



# 2014 AGM REPORT

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## **Basic Income Canada Network** **Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti**

The following document is the Report for the 2014 Annual General Meeting of the BICN / RCRG. It contains a summary of major events and development of the organization and its projects. It also contains a 2013 financial summary and appendices for the 2014 AGM.

# 2014 AGM REPORT

## BASIC INCOME CANADA NETWORK / RÉSEAU CANADIEN POUR LE REVENU GARANTI

### REPORT FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Approximately, one year ago the BICN board started a process to interview a wide selection of people and prepare recommendations for setting an organizational direction. This occurred shortly after the 2013 Annual General Meeting. We have received documents from various people indicating differing opinions on possible directions. At the time there seemed to be quite divergent viewpoints regarding where the BICN / RCRG should go, but overtime commonalities began to emerge.

During and after the 2013 AGM one common theme arose that BICN needs to educate the public on basic income and work with leaders to discover ways to develop policy for the idea's implementation.

A second notion was the idea that a basic income needs to be based on something, a larger need. The elimination of poverty in Canada, and its replacement with something else that encourages overall wellbeing, seems to be driving almost everyone involved in the organization.

A third point is that with the demise of the National Council on Welfare there is a great need in Canada for an information gathering point on the welfare of Canadians. There is a need for an organization to bring people together on public interest in areas related to basic income and wellbeing.

With this in mind, an overall vision and the mission to achieve this vision were proposed and a focus for 2013/4 was set. The following outlines the strides made toward developing something new for Canada.

- Sheila Regehr., Chairperson, BICN / RCRG
- Kelly Ernst, Ph.D., Secretary General, BICN / RCRG

## A NEW VISION FOR CANADA

Basic Income Canada

Network / Réseau

canadien pour le

revenu garanti set a

vision that by

eliminating poverty,

wellbeing for all

Canadian's is secured.

## **SOMETHING NEW FOR CANADA**

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*“BICN’s vision is that by eliminating poverty, wellbeing for all Canadians is secured.”*

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The board decided early in the year that if BICN achieved all of the goals of its mission, then this vision will ultimately be reached. Going broader was thought to open up opportunities for the organization, possibly attract resources to it, and ensure the organization is grounded in a strong rationale for a basic income. The vision is not meant to define the strategies it may undertake, or predefine what “wellbeing” may entail. These would be developed further through consultation and development of a mission and strategies.

## **OUR PROPOSED LEGACY**

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*Achieving a basic income for all is core to achieving the vision.*

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There are many ways to achieve this, through employment, government income support, citizen’s dividend and so on. There are also steps in its implementation over time, such as expanding the GIS to people with disabilities, then to students, creating investment accounts for each child born, or simply a negative income tax. There continues to be no broad consensus regarding the specific ways to create a basic income, how it should be implemented, or regarding specific long-term strategies.

It was suggested that the 2014 Congress be used as a time point to coalesce ideas into a common mission. The first morning of the June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 NABIG Congress “Canada Day” has been set aside to discuss the principles and parameters for developing more specific policy around a basic income.

## **FOCUS**

Three main activities were the focus of the past year: Congress development, a campaign to forward the idea of a basic income, and further development of the organization to support these efforts.

### **Congress Planning and Implementation**

Considerable work was undertaken for the [15<sup>th</sup> International Basic Income Earth Network Congress](#) which is planned to occur at the McGill Law School in Montreal from June 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014. BICN is hosting the congress and it will be preceded by the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual North American Basic Income Guarantee Conference on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

Jurgen De Wispelaere and Kelly Ernst Co-chair the congress and have been working with a congress committee to host the congress. Countless hours have gone into development of a program, session submissions selections, budget development and planning, web page development, and logistical planning of the congress.

The congress was budgeted for nearly \$30,000 and the committee anticipates less costs and a break even financial result. Currently efforts are underway to ensure good participation in the event and to seek registrations.

The Congress jury was extremely pleased to bring together not only a wide variety of excellent sessional speakers, but also very high calibre of plenary key note speakers, including:

**ANNA REID**

Past President, Canadian Medical Association

**ALICIA BÁRCENA IBARRA**

Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

**ROBERTO GARGARELLA**

Professor at the Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina and Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professor at University College London

**RENANA JHABVALA**

President of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Bharat, India

**STANISLAS JOURDAN**

Co-founder of the French Movement for Basic Income and Coordinator for Unconditional Basic Income Europe

**ENNO SCHMIDT**

Co-founder of the Initiative Basic Income in Switzerland and president of the Cultural Impulse Switzerland Foundation

**JOE SOSS**

Cowles Chair for the Study of Public Service at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

**GUY STANDING**

Professor in Development Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London and Co-President, Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN)

We encourage you to register very soon for the congress.

