by those interested in the cause and concerned about “wage inequality at record highs and technology plundering jobs.” In particular, the article focuses on the support for UBI shown by Elon Musk.

Musk is heavily invested and involved in the technology world: he founded Tesla, an electric car company, and SpaceX, a private rocket engine and spacecraft builder. He has a net worth reported at \$11.5 billion.

There is “a pretty good chance we end up with a universal basic income, or something like that, due to automation,” Musk said.

The article goes on to talk about interest in UBI in general in Silicon Valley, the impact of automation on the labor market, and recent changes in education and job creation.

Read the full article here:

Mike Secombe, “Changing employment trends and universal basic income”, *The Saturday Paper*, Dec 17, 2016.

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/economy/2016/12/17/changing-employment-trends-and-universal-basic-income/14818932004100>.

## **Øyvind Steensen, “Den norske modellen versjon 2.0” (BI as continuation of Norwegian Model)**

**January 2017, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Øyvind Steensen describes the Norwegian model, which involves two citizen salary schemes – family allowances and minimum pension, and possible improvements to it. The change to the current welfare system would be the provision of a basic income.

Steensen describes basic income as “a basic citizen wages granted without means testing for all adults residing in the country.”

According to Steensen, however, it should not be too high. If too high, it might disincentivize work.

Read the original article here (in Norwegian):

Øyvind Steensen, “Den norske modellen versjon 2.0“. Gjesteblogg, November 15th, 2016

## Seoul National University Economy professor Lee Keun says South Korea needs BI

January 21, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to business writer Kwack Jung-soo, South Korea will need to make fundamental changes to its operations due to the nation's prolonged low growth and lack of new growth engines.

In a new book entitled *2017 Grand Forecast for the South Korean Economy*, 43 economics experts provide analyses and possible solutions to the economic crisis in South Korea.

One contributor, Professor Lee Keun of Seoul National University, believes that the present situation is a "crisis of South Korean capitalism" rooted in income inequality. He maintains that part of the solution is a "basic income system" in which "sufficient livelihood benefits would be paid to all citizens to keep them out of poverty, regardless of assets, income, or working status" (in the words of reporter Jung-soo).

Read the full article here:

Kwack Jung-soo, "Economists say in 2017 will enter "long-term low growth conditions"", The Hankyoreh, November 23, 2016.

## **Gigi Foster, “Universal basic income: the dangerous idea of 2016”**

**January 22, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Universal basic income (UBI) has gain traction in the developed world. Some citizens in Australia support it. Gigi Foster, Associate Professor in the School of Economics at University of New South Wales, said, “...while good in theory, it’s no panacea for the challenges of our modern economy.”

That is, UBI is gaining traction in the developed world, but, according to Foster, is not a cure-all for the Australian economy. Foster notes this would replace some social security and welfare programs. “In the developed world, Canada is trialling a UBI scheme,” she said, “Finland also just rolled out a UBI trial, involving about 10,000 recipients for two years.” In short, there are UBI experiments.

“The present Australian welfare system (excluding the Medicare bill of A\$25 billion) costs around A\$170 billion per annum,” Foster said, “Our GDP is around A\$1.7 trillion per year, so this welfare bill is about 10% of annual GDP.”

Read the full article here:

Gigi Foster, “Universal basic income: the dangerous idea of 2016“, The Conversation (Australia), December 26th, 2016



## INDIA: Ajit Ranade, “From NREGA to universal basic income”

January 30, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Ajit Ranade, senior economist based in Mumbai, writes in *The Free Press Journal* that a direct universal cash benefit “can replace ill-targeted subsidies on cooking gas, fertiliser and food grain,” under India’s current welfare system.

4.2% of India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is spent on subsidies: electricity, fertilizer, food, oil, rail, and water. Many of the subsidies do not make their way to the purported beneficiaries because they are untargeted. Ranade reports, targeted subsidies can use the subsidies better.

Vijay Roshi, Reader in Economics at Oxford University, is an early supporter of UBI for India. With all considered, Roshi sees UBI as a possibility with 3.5% of India’s GDP. Ranada said, “UBI is based on a Gandhian principle: societal welfare is determined by how we treat our worst off.”

Read the full article here:

Ajit Ranade, “From NREGA to universal basic income“, *The Free Press Journal*, December 12th, 2016

## December 2016 Sam Altman interview in Business Insider

January 31, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

According to Chris Weller from *Business Insider*, Sam Altman, President of Y Combinator (the largest startup accelerator in Silicon Valley), recently voiced some of his doubts regarding people replacing their current work with other meaningful work or activities if given a basic income.

Weller reports Altman puts faith in the provision of free money to make people both healthier and happier, but isn't betting everything on it.

According to Weller, Altman, and other Y Combinator researchers, will implement an experiment in 2017, located in Oakland, California. It will give 100 families \$2,000 per month. It is to test whether free, regular money helps "people escape poverty and live healthier lives," Weller explains.

According to Weller, experiments, in Kenya and Honduras, show this; both are underdeveloped countries. Some see work for work's sake as an intrinsic value. Well suggests separation of work from income might not sit well with those people, but might if presented as freedom from hated work.

"Citizens could finally do the work that matters most to them rather than the work that pays the best." Weller argued.

