The Inheritance We Could Build

A generation could leave dependable food infrastructure alongside financial wealth. Germany provides an illustrative case for investment, gifts, service payments and obligations that survive a change of owner.

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Every generation leaves the next one something. A house, perhaps. Savings, debts, roads, factories and institutions. Sometimes machinery that is still working long after the people who paid for it are gone.

I would like part of that inheritance to be a food supply that still works for people who have never heard of its founders.

In *One Potato at a Time* (https://hedegreenresearch.com/articles/one-potato-at-a-time/), I imagined agriculture no longer requiring farmers' labour, then asked who would control the harvest. The machines could keep producing after one player had won the ownership game. That would not tell everyone else how to eat. Human Baseline begins with a different objective: dependable access to essentials, with room above that floor for markets, new farms and things we have not yet invented.

The next question is who could help build that foundation, and what they would actually be leaving behind. A generation can pass on money to buy necessities. Could it also pass on systems that make some of those necessities reliably available without a payment at collection?

Nothing material becomes costless because we call it an inheritance. The interesting possibility is to leave both personal financial freedom and productive capacity held to a public purpose.

We already invest in tomorrow

Pension institutions invest for decades. Foundations fund research and public-benefit projects. Companies build machines, warehouses and distribution networks. Public institutions purchase services. Cooperatives bring people and production together.

These are different kinds of participation. An investor may need repayment and a return. A foundation may give money without seeking either. A company may sell equipment or operate a service. A public purchaser would need authority and a continuing budget. Calling all of them contributors does not make their obligations interchangeable.

But it gives us a way to ask a practical question. Could those different abilities be brought together around a food supply intended to serve everybody?

A pension institution might finance an eligible storage asset under terms that protect its beneficiaries. A foundation might fund research or help pay for a first installation. Growers and companies might supply food, equipment and paid operation. People could contribute land, knowledge, money or work because they

wanted the system to exist.

Everyone could help build the baseline. Nobody should have to contribute to receive it.

Someone whose grandparents never invested would have the same claim to basic access. The inheritance would change the conditions in which people live, rather than divide them into descendants of donors and everybody else.

Germany makes the question concrete

Germany is an illustrative first institutional case within a proposed European project. It already has long-term investment institutions, agricultural finance and a productive sector that would not need to be invented for this essay.

The main statutory pension must be kept separate. Deutsche Rentenversicherung describes its pay-as-you-go financing (https://www.deutsche-rentenversicherung.de/SharedDocs/Glossareintraege/DE/U/umlageverfahren.html): current contributions and federal funds support current pensions. That is not a national savings account available to redirect into farms.

Other institutions manage investment assets. Bayerische Versorgungskammer (https://www.versorgungskammer.de/Kapitalanlage) reports approximately €122 billion for twelve pension institutions, at market value in January 2026. VBL (https://www.vbl.de/de/verm%C3%B6gensanlage) reports about €70.5 billion at market value on 31 December 2025. Their investment obligations concern the people whose pensions they support. Those totals are not spare money, and they say nothing about whether a particular Human Baseline investment would qualify.

Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank (https://publikationen.rentenbank.de/en/annual-report/annual-report-2025/our-financial-year-2025/promotional-activity/) is an agricultural development bank, not a pension fund. It reports approximately €6.6 billion in new special promotional loans in 2025, including agriculture and agribusiness. Lending is another existing capability, with its own conditions.

Foundations illustrate a different role. The A.P. Moller Foundation (https://www.apmollerfonde.dk/the-a-p-moller-foundation/) supports common-good projects within its purposes and geographical scope. The Novo Nordisk Foundation's plant science, agriculture and food biotechnology programme (https://novonordiskfonden.dk/en/grant/project-grants-for-research-within-plant-science-agriculture-and-food-biotechnology) supports specified research at Nordic non-profit research institutions. Neither description amounts to a general offer to finance German food operations. Nor should either foundation be confused with an associated commercial company.

These are examples of existing capabilities, not announced participants in Human Baseline. Their records establish existing activities and constraints. They make the institutional question concrete without answering it on their behalf.

A machine still has a bill

Suppose a foundation donates a warehouse and an investor finances its equipment. There is still electricity to buy, food to move, machinery to maintain and eventually replace. The gift may reduce what must be financed initially. It does not keep the lights on indefinitely.

A continuing service therefore needs a continuing payer. A public or mixed arrangement might purchase availability under long-term contracts, subject to lawful budgets and scrutiny. Those payments would have to cover the actual service, including any financing costs. A cooperative or endowment arrangement would need an equally credible account of where its recurring income comes from.