**Registration** for the congress can occur through a Pal Pay payment or through Eventbrite linked from the congress page below.

<http://biencanada.ca/congress/registration>

**The Congress Schedule** and sessions can be viewed at:

<http://biencanada.ca/congress/congress-program>

## The BIG Push

Originally, BICN started with an advocacy committee and a public education committee. There was some thought to pursuing multiple educational campaigns that would support a basic income. These ideas were coalesced together when Rob Rainer approached BICN to lead and develop a larger campaign devoted to pushing the idea for a basic income for all Canadians.

The idea was named, "[The BIG \(Basic Income Goal\) Push](#)." Its original idea was to initiate pilots using basic income. In the spring of 2013 there were meetings in Ottawa with Rob Rainer, Kelly Ernst, Chandra Pasma, and Thomas Allgoewer to develop the idea further and determine interest in the idea. Very quickly, the idea had no difficulty in attracting support and the campaign was born.

Rob Rainer founded the project and created the initial infrastructure to begin a campaign. By the fall of 2013, Thomas Allgoewer created a fund development plan and was instrumental in BICN's efforts to support the project. Rob also started to attract a wide variety of people to support the campaign. A website, blog, and E-News was created for the campaign and the idea began to spread.

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*I am now convinced that the simplest solution to poverty is to abolish it directly by a now widely discussed measure: the guaranteed income... The dignity of the individual will flourish when the decisions concerning his life are in his own hands, when he has the assurance that his income is stable and certain, and when he knows that he has the means to seek self-improvement. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)*

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The campaign's early success meant that other BICN campaigns and the education committee were rolled into the BIG Push. Rather than eliminate these efforts, it was decided to leverage people's work toward a more common direction.

To date nearly \$10,000 has been privately raised by the campaign and the groundwork is laid for much more. The Sister's of St. Ann in Victoria became its first major donor. Now the campaign is starting to attract monthly donors, an important development to give the campaign financial stability. A communications team has been established for the campaign and a video is being developed to support greater fund development efforts that will include crowd sourcing.

Mark Chamberlain and Dr. Phillip Berger became the first high profile campaign council members and an executive was put into place to help advise the project's direction. Numerous proposals for ideas on a basic income have been forwarded, community teams have started to emerge.

The next step in the campaign is to bring together resources in a common direction that will eventually help local community leaders to educate the public regarding a basic income. The principles and key parameters for further development of basic income policy for Canada has been proposed by Sheila Regehr with the input from many others (see the last section of this report for a draft). This will be the main topic of discussion during the first morning of the June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 NABIG Congress "Canada Day." Time has been set aside to discuss the principles and parameters for developing a basic income.

Afterward, a renewed operational plan, budget, communication plan, and fund development plan will be created. These are anticipated to be developed for the summer of 2014.

## Organizational Development

Work has also gone into development of the BICN / RCRG organization. During the summer and fall new websites were created for the organization, the BIG Push, and the Congress. These were all launched by January of 2014.

New board members allowed the development of greater financial stewardship, including opening of TD Bank accounts, budget development, financial control procedures, and financial monitoring. Pierre Stevens, our Treasurer since the fall of 2014, has been instrumental in this development. Pierre was Senior Instructor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia and an advocate for poverty reduction, social equity and a just society.

Two new board members joined after Pierre Stevens. Eleni Bakopanos, former Member of Parliament from Montreal and long-time advocate for women's rights and social economic development, joined in the winter of 2014. She was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development with special emphasis on the Social Economy. Dan Meades from St. John's, Newfoundland joined the board at about the same time. Dan is also a long-time advocate for poverty reduction through his Vibrant Communities work in Newfoundland and Alberta, plus work throughout Canada, Europe, the United States and West Africa; all the while his focus has been on community change and civic empowerment. These new board members' vast experience has infused the board with incredible competencies and placed the board in an excellent position going forward.

After Rob Rainer established the BIG Push, he was offered the position of Executive Director of the Green Party of Canada. Rob recommended to the board that Kelly Ernst take over his leadership position to ensure smooth transition of the campaign. Kelly accepted and resigned from the board. The board appointed him the Secretary General of the Basic Income Canada Network in May 2014. Sheila Regehr took over the Chairperson role for the board of directors at this time.

## 2013 Financial Summary

The 2013/4 year is the first year that BICN/ RCRG received revenue for its efforts and expended these revenues toward its mandate. As such, the year 2013 ended with small amounts.