Read the full article here:

Chris Weller, "One of the biggest VCs in Silicon Valley explains how basic income could fail in America", Business Insider, December 18th, 2016.

## FRANCE: Thomas Piketty, “Basic income or fair wage?”

February 4, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Thomas Piketty, Professor in the Paris School of Economics and author of *Capital in the 21st Century*, in his blog (in *Le Monde*) reports “there is a degree of consensus in France” on the provision of a minimum income. French citizens are for it.

For the minimum income, Piketty says disagreements exist around the amount. The consensus for the provision of a basic income is seen in “numerous other European countries,” Picketty claims. Picketty notes the problem with discussions about basic income is the “real issues” are not explored and can represent “social justice on the cheap.”

“The question of justice is not simply a matter of 530 Euros or 800 Euros a month,” Picketty said, “If we wish to live in a fair and just society we have to formulate more ambitious objectives.”

Picketty said, “The debate on basic income has at least one virtue, namely that of reminding us that there is a degree of consensus in France on the fact that everyone should have a minimum income.”

In a previous interview, Picketty supported some arguments for a basic income (financing access to basic goods) and remained skeptical about other arguments (substitute for basic goods) for a basic income.

Read the full article here:

Thomas Piketty, “Basic income or fair wage?“, *Le Monde*, December 13th, 2016

## **“A Brief History of the Idea That Everyone Should Get Free Cash for Life” (Mother Jones)**

**February 5, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Delphine d’Amora from *Mother Jones* has offered a brief history of the idea of basic income, tracking its development from the 18th century to its current resurgence with prominent modern advocates, such as Belgian philosophy professor Philippe van Parijs, and various basic income experiments ongoing in a number of countries.

“After decades of obscurity, the idea is suddenly in fashion,” d’Amora notes, “Politicians around the world are interested and a handful of governments, such as Finland and the Canadian province of Ontario, are planning or considering basic-income pilot projects.”

The article is an in-depth, chronological history of basic income, starting with the 18th century, and including various manifestations of the idea, including negative income tax as described by American economist Milton Friedman in an embedded video.

Read the full article here:

Delphine d’Amora, “[A Brief History of the Idea That Everyone Should Get Free Cash for Life](#)“, Mother Jones, December 26th 2016

## **Anthony Painter, “A universal basic income: the answer to poverty, insecurity, and health inequality?”**

**February 12, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Anthony Painter, Director of the Action and Research Center at the RSA, in an editorial article described an experiment in the middle of the 1970s in the small town of Dauphin, Manitoba, Canada. As Painter describes, there were “statistically significant benefits” to the physical and mental health of the participants in the experiment, which was in the British Medical Journal.

The experiment involved the provision of “a basic income—a regular, unconditional payment made to each and every citizen” of Dauphin. A complete statistical analysis was not provided for several decades because of a loss of political interest.

Painter claims inequality and poor health outcomes is a well-established finding with the mechanism is less known.

Read the full article here:

Anthony Painter, “[A universal basic income: the answer to poverty, insecurity, and health inequality?](#)“, The British Medical Journal, December 12th, 2016

## **Robin Clunie: “How to use Scotland’s land to create a brand new people’s welfare”**

**February 14, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Robin Clunie, an architect, outlined in a recent article the way Scotland can take control of its land to provide for all of its citizens. With an amendment to land ownership laws, this could be done, according to Clunie.

Clunie said, “All land except that immediately attached to a residence is taken into the people’s ownership in perpetuity.” It would be a “community buy out.” Everyone in the community would have a ‘vote’ in the ways that the land is used.

Rents would be at a basic social wage for those age 16 and up, along with allowances for children up to the age of 15. Clunie argues for it as non-nationalisation and “democratisation of the ownership” of the non-domestic land.

More information at:

Robin Clunie, “[Robin Clunie: How to use Scotland’s land to create a brand new people’s welfare](#)“. CommonSpace, December 2nd, 2016

# An Interview with Dr. Danielle Martin, MD CCFP FCFP MPP of Medical Affairs & Health System Solutions

February 20, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

**You are a family doctor, with unique insights into the Canadian health care system. Your new book, *Better Now: Six Big Ideas to Improve Health Care for All Canadians*, poses, as per the title, six big ideas to improve the Canadian health care system. What inspired you to write this book?**

Each chapter in the book was named after a patient in my practice who I was inspired by and this is a book about their stories. I think that when people pick up a copy of *Better Now*, they will see themselves in the stories, or a friend or a family member. Many of us have had similar experiences in the doctor's office, or we know of someone who has. As a family doctor, I see the challenges my patients face because of problems in the system. These problems often feel outside the control of both individual patients and providers. But as someone who studies health system issues, I know that a lot of those problems can be fixed, and importantly we can fix them in ways that build on the value of fairness that is so important to Canadians. I felt a book was a good way to give voice to these issues and to try to get people like my patients and your readers more engaged in pushing for improvements.