If an investor is paid from that budget, the return is part of the cost. Moving a food payment from a household checkout to a shared budget does not, by itself, reduce the resources society uses. Any real gain must come from something we can examine: better production, less waste, useful shared capacity, more dependable access or a distribution of costs people have chosen to support.

This is where the Saved Hours question (https://hedegreenresearch.com/articles/the-saved-hours-doctrine/) returns. Reduced required labour can change what provision costs. Ownership and financing then help determine who receives the benefit. A larger output and a cheaper process do not automatically give a person either more time or a secure meal.

I would want the accounts to show both what the system costs and what people can actually depend on because it exists. A beautiful balance sheet is not a substitute for food arriving.

Do not inherit another landlord

There is an uncomfortable version of this proposal. We persuade long-term investors to finance productive assets, then discover that basic access depends entirely on their continuing willingness to offer it. We have built the machinery and returned to the Matador board.

The access obligation would need a life beyond one owner or operator. Before calling an installation part of the baseline, I would want an answer to what happens when it is sold, an operator fails or a funder withdraws. Who keeps supplying people during the change? Can another operator take over the necessary equipment and records? Which duties continue, and who can enforce them?

Those are requirements to design and test, not legal protections this essay has already established. A sale must not be allowed to count as a successful investment exit while the public service quietly disappears. Equally, an investor should know the obligations before committing money. Nobody benefits from pretending that a permanent service promise and an unrestricted asset are the same product.

The lesson connects with Pizza4People (https://hedegreenresearch.com/articles/how-to-take-wolts-market-without-becoming-wolt/): a useful service should be able to survive a change of supplier. Food adds physical assets, crops, storage and consequences that cannot be moved by copying software. The continuity problem is harder, but it does not become less important.

What the next generation could use

The first crop belongs to the practical beginning described in *One Potato at a Time*. The inheritance I have in mind is what could grow around it: diverse basic foods, increasingly automated production, preservation suited to each food and rotating reserves that are used, checked and replenished.

People would collect what they needed without proving poverty, buying membership or having a personal potato quota recorded against their name. Capacity planning would still need population estimates, demand, losses and reserve margins. An average used to size a warehouse must not quietly become a rule about what one person deserves. Whether a particular service can sustain that access, handle shortages and limit diversion remains work to establish.

Commercial food markets would continue alongside it. Someone could grow an ordinary potato for sale, maintain an heirloom variety, open a strange bakery or invent an expensive cheese. A private producer could also supply the baseline under contract. The distinction is the service's obligation, not the moral character of a tractor.

I would like the security underneath those choices to leave more people able to try them. That is an ambition, not an economic effect demonstrated by this article. Businesses would still need skills, customers and capital. A baseline that trapped people in a bad service or made independent production impossible would betray the freedom it was meant to support.

Something worth leaving behind

For someone deciding what their savings, institution or business should leave behind, the invitation is larger than a donation. Help build something that can continue to serve people after your involvement ends. Investment, gifts and paid work can each have a place, provided their terms support that purpose.

I am not proposing that earned pensions be cut or exchanged for access to food. Financial security and dependable material provision can complement each other. Whether a particular arrangement improves people's security depends on its full costs, its reliability and the freedom it leaves them.

I would begin within Europe, with Germany as one place to investigate the institutional connections. Each working part should leave usable knowledge for the next place: costs, maintenance, failures and the arrangements that kept access intact. The global ambition remains the one in the first article: **no baseline is complete while your neighbour still has none.**

A warehouse with a donor's name is an object. One that is maintained, replenished and still serving people decades later is an inheritance the next generation can use.

We can leave money to buy food. We can also try to leave systems that keep basic food reliably available.

What if we built both?

— Dennis Hedegreen, still checking

RELATION MEMORY

CONTINUES One Potato at a Time · Continues the question of access to food with productive inheritance, financing and obligations that survive a change of owner.

SOURCE LAYER Where Did the Saved Hours Go? · Saved labour, access and the distribution of benefits are separate questions; conceptual author context, not measured food-service results.

RETURNS TO Money Should Not Be the Door to Survival · Extends the argument for dependable access into financing, ongoing payment and obligations that survive changes of owner.

NEARBY How to Take Wolt’s Market Without Becoming Wolt · Supplier portability and continuity as a conceptual comparison; physical food provision adds distinct practical constraints.

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