Income Statement		To Year Ending:	December 31, 2013
<b>Revenue</b>			
	Big Push Donations		\$ 2,130.00
	BICN Donations		\$ 300.00
	Disbursement Reimbursement		\$ 173.52
	Other		\$ 10.37
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 2,613.89</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
	Phone/Communications		\$ 173.52
	Contracts		\$ 914.00
	Insurance		\$ 760.00
	Bank Fees		\$ 76.19
	<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 1,923.71</b>
<b>Net Surplus / Deficit</b>			<b>\$ 690.18</b>

## 2014 Budget

The 2014 budget year is oriented to two major projects, the 2014 International BIEN Congress, and the BIG Push. The Congress budget and Big Push budget were approved separately. Their combined budget with administrative expenses for the organizations is presented below.

2014 Proposed Budget		Total			
Revenue		Revenue	Congress	The BIG Push	Administration
	<b>Memberships</b>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>			\$ 1,000.00
	<b>Donations</b>	<b>\$ 40,000.00</b>		\$ 40,000.00	
	<b>BICN-Directors</b>	<b>\$ 1,500.00</b>			\$ 1,500.00
	<b>Fees</b>	<b>\$ 32,000.00</b>	\$ 32,000.00		
	<b>Sponsors</b>	<b>\$ 3,150.00</b>	\$ 3,150.00		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 77,650.00</b>	\$ 35,150.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 2,500.00
<b>Expenses</b>					
	<b>Office Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 4,560.00</b>	\$ 2,110.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 250.00
	<b>Disbursements</b>	<b>\$ 1,500.00</b>	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	
	<b>Travel</b>	<b>\$ 13,160.00</b>	\$ 10,160.00	\$ 3,000.00	
	<b>Marketing</b>	<b>\$ 10,210.00</b>	\$ 4,260.00	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 150.00
	<b>Phone/Communications/Web</b>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>		\$ 1,000.00	
	<b>Contractors/Speakers</b>	<b>\$ 31,500.00</b>	\$ 6,700.00	\$ 26,000.00	
	<b>Meeting Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 7,000.00</b>	\$ 5,500.00		\$ 300.00
	<b>Insurance, Legal and Professional Fees</b>	<b>\$ 1,000.00</b>			\$ 1,000.00
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>\$ 120.00</b>			\$ 120.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 70,050.00</b>	\$ 29,730.00	\$ 38,500.00	\$ 1,820.00
<b>Net Surplus / Deficit</b>		<b>\$ 7,600.00</b>	\$ 5,420.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 680.00

It should be noted that this is a projected budget for 2014 and are not actual financial statements of BICN / RCRG up to the date of the AGM. Financial statements for 2014 will be presented at the 2015 AGM.

Once an update operational, communications, and fund development plans are created, a new budget will be forwarded to the 2014/5 board.

## 2014/5 Board of Directors

The 2014/5 board of directors will be voted on at the upcoming AGM on May 28<sup>th</sup>. Directors are elected by the AGM and in the case vacancies exist between AGM's the board may appoint new directors. Directors' terms are for 2 years. Currently, Sheila Regehr, Jim Mulvale, Jenna van Draanen, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Sharon Murphy, and Rob Rainer must be confirmed for the 2014-2016 term.

The remainder of this document are appendices for the 2014 AGM.

# APPENDICES

## Basic Income Canada Network /Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti Minutes from the Annual General Assembly

Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013 1PM EST

To be held via teleconference at [1-866-261-6767](tel:1-866-261-6767), Participant Code: 5315500#

In attendance: Mandy Kay-Raining Bird, Pierre Stephens, Sharon Murphy, Kizzy Paris, Sharon Anderson, Sheila Regher, Pat Evans, Jenna van Draanen (Recorder), Sally Lerner, Sean Goeby, Jim Mulvale, Helge Nome, John Rook, Kelly Ernst (Chair), Tim Rourke

Regrets: Rob Rainer, Bronwen Cunningham, Myron Frankman, Jurgen De Wispelaere

### 1. Opening remarks/welcome

### 2. Minutes of previous AGM

There was a motion to approve the minutes of the previous AGM by Sharon Murphy, Sharon Anderson seconded, no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 3. Report from the Chair (Chairperson)

Kelly reported on several things that have happened since the last general meeting. Notably, we added John Rook to the Board, and moved to be governed under the new act in February, 2013. Since that change the board has been able to move ahead in a lot of ways (opening a bank account, developing policy documents, etc.). We have also launched a new website and though it is functional, it is not completely finished yet. The website needs more work and will be improved in the coming weeks.