**Big idea 1 is the return to relationships. What does this mean for Canadian health care?**

We know that around 85% of Canadians have a family doctor, so that's a great place to start. But having a good relationship with your doctor comes next. This relationship should be one where there is open communication, so that we as doctors have the chance to really understand what patients need when they come in to see us. In my book, I say that the notion of being seen by "someone who knows you" is central to primary care. The best place to integrate all your health needs is a place where, like the bar in *Cheers*, everybody knows your name. So, for example, if you come in to see me for a cold, I would help you with that, but while you were there, we might also sit and talk about other concerns you may be having, discuss your family history with a disease, talk about screening and what we need to better manage your health. This relationship can also help to guard against overtreatment or over-doctoring. For example, in my book, I talk about my patient Abida and how we've worked to reduce the number of medications she takes and the specialists she meets with over the years, to her benefit. We've also tried to limit the number of times she goes in to the emergency room by making sure that she sees me more often, vs. other healthcare providers who many not know about as much about her health history.

**Big idea 2 is a nation with a drug problem. What is our drug problem in Canada? What is the remedy or the solution for it?**

We know that one in five Canadian households report that someone in that household is not taking their medicine out of concerns about costs. We need a public drug plan that covers all Canadians and does not have high co-payments so that patients can afford to take their life-saving medications. A strong national pharmacare program would solve our access problems and save Canadians billions of dollars. If done right, a pharmacare program could also help to reduce

overmedication and inappropriate prescribing – problems that affect too many Canadians, especially seniors. Canadians believe in the principle that access to health care should be based on need, not ability to pay. That principle needs to be extended beyond doctors and hospitals to include universal access to a publicly-funded formulary of essential medicines.

**Big idea 5 is a basic income for basic health. That is important to BIEN. It is, specifically, a basic income guarantee. What is the specific definition of a basic income guarantee in big idea 5? How would this impact the Canadian health care system?**

A basic income guarantee means that if your income falls below a certain level, you would be topped up to a level sufficient to meet your basic needs. It's a departure from our current social assistance program in two ways:

A basic income would ensure that everyone in Canada has income above the “poverty line.”

It would work through the tax system and be easier to administer with the only eligibility requirement being a person's income. Who you live with or whether you were searching for work or attending a training program wouldn't be factored into whether you are eligible to receive support.

Medicine isn't the only thing that makes us healthy. If you can't afford good food, your rent or safe housing, it's harder to be healthy, so we need a basic income for basic health. By ensuring that everyone has access to a basic income, we can improve health and decrease costs in the health care system by reducing or eliminating poverty. For example, in Manitoba in the 1970s, a small income top-up for people in poverty reduced hospitalizations by 8.5%. If we could find a drug as effective as that, we would put it in the water supply!

About the Author

Danielle Martin is a family physician in Toronto and Vice President, Medical Affairs and Health System Solutions at Women's College Hospital. Her book, *Better Now: Six Big Ideas to Improve Health Care for All Canadians*, was released by Penguin Random House in January 2017. For more information on her current book tour [watch here](#) and follow [@docdanielle](#) on Twitter.



## Basic Income on French 24 TV

March 5, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

France24 hosted a 45-minute debate, moderated by François Picard, on the topic of automation and the labour market. In the context of the Brexit vote and the Donald Trump election, the programme claims, some have “blamed immigrants [for] stealing jobs and undercutting wages.” An alternative explanation is that automation is the major factor, and whether or not automation will “destroy the labour market” was the main subject of the debate.

The discussion covered the Universal Basic Income (UBI) experiment in Finland, and some debaters saw the merits of a UBI. When asked by the moderator why this idea of a UBI is “taking off”, some saw the idea as liberal and good, but requiring proper implementation to be successful.

The debate is available in two parts, the first here and the second, with a focus on UBI from 7:22, here.

Read more here:

François Picard et al., “Rage against the machines: Is automation destroying the labour market? (part 2)“, *France24*, December 27th, 2016.

# Sarah Gardner on Robots, Finland, Canada, and Basic Income (Three Articles)

March 6, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Sarah Gardner, a reporter for *Marketplace*, published three articles in December 2016 on the topic of universal basic income (UBI): *How to support yourself after the robot revolution*, *Finland to test a basic income for the unemployed*, and *On the Canadian prairie, a basic income experiment*.

In *How to support yourself after the robot revolution*, Gardner describes the prediction of Lawrence Summers, Former Undersecretary of International Affairs, that by the middle of the 21st century, one third of men between the ages of 25 and 54 will be out of work. The reason is automation.

Sam Altman, Gardner says, also sees automation, including software automation, as a factor for future unemployment. Altman and others are raising millions of dollars for a basic income experiment in Oakland, California.

In *Finland to test a basic income for the unemployed*, Gardner talks about the “buzz” around UBI in Silicon Valley, the Netherlands, and Finland. Finland, specifically, is facing a hard time with high youth unemployment. — general unemployment is at 8%, while young adults have a 20% unemployment rate. Olli Kangas, the director of government and community relations for KELA (the government agency responsible for public benefits), said, “In the present system they are a little bit afraid of accepting job offers, say, for two months or three months, because they think that, okay, how much would I benefit, in terms of money?”

In *On the Canadian prairie, a basic income experiment*, Gardner notes, as in the other articles, that automation and temp work are modern issues. Previously, however, there were the Mincome experiments in Manitoba, which trialed a payment similar to UBI.

While these trials were conducted in several parts of Manitoba, “the most interesting pilot was in Dauphin, a small farming town more than three hours northwest of Winnipeg,” Gardner says. Dauphin was a tight-knit Ukrainian community, and the Canadian government gave money, through the program, to ensure families “would never fall below a basic amount.”

