



## **Protect and Invest - to eradicate inequalities in our societies**

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The world has been turned upside down over the last nine months, exposing major weaknesses in our economy and deep-seated inequalities in our society, which means that the most vulnerable people have been hardest hit. It's not just Covid that has impacted the world, floods and devastating fires in Australia, California and Argentina have also caused tremendous destruction and the need to rebuild.

What we do next could change everything. As the world recovers, we have a chance to reset the clock and build back better than before.

We need to protect and invest in our care and health, our communities, in jobs, transport and housing, in a way that tackles inequality and enhances the lives of ordinary people, workers and communities and while doing this we need to decarbonise the economy.

## Invest in care

- UK parents pay the highest childcare costs in Europe and the second highest in the world
- 1.4 million older people in the UK have unmet care needs
- Investment in care in the UK would produce 2.7 times as many jobs as an equivalent investment in construction
- Women and adolescent girls take on disproportionate care burdens with negative impacts on their economic empowerment



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This is an important moment for transformative change that focuses on care. The Women's Budget Group (an independent, not-for-profit organisation which monitors the impact of government policies on men and women) has written a briefing which sets out why much-needed investment in care, whether child care, or adult care, would promote employment, reduce the gender employment gap and would be a first step in building a resilient, sustainable and more equal economy.

- Currently, UK parents pay the highest childcare costs in Europe and the second highest in the world, and 1.4 million older people have unmet care needs.
- Investment in care is an excellent way to stimulate employment, reduce the gender employment gap and counter the possible economic recession.
- Any investment in care in the UK would produce almost 3 times as many jobs as an equivalent investment in construction.

## Communities, cities, housing and transport

- Rethink cities. What is the purpose of a city?
- Some countries need more cities
- 15-minute cities
- More and better quality housing
- Mass transit v's individual transport

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Vyasarpadi, India



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Throughout the pandemic we have been told to keep our distance, this applies to housing as well as other aspects of our lives.

We need to rethink cities. What is the purpose of a city? To live, work or socialise? In cities we need more space, ideally green spaces.

In developed economies, cities are no longer places we need to go to for work, people can work from home. So, these cities need to include spaces for networking, to 'hang out', we need places for running, swimming, music and art.

In cities like Beijing they need fresh non-polluted air. Cities like São Paulo in Brazil and others in India are very unequal and need revisioning, investment and redevelopment.

In countries like Africa and India we need more cities, people have to travel several hours to get work in a city. More cities, properly developed with no 'ghettoization' could improve the quality of life for many people.

Today we want everything in 15 minutes or less. Earlier this year in France there was talk about Paris being a "15-minute city". One of the politicians wanted to encourage more self-sufficient communities within each district of the French capital, with grocery shops, parks, cafes, sports facilities, health centres, schools and workplaces just a walk or bike ride away.

Melbourne in Australia and Copenhagen in Denmark have done something similar with the idea of "hyper proximity" to fulfil the needs of city dwellers.

I wonder, does the future look like a garden city?

During the pandemic the key message has been stay home, work from home and wash your hands. You cannot work from home if you're a street vendor or factory worker. You cannot easily quarantine or "social distance" when you live in a crowded house without adequate plumbing.

In times of crisis, a house has to function as a shelter, a school, a virtual workplace, and a space where the sick and vulnerable can feel safe.

We need more better-quality housing without overcrowding. Definitions of housing quality vary greatly from one country to another: a study in Latin America showed one country had 23% poor quality housing, this rose to 68% when a stricter definition from a neighbouring country was used.

Thinking about how we get around in future, in the developed world there was a move towards mass transit systems, but with the emphasis on social distance there may be more focus again on individual travel, walking and cycling and perhaps speeding up of the introduction of

driverless cars.

In developing countries people rely on informal public transit such as jeepneys, minivans, and shared vehicles, these small businesses had to stop during the pandemic, impacting the family income.