### 4. Strategic direction discussion and adoption (Chairperson)

Kelly gave an overview of the new strategic direction being recommended by the board. The board has put together a draft strategic document but would like to discuss and decide on the details of our mission, vision and strategic directions at the conference in June 2014. The general summary of the direction being recommended by the board is that the organization should focus on more than just basic income, to see basic income as part of the poverty puzzle more broadly.

The draft BICN vision is to eliminate poverty and secure wellbeing for all Canadians. There are many different missions proposed in the strategic directions document, and it is suggested that at the 2014 congress we can do a mission/vision strategic directions retreat so everyone can be involved in setting the direction together in person.

Other congress items have moved forward and advocacy items have moved forward (these will be discussed in more detail later in the meeting).

There was significant discussion on mission and vision on the call. Some questioned that if we focus on poverty, might we be moving away from universality? Others felt that if there was a focus on poverty, we can spend our time working on policy change, but that in itself the vision will be neither prioritizing nor hindering a focus on universality. Some on the call voiced the opinion that they prefer to keep focus on poverty. Others noted from a social credit perspective we should focus on a dividend for everyone. Some feel that the poverty focus is too narrow: a basic income could also appeal to entrepreneurship,



macroeconomic policies. It was noted by here is room for multiple perspectives within this with the focus being on poverty but not exclusively. Fundamental principles seem to be common among all the arguments for basic income and it is these principles that we must highlight and review at the 2014 BIEN conference. Some members felt we may not be talking about the same principles.

It was discussed that we should have written submissions of ideas for this direction. **ACTION: Members should submit their suggestions to Jenna and if the author wishes, they can be put on the website as a blog to have dialog between members.**

There was a motion proposed: that the membership accepts the idea that in 2014 we have a meeting to discuss the strategic direction and mission and in the meantime discussions proceed by written submission. Sheila moved the above motion, Sharon Murphy seconded, all were in favour and the motion carried.

## **5. Financial report (Treasurer)**

Jenna is the interim treasurer, we are still seeking a permanent treasurer to take over this position on the Board. Currently we have a zero budget, but we will have to project a budget for our next year of activity so insurance and conference purposes. We have set up a bank account with TD and we have four signatories from the Board on this bank account. For convenience in doing banking, two of the signatories are located in Calgary and can sign for deposits and withdrawal that require 2 signatures.

There was a motion put forward that the Board prepare a budget for the general membership to review at the next general meeting in September so that we can move forward with acquiring insurance. Sharon Murphy moved the motion, Jim seconded, all were in favour and the motion passed.

## **6. Election of new board members (Chair)**

At the mast meeting we adopted a slate of Board members, and they are going to be on the board for two years. A new board member was added to the board (John Rook) and we have space for one more board member. We are putting the call out for a new treasurer, if you are interested please submit your name and a brief description of your interest in this position to the board. The new board email address is [board@biencanada.ca](mailto:board@biencanada.ca).

## **7. Committee recruitment and updates**

### **a. Congress Committee (Kelly and Jim)**

The update from the congress committee was given. Congress planning continues to proceed well. The official dates for the congress are June 26-29, 2014. The McGill law faculty will be hosting the event. The theme is re-democratizing the economy, and the format will be the same as past congresses. Plenary presentations will have simultaneous French translations and there will be French-only sessions if there are submissions in French. The call for papers will go out in September, 2013.

There was some discussion from members around attendance numbers, costs of attendance, and media presence. The congress planning committee clarified that 250 attendees is the target, and the rates will likely be similar to the last NABIG congress (which were: \$150 for corporate registrant, \$40 for low income, and \$50 for those working for not for profit organizations and students). Members proposed the idea of seeking increased media attention at this conference.

## **b. Advocacy Committee (Sharon Murphy)**

Sharon provided the update that instead of having an advocacy committee we are having advocacy campaigns, if you're interested you can get in touch with Sharon or Rob directly. Campaign #1 - Sharon has started a campaign speaking to low-income people about their opinions of basic income and she interviewed 7 people yesterday. Sharon reported interesting results from these interviews including one main message from participants that basic income would help people to buy nutritious food.

Campaign #2 - Rob Rainer is leading a campaign called the BIG (Basic Income Goal) push, and BICN is supporting Rob in this campaign and adopting it as a campaign for the year. The following blurb describes the initiative:

**The BIG Push** is a new national campaign led by Basic Income Canada Network (BICN), a non-profit group founded in 2012 and which is also the Canadian affiliate of [Basic Income Earth Network](#). Through **The BIG Push**, we strive to raise public awareness of basic income, build public support for an expanded system of basic income in Canada, and secure public commitments for and delivery of this system so that everyone has true and sufficient income security. Our shorter term goal is to see the advent and completion of one or more 5-year basic income pilot initiatives so that more evidence of the benefits and costs of basic income can be gathered from within Canada.