Read the full articles here:

Sarah Gardner, “How to support yourself after the robot revolution“, *Marketplace*, December 7, 2016.

Sarah Gardner, “Finland to test a basic income for the unemployed“, *Marketplace*, December 13, 2016.

Sarah Gardner, “On the Canadian prairie, a basic income experiment“, *Marketplace*, December 20, 2016.

## ITALY: “Automation, future of work, and guaranteed income” event (March 4 – May 7)

March 25, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

From March 4 to May 7, 2017, a novel program will begin under the auspices of ‘Beyond Growth’ (“Oltre La Crescita”), which is a school of training open to all circa 2011, entitled ‘*Need to work or work without? Automation, future of work, the basic income.*’ Beyond Growth is an event intended to be a debate and a reflection.

There will be examination of a variety of issues, including the “relationship between automation and work, the effects of neoliberal policies and wage labor, and rethinking the current paradigm,” among other topics. Program [here](#).

These topics will be debated and reflected upon in their cultural, economic, ethical, social, and technological dimensions. The ‘Beyond Growth’ conference will include four events for broad-based debate, followed by a concluding event offering results and a final discussion.

Further details can be found [here](#) and [here](#) (in Italian).

# ONTARIO, CANADA: Campaign Research opinion survey on pilot project

July 1, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

As reported before, the majority of the Ontario's citizens support a basic income, but they want a pilot project. However, most think \$17,000 (CAD) is insufficient to meet the basic needs of most citizens.

There was a poll by Campaign Research done on 1,969 people with 53% of people supporting the plan for a basic income. Young people, aged 18 to 24, were the most supportive age group at 59%.

Lars Osberg, professor of economics at Dalhousie University, said the poll was possibly inaccurate with, for example, the Atlantic Canada (63% support for the plan) sample at only 198 people. Liberals (62%) and NDP (63%) were the most supportive.

The pilot project has 4,000 people from three areas: Hamilton, Lindsay, and Thunder Bay. It emphasizes citizens with low incomes. Couples will get \$24,027; singles will receive \$16,989.

The first experiment will run one year without conditions. The reason for the experiment is to see if the basic income provisions will improve life quality and job prospects.

Osberg noted that the youth are the unemployed or the underemployed, generally, and that the basic income does not disincentivize work. Osberg thinks the basic income would not disincentive work, as some fear.

More information at:

Jack Hauen, "Majority support Ontario's basic income plan, but many find \$17,000 not enough: poll", Financial Times, May 17th 2017

Eli Yufest, "Majority approves of Ontario's basic income plan, many find \$17,000 per year too little an amount", Campaign Research, May 16th 2017

## AT Kearney: “Best Things in Life Are Free?”

July 15, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Courtney McCaffrey and others from AT Kearney published an article on the debate around Universal Basic Income (UBI) in markets throughout the world. Politicians, in both Europe and North America, are winning on campaign trails with talk about returning control to the common people from the economic system in the globe.

But one of the big worker displacers is automation and new technologies. Oxford University reported 47% of US jobs will be taken over by automation in the next two decades. A UBI is being offered as an economic buffer for such workplace and technology transitions.

Such a UBI would be universal and unconditional in the application. Past UBI experiments such as Mincome in Canada, projects in Seattle and Denver (USA), and Namibia produced real, positive results empowering those politicians. McCaffrey and her colleagues also mention recent major endorsements for UBI, for instance from such luminaries as Elon Musk, Tim O'Reilly, and Marc Andreessen.

Two books are recommended: 1) *Utopia for Realists* by Rutger Bregman, and 2) *Basic Income: A Radical Proposal for a Free Society and a Sane Economy* by Philippe Van Parijs and Yannick Vanderborght. Other notable cases reported on were Finland, India, and Ontario.

The article discusses pros and cons of UBI, in a general sense. It was noted that citizens with a UBI will spend more time on family and school. The sources of funding for the UBI could be revenues from natural resources and/or more taxes. Some views of critics are following their own political lines, but the major concern revolves around people's availability to work when they get a UBI covering their basic needs.

Finally, the article summarizes views against UBI on the political Right and Left. On the Right, the main argument is cost. On the political Left, detractors view UBI as “regressive” because it could dismantle current welfare systems, and that it may not capture different living costs in different areas.

More information at:

McCaffrey, C.R., Toland, T. & Peterson, E.R., “The Best Things in Life Are Free?”, AT Kearney, March 2017

## **Luke Kingma (for Futurism): “Universal Basic Income – the answer to automation?”**

**August 22, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Futurism reported on automation, robots, and universal basic income through the provision of a chart-article. Some of the information summarized by the chart includes that fact that as there are 4.73 robots working per 100 human workers in South Korea. The global average is 0.66 per 100 workers. That ratio is reported to be rising rapidly throughout the world. Also, with more robots, they become cheaper to implement. Workers in the developing world are most at risk of losing jobs due to automation.

The problem is not limited manufacturing, however. It includes diverse areas such as farm labor, construction labor, truck drivers, mailer carriers, and so on. The chart mentions that \$2,600 per month as a UBI solution is being considered in Switzerland, which BIEN has reported on, and only \$1,000 per year in Kenya. (same paragraph as above) The chart also describes the cases of Alaska, Namibia, and Harper Lee.