## Universal basic income, jobs and inequalities

- Should rich countries help poorer countries?
- The pandemic is not only a health crisis, it is also proving to be an economic disaster for huge numbers of people worldwide. (United National Development Programme)
- Universal basic income (UBI)
  - Without the means to sustain themselves, poor people are far more likely to succumb to hunger, diseases or homelessness
  - Could help women escape abuse
  - Would help unpaid carers
  - Would help lift everyone out of poverty

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Should the rich help the poor, or rich countries help poor countries? Should there be a wealth tax for the super-rich? These are not questions we can answer here today, but things you might like to think about in the context of universal basic income.

The pandemic is not only a health crisis, it is also proving to be an economic disaster for huge numbers of people worldwide.

A senior United Nations official with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is calling for countries to provide citizens with a universal basic income, to help the millions who have lost their jobs, because of measures to curb the virus.

The UN is saying that, if there isn't a minimum income to fall back on when this kind of massive shock hits, people have no options. Without the means to sustain themselves, they are far more likely to succumb to hunger, ill health and homelessness. This is why, for UNDP, it is essential to bring back, a conversation about universal basic income, and to make it a central part of the fiscal stimulus packages that countries are planning for. Currently the UK Government does not support UBI.

Developing a UBI program requires a high initial investment and may also require the country to scrap existing welfare programs. There is much to learn from countries who have or will be implementing UBI pilots such as Finland, India, Canada.

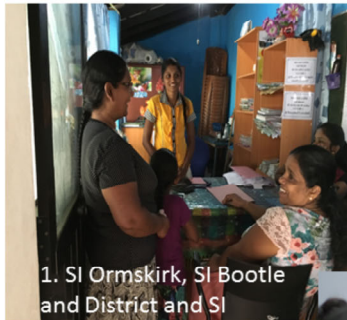
There are arguments that it could help end abuse, some women are trapped because they don't have the financial means to escape.

UBI could help the care sector. Millions of people are now out of a job. A huge proportion of people work in the informal sector, without a contract, insurance or any kind of job security. We know that it is mostly women who work in the informal sector, yet they are still expected to support and care for their families.

UBI would bring everyone's income above the poverty line.



## Invest in women and protect the future



1. SI Ormskirk, SI Bootle and District and SI

1. Rebuilding after the tsunami
2. Luminary Bakery
3. Learning about microloans
4. Learning tailoring skills
5. Girls in aviation

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2. SI East London



3. SI Barry & District



5. SI Esperanza



4. SI Chennai

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Women's economic empowerment, that is, their capacity to bring about economic change for themselves, is increasingly viewed as the most important contributing factor to achieving equality between women and men.

Economically strengthening women, is not only a means by which to spur economic growth, but also a matter of advancing women's human rights.

When governments, businesses and communities invest in and include women in decision making, they are more likely to eliminate inequalities, and developing countries are less likely to be plagued by poverty.

## Call to action

"The UN insists on the importance of economic, social, and environmental sustainability and the need to bring people and planet together and invest in both".

Get engaged in projects, petitions and policy discussions about care, health, housing and jobs to make a change for the future.

Protect a better future, invest your time and energy now.

Change the Status quo.



Thank you

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I think the UN put the current situation very succinctly, "The UN insists on the importance of economic, social, and environmental sustainability and the need to bring people and planet together and invest in both".

This is not just some out-of-reach dream, that is too costly to make a reality. The cost of living with fossil fuels and with diseases like COVID-19, is far more expensive, not just in the long-term, but in the short-term.

What is important is that we respect the planet and one another.

I encourage you to get engaged in projects, petitions and policy discussions about care, health, housing and jobs to make a change for the future. Protect a better future, invest your time and energy now.

Thank you.

## Useful links

- <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-and-women-s-economic-empowerment>
- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women>
- <https://www.icrw.org/issues/economic-empowerment/>
- [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un\\_framework\\_report\\_on\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_framework_report_on_covid-19.pdf)
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- <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/623426/covid-19-transport-asia-pacific.pdf>
- [https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/10\\_Why-It-Matters-2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/10_Why-It-Matters-2020.pdf)
- <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2018/universal-basic-income-pros-cons/>
- <https://borgenproject.org/universal-basic-income-in-india-2/#:~:text=Universal%20Basic%20Income%20in%20India%20Universal%20Basic%20Income,cash%2C%20regardless%20of%20their%20social%20or%20economic%20status.>

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