The membership would like to invite Rob to present on this at the next general meeting in September.

## **c. Public Education Committee (John Rook)**

John Rook has started putting this together, the committee members haven't met yet but there are a few people that are interested: Sheila, Simon, Dan Meades. This committee will work on developing terms of reference and getting started over the summer.

## **8. Other methods of activity and engagement**

There were suggestions from the membership for new methods of BICN activity and engagement. Helge suggested to look for specific political parties for support, for example, to go to local political party meetings to discuss and see if they are interested in putting basic income on their platforms. Other members noted that there are many parliamentarians who are supporters of this: Hugh Segal, Art Eggleton, and Elizabeth May. Many people in our organization have connections to politicians and they (especially Rob) are following up on these connections.

Sharon is interested in having a meeting with people in Halifax and having a local meeting. Action: Those interested should contact [board@biencanada.ca](mailto:board@biencanada.ca).

### **Other items**

The board has identified a need from the membership for support in the following areas:

- **We need a volunteer for the website, Jurgen has started this and needs someone else to take it forward**
- **Bronwen has started policy documents for the board and to govern the organization and we need someone to continue this**
- **We need a treasurer to join the board, those interested should contact [board@biencanada.ca](mailto:board@biencanada.ca).**

## **9. Closing remarks/adjournment**

## Slate for Board of Directors, May 2014

### **Sheila Regehr, Chairperson (renewal in 2014)**

Sheila Regehr is the recently retired Executive Director of the National Council of Welfare, an historically important, independent advisory body dedicated to solving poverty that was abolished by the federal government in 2012, leaving a large gap in Canada's ability to tackle poverty and growing inequalities that affect everyone. In addition to the seven years she served at the NCW, Sheila's 29 year career in the public service encompassed front line work with people who had lost their jobs, policy analysis and development, international relations, stakeholder consultations, and senior management positions. Throughout her career, and her voluntary work with political organizations, unions and community groups, her focus was always on improving fairness and equality, especially in matters related to employment, income security, taxation and the need to balance work in the labour market with the essential human work of raising families and building strong societies.

Sheila has degrees in political science and social policy and she has lived experience of poverty in her early years as a lone parent. With her children now successful adults, Sheila is very grateful to have the resources, time and health to help care for her twin grandchildren.

### **James Mulvale, Vice Chairperson (renewal in 2014)**

Dr. James (Jim) Mulvale is the Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Jim has professional experience in the fields of developmental disability and community mental health. His research interests include: guaranteed or basic income; social development in Aboriginal and northern communities; poverty elimination; social work theory; and distance and distributed learning in social work education. He was a founding member in 2008 of the group that became BICN, and has served on the Executive Committee of the Basic Income Earth Network. He is co-author (with Margot Young) of *Possibilities and Prospects: The Debate Over a Guaranteed Income* available at:

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/possibilities-and-prospects>

### **Pierre Stevens, Treasurer (renewal in 2015)**

Pierre grew up in the Netherlands where he enjoyed the benefits of a government funded post-secondary education, an education that would not have been possible if not for the liberal access to post-secondary education. He immigrated to Canada in 1973 at age 25 and have primarily spend 33 years teaching as a Senior Instructor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. As a Faculty member, he has been active in the Dalhousie Faculty Association, including a number of years on the Association's executive and a number of years as a treasurer. In addition, he has served twice on the Association's negotiation team.

Although he has not been a frontline social activist, he does believe that, he is guided by concerns for social equity and a just society. It has always been his belief that every human being has the right to a fair standard of living, regardless of the circumstances that that person finds him or herself. He believes that as a society, as a community, we have an obligation to make this possible for all.

He is aware that fair social practices in Canada and elsewhere are under attack and are not only in need of defense, but more so in need of major improvements. He feels that as a treasurer he can help in providing support for the Basic Income Canada Network to achieve its goals towards the objectives of eradicating poverty and securing fair income redistribution.

### **Jenna van Draanen, Secretary (renewal in 2014)**

Jenna van Draanen recently completed a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Toronto, and is currently a Research Coordinator at the Evaluation Centre for Complex Health Interventions at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. Most of her research and evaluation interest and experience are in the fields of mental health, addiction, and homelessness. Jenna became interested in the concept of basic income during her master's degree and continues to advocate in both a personal and professional role for the alleviation of poverty and income security for all. Jenna has worked

extensively on research projects with people who have lived experience of poverty, and is personally dedicated to creating a truly inclusive society. She has done volunteer work for Lutherwood (a community organization in Waterloo, ON) as a housing counselor, and