It ends with quotes from supporters of a UBI, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Bertrand Russell, Harris Levine, Jeremy Howard, F.A. Hayek, and Thomas Paine.

More information at:

Futurism, “Universal Basic Income: The Answer to Automation?“, Futurism, June 2017

## China: News from Macau's "Wealth Partaking Scheme"

October 1, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

In the Legislative Assembly (AL) elections for The New Hope (Nova Esperança), a political party from Macau, candidacy is headed by lawmaker José Pereira Coutinho. He is urging for the redistribution of the second share of the Wealth Parking Scheme, as reported on by BIEN in late July, by the end of 2017.

Under this second share, local permanent residents will receive an increment in their annual unconditional (partial) basic income of US \$1,128, while non-permanent residents will get more US \$672. This constitutes a development considering what the program has been until now.

Coutinho urged political candidates at a press conference to act and not simply talk for solving people's issues. The New Hope is looking for the construction of 80,000 affordable housing units. He also noted houses are not being built properly.

Moreover, Coutinho also proposed an increase in the health care voucher scheme from 600 (Macanese) Pataca (US \$75) to 1,000 Pataca (US \$124), with a 3,000 Pataca (US \$372.76) handout for senior citizens.

More information at:

Renato Marques, "Al Election: New Hope Urges Gov't to Double Wealth Partaking Scheme This Year", Futurism, 5th September 2017

## **INDIA: Goa Foundation, mines, minerals & People, Common Cause and the Goenchi Mati Movement jointly launch The Future We Need Campaign**

**October 19, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

The The Future We Need campaign was launched by the Goa Foundation (GF), mines, minerals & People (mm&P), Common Cause and the Goenchi Mati Movement (GMM). Dr. K.R. Rao Committee has been entrusted by the Ministry of Mines in order to draft the National Mineral Policy, due October 31st, 2017.

A letter has been made by the campaign as a draft statement on values, which can be found [here](#).

BIEN has reported on Goa several times (Madhavan, 2017; Shanahan, 2017; McFarland, 2017; McFarland, 2016). The article invokes the Intergenerational Equity principles, or IE, which is the protection of the inheritance resources for future generations.

“In Goa, over an eight-year period (2004-2012), 95% of the value of the minerals was lost. The per-head loss from recent “legal” lease renewals was Rs.10 lakhs,” the Director of the Goa Foundation, Claude Alvares, said, “Data from across the country for iron ore, coal, oil and gas shows a similar trend. Everyone is losing equally, while a few are becoming super-rich. This is looting economics, not trickle-down economics.”

The Future We Need proposes some principles for a National Mineral Policy which regards natural resources as the Commons, in such a way that people in general are entrusted as the natural custodians of these resources. In this new agreement, the Commons shall be preserved, and if sold the income must be equally shared by all.

More information at:

Alvares, C, “Goa Foundation, mines, minerals & People, Common Cause and the Goenchi Mati Movement jointly launch The Future We Need Campaign”, Futurism, October 3rd 2017

Madhavan, M, “India: Goa Foundation provides recommendations to Expert Committee to push a Citizen’s Dividend out of mining fund”, BIEN, September 29th 2017

McFarland, K, “GOA, INDIA: Citizen’s Dividend promoters find support in Archbishop’s address”, BIEN, January 10th 2017

McFarland, K, “GOA, INDIA: Mining reform group releases Manifesto, calls for citizen’s dividend”, BIEN, November 26th 2016

Shanahan, G, “GOA, INDIA: Goenchi Mati Movement gains political support”, BIEN, February 8th 2017



## Portugal: Web Summit – Guy Standing’s Basic Income Panel

November 30, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

At the Web Summit in Lisbon, Portugal, from November 5th to 8th, Guy Standing took part in this big event. Over 60,000 participants from 170 countries attended the event; the event hosted about 1,200 speakers.

Some speakers included influential individuals like Elon Musk, Al Gore, Bono, Margrethe Vestager, Travis Kalanick, Jack Dorsey, Reed Hastings, Mike Krieger, Eva Longoria, Professor Stephen Hawking, and others. In addition, the 800th anniversary of the Charter of the Forest, which is a companion document to the Magna Carta, was also celebrated and represented at the event.

It was held in the Speaker’s Chamber of the House of Commons. Guy Standing’s panel asked, and was themed, on two questions, “Is it the answer to inequality for which we have all been waiting? Or a convenient way for governments to evade the provision of real social services?”

More information at:

Web Summit, “University of London’s Guy Standing, Kela’s Marjukka Turunen, GiveDirectly’s Michael Faye, Government of Portugal’s Augusto Santos Silva & Yahoo Finance’s Rob Pegoraro”, November 2017

# USA: Forbes 30 Under 30 Names Stockton Mayor Pioneering UBI in California

March 3, 2018

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Forbes published its “30 Under 30 in Law & Policy” and notes that these winners come from across the political spectrum. They have been associated with President Trump, the Democratic Party, and emerge from law schools and professional organizations.

Hundreds of online nominations came in for the listing. The nominations were judged by the CEO of Heritage Action for America Mike Needham, Harvard Law’s Laurence Tribe, FiscalNote’s Co-Founder Timothy Hwang, and the Senior Vice President of Legal Affairs at 3M.

Winners of this year’s 30 under 30 were people such as the co-founder of the National Trans Bar Association Alexander Chen, the co-founder of Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri, a top policy advisor for Medicare and Medicaid Services Jeet Guram, and numerous others.

One individual, Michael Tubbs, who is 27-years-old, is the mayor of Stockton, California was dubbed as “ambitious” in “an attempt to experiment with social policy.” In order to reduce the violent crime rate, Tubbs wants to replicate, at the time of the listing, the program from the Bay Area. The initiative “pays monthly stipends to young men determined to be likely to engage in gun violence to stay out of trouble, as well as provide mentoring, internships and travel opportunities.” Tubbs and the Stockton municipality had already been highlighted for the efforts concerning demonstrating basic income, which were intended to start effectively at the beginning of 2018.

Basic Income News has been reporting on the Bay Area initiatives in several news articles. You can find more information elsewhere (note 1).

More information at:

Avik Roy, “Meet The 30 Under 30 Activists, Washington Insiders And Legal Entrepreneurs Shaping U.S. Law And Policy Now”, Forbes, November 14th 2017

Sara Bizarro, “UNITED STATES: Stockton, California plans a Basic Income Demonstration”, Basic Income News, November 21<sup>st</sup>2017

Note 1 – reference#1, reference#2, reference#3, reference#4, reference#5, and reference#6.

## International: Being paid for data

March 16, 2018

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

Who does data belong to? Would it be possible for all of us to receive monetary compensation for what we put on the internet? These questions lead to additional questions regarding the latest tendencies in data mining and management related to Universal Basic Income (UBI).

Eduardo Porter in the *New York Times* talked about data in the Robotic Age and posed such a question, “Shouldn’t we be paid for it?” (Our data being placed on the web.)

Porter notes that 1.4 billion people use Facebook on a daily basis. He opines in amazement that we are not paid for any of the data we share. Interestingly, if people were paid for their data, Porter argues that the quality of the data would increase because it would no longer be free. If the switch to data-for-pay were to take place, he claims there would be difficulties putting systems in place in order to put a value on information. This could challenge the dominance of Google, Amazon, Apple, and other information giants.

Jaron Lanier founded a proposal in 2013 with his book *Who Owns the Future?* to have companies pay transparently for any information users place online. Porter mentions this could undermine the “stranglehold” on the future of technology by the “data titans.” Lanier’s bold proposal remains relevant now into 2018. According to *Politico*, the European Commission generated a report in February 2018 that proposed a tax on the revenue earned by digital companies, which would be based on their location.

Basic Income News has previously reported on proposals and news about the funding of basic income through data mining. Ex-CIA officer, Bryan Wright, made the proposal for UBI funded by data as well.

More information at:

Eduardo Porter, “Your Data Is Crucial to a Robotic Age. Shouldn’t You Be Paid for It?”, The New York Times, March 6th 2018

Janet Maslin, “Fighting Words Against Big Data”, The New York Times, May 5th 2013

Kate McFarland, “UNITED STATES: Ex-CIA officer Bryan Wright proposes data mining royalties”, Basic Income News, May 27<sup>th</sup> 2016

Craig Rhodes, “Funding basic income through data mining”, Basic Income News, January 29<sup>th</sup> 2017

# USA: Many in Silicon Valley Support Universal Basic Income. Now the California Democratic Party Does, Too

March 20, 2018

Scott Douglas Jacobsen

The Democratic Party in California is supporting Universal Basic Income (UBI). It is now public that people like Elon Musk have supported the initiative, mainly justified through job losses due to automation.

However, this of course leads to questions about the source of the influence that is supporting a basic income in the California Democratic Party, which has adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February its official 2018 Platform.

In the Californian Democratic Party scene, UBI is mainstream, apparently, since it now features in the Platform, but not in the US as a whole. Since politicians with a Democratic label have to read and support the party policies, one may conclude that the UBI concept has gained traction in the Californian state, at least.

A growing cohort of young political activist leaders have been adopting UBI in their political campaigns. One such examples is 27-year-old Michael Tubbs, the present mayor of Stockton, California. He has promoted and launched a pilot project in Stockton municipality (funded by the Economic Security Project).

Region 5 (a congressional district) Director for the California Democratic Party, Rocky Fernandez, said that he has been talking about UBI for several years. Bob Wieckowski has also played an important leadership role in having basic income become concrete and part of the platform. The UBI platform proposal went through and “was passed,” in the convention by “thousands of party delegates”.

UBI has now a main statement in the Economic Justice section of the California Democratic Party platform. However, the same platform reinforces traditional Democratic values, which focus on jobs to further economic mobility for all Americans. The Party platform justifies the UBI in order to eliminate poverty, while simultaneously supporting efforts to establish government guaranteed jobs, that will “help people climb the economic ladder.” This could be interpreted as being willing to secure basic economic conditions for all people, while not trusting that these people will work if they get to be economically secure.

More information at:

Shirin Chaffray, “Many in Silicon Valley support Universal Basic Income. Now the California Democratic Party does, too.“, Recode, March 8th 2018

Kate McFarland, “Elon Musk reaffirms UBI prediction at World Government Summit“, Basic Income News, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2017

Roger Phillips, “Stockton to pilot ‘basic income’ experiment“, Recordnet.com, October 18<sup>th</sup> 2017

## **Anna Dent: “From utopia to implementation” – (full dissertation)**

**March 22, 2018**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Anna Dent, M.Sc., published a Master’s dissertation entitled “From Utopia to Implementation: How Basic Income has progressed from radical idea to legitimate policy solution.”

In it, Dent explores how “utopian and marginal” ideas such as basic income became part of the agendas for policy. The dissertation looks at UBI pilot projects including Finland, the Netherlands, Ontario, and Scotland.

Dent looked at policy change in progress through the dissertation’s “inductive, exploratory approach.” That is, she used case studies, documented analysis, and interviews. The four cases in the research have common aspects.

Many variables close together in time reinforce one another. Basic income was seen as a solution to policy failures, poverty, and unemployment. Each of the four cases – Finland, the Netherlands, Ontario, and Scotland – represent attempts to solve local contexts.

Dent’s research finds the pathway from obscurity to maturity of an idea, as it gains a mainstream positioning.

More information at:

Anna Dent, “From Utopia to Implementation: How Basic Income has progressed from radical idea to legitimate policy solution”, University of Bristol, September 2017

Anna Dent is a consultant working in employment and skills policy and implementation for the public and non-profit sectors. She has particular interests in low-income workers, the changing nature of work, and welfare benefits. She holds an MSc in Public Policy from the University of Bristol, and is a fellow of the RSA (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce). She can be contacted via twitter at @anna\_b\_dent

## **Stefen Hertog: “Making wealth sharing more efficient in high-rent countries: the citizens’ income”**

**March 23, 2018**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Steffen Hertog, Associate Professor in Comparative Politics in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics and Political Science, has published a paper in *Energy Transitions* (Hertog, 2017) which relates the efficiency in wealth sharing and basic income.

The paper makes the case that hydrocarbon producers with higher rents per capita make a unique category of the rent-dependent nations. Those that face specific development challenges not present in mid-rent nations.

With a look into the patterns of rent distributions in high-rent countries, excessive public employment, and energy subsidies, Hertog argues that these lead to lower labor productivity and the exclusion of the national population from the privatized labor market.

Hertog proposes unconditional cash payments in high-rent countries as a means to minimize the distortion patterns in the hiring of nationals for the private labor market and in labor productivity resulting from rent distribution.

More information at:

Stefan Hertog, “Making wealth sharing more efficient in high-rent countries: the citizens’ income”, *Energy Transitions*, December 2017

## **LINK: Tom Minogue Hastings website**

**March 25, 2018**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen**

Tom Minogue Hastings has been promoting Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the United States. He has been doing this with a popular website devoted to UBI, also appearing on the USBIG (U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network) website while also writing for the Diane Pagen blog.

Hasting's version for 2018 includes quotations by individuals, including Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, Dr. Paul Krugman, Dr. David Harvey, Dr. Richard Wolff, and links to Youtube lectures by Dr. Guy Standing, Dr. Yanis Varoufakis, Dr. Robert Reich, Dr. Michael Hudson, Dr. David Graeber, Dr. Paul Mason, Dr. Alex Vitale, Dr. Thomas Frank, Elon Musk and Dr. Barbara Ehrenreich.

The website also includes links to a number of lectures and videos available for free online from the likes of David Graeber, Dr. Paul Mason, and Elon Musk. The website is focused on the 99% of people, the Precariat, or those living more precarious lives than other Americans.

This website is an information resource in order to inform the reader on the important sub-topics within the UBI world.

More information at:

Tom Minogue Hastings, "Universal Basic Income For Everyone", How to be the Revolution, 2018 (link)

## **PLACE 3: A LIFE IN COMEDY**



# Life in LA as a Comedy Writer 1 - Writing

June 1, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen:** When it comes to writing process or brainstorming for comedy, what is it for you?

**Rick Rosner:** Well, most of my experience is writing topically. So the first thing to do is to sit down and see what's happened over night, and what's going on in the world. Since I am unemployed, and since I am deludedly trying to build a media brand via Twitter, I usually get my news from Twitter. I see what everyone is going crazy about. The day before yesterday, it was covfefe, which was Trump's spasm of misspelling in a tweet.

The last close to a year has been mostly Trump. I am sick of it. Everybody else is sick of it, of having to make Trump jokes. Of course, everybody else is sick of why we have to make Trump jokes, which is that he is running the country. So anyway, first to Twitter to see what everybody is going crazy about, and to see hat jokes have already been hit, and to see if there are some other angles to come up with.

Some people when writing jokes will not let themselves read Twitter because it will close out too many joke angles. Once you see somebody else do it, you don't want to do it. Once I see everybody go crazy on Twitter, I will try to look up some of the articles. I will try to get more information about the topics to see if there are any jokes to be had using extra information. I don't know. Maybe, a third of the time you find some extra facts, which give you the opportunity to present the joked about situation that is even more absurd.

That's for topical. There are also evergreen jokes, which, for me, is usually pulling stuff out of my everyday experience or life experience. It can include dumb stuff I've done in my life. Extra points if you can tie it into dumb stuff going on right now.

**Jacobsen:** Some closing statements.

**Rosner:** To sum up: check the goofy news, search for additional information, and consider your own life from personal angles. That's a good three starting steps.

[End of recorded material]

## **A Life in Comedy 2 - Now (Part 1)**

June 8, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is going on in your life now?**

**Rick Rosner:** If you're a TV or a movie writer, even if you're successful, you'll have some periods of unemployment. At any given time, only about half of the members of the Writers' Guild are employed. I had a really long run. Where I consistently employed for 14 years, then I lost my late night writing job about 3 years ago.

And quickly learned, I was screwed for getting more employment in that area. In that, there are only about 100 late night writers employed at any given time. There is not a lot of turnover. I don't have or didn't have a reputation for being a unique voice, even though I pretty much am, that is a gem who will be an asset to any late night staff.

I talked to an agent who said he would only represent me if I came up with a half-hour comedy spec. script, which struck me as not super difficult, but pretty hard to do an excellent at. So since my experience is not in that area, I could write a spec. script and I could try my hardest. And it would end up being one of a 100 scripts in a pile of submissions.

Out of those 100 people who have submitted. Only 1 or 2 get hired. It seemed like not the best way to proceed to try to make myself one of the top 1 or 2 out of a 100 experienced writers with representation. That I could suddenly jump in and write best one of the best spec. scripts with zero experience. It seemed unlikely.

[End of recorded material]

## **A Life in Comedy 3 - Now (Part 2)**

**June 15, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner**

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen: What is going on in your life now?**

**Rick Rosner:** So my plan was to sell a book. A memoir about the 10 years I spent in high school. I got an agent based on a couple of appearances on a couple of podcasts, like Bill Simmons' podcast. I got a co-author because I like partnering up on stuff. We wrote a 60-page book proposal. It went out. I got a deal for a half of a second.

An editor from Riverhead said they wanted a deal, then called back 4 days later, but she could not persuade her bosses to make a deal. My plan has been, over the past 3 years, if do nothing else, at least increase my social media presence to the point where I am - not quite famous because it is not famous - having at least enough of a social media following to make some publisher think giving me a deal is a good move.

So I've been building up my following on Twitter. With your help, we have been expanding my social media presence into all sorts of areas: blogging, Wordpress. A bunch of different sites.

[End of recorded material]

## A Life in Comedy 4 - Now (Part 3)

June 22, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Rick Rosner:** Also, a friend and I have a YouTube series where we discuss politics while he paints my portrait. All of this is to get a bunch of social media views to help make my pitch more persuasive to a publisher. I switched away from the book about the 10 years in high school and want to do a book about how to be a fucked up genius because genius is a pretty hot topic right now.

I think because the world is so vast and confusing. I think people turn to the idea of genius to figure things out. Also, people want to feel smart in a world that can make you feel dumb. So my day is I get up and check what is going on on the news. And then I crank out a couple of tweets about it. Often, usually, lately, for the past 6 months, it has been about Trump.

Most of the joke tweets have been about Trump. Even as Trump is literally killing me, I go in tomorrow to see if I have internal bleeding someplace. My hemoglobin numbers are down 40% from what a healthy guy should have, which means I am leaking someplace and the leaking started the whole - the IBS, or irritable bowel syndrome - stress pooping started when Trump was elected.

[End of recorded material]

## **A Life in Comedy 5 - Now (Part 4)**

July 1, 2017

Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Rick Rosner:** Now, I am 40% anemic or fully anemic. I only have 60% of the red blood cells I should have. My being a snowflake about Trump is literally killing me, not that I fall down. But I have to catch my breath. I get up. I tweet often about Trump. I check my numbers of followers. I respond to people who have written me messages. Though I am a terrible responder to stuff.

I take a lot of time and miss a lot of stuff. I am not the best replier to DMs or emails. Some days, several days a week, you and I get together and you ask me questions, and I answer questions that way I do now. You turn that in to more material to put online, which is awesome. I am best at writing 20 words at a time. I am best at writing jokes. The longer-form stuff takes me longer.

So this way of doing things is fantastically helpful. I can talk my way through stuff. Given that I am unemployed, I can help around the house, though I do not help as much as I should. In the afternoon, I tweet some more. I think that I really should work some more on the proposal for How to be a Fucked Up Genius. Lately, I have been taking a nap and eating a lot of cheese.

Cheese is one of the things that doesn't wreck my stomach. Then my wife comes home. We have dinner. I go out to 5 gyms. I have got super OCD about going to the gym.

[End of recorded material]

## **A Life in Comedy 6 - Now (Part 5)**

**July 8, 2017**

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner**

[Beginning of recorded material]

**Rick Rosner:** Again, since Trump has been elected. The amount of working out I have been doing has been increasing crazily from maybe 60 sets per day to 100 little sets a day. I'll go to one gym and do 24 sets. I'll go to another and do 70 sets until I've worked through 5 gyms, even though I have no aerobic or I am aerobically messed up. I can still sit on weight machines and do a bunch of sets there.

I come home and do more tweeting based on a Hollywood show called Hashtag Wars. They give you a topic and then you tweet jokes to fit the topic. The whole idea is a dumb thing to do. Everything I do is doing comedy pushups. That is, writing jokes for the writing of jokes sake. Nobody is paying me to do it. This will drive eyes to my social media stuff.

Right now, I have been averaging 60,000 to 70,000 views of my tweets per day, which I think is pretty good. But I don't know if that will convince a publisher that I have a built-in public. That is my day. It is somewhat ridiculous. I hope to someday get paid for words again.

[End of recorded material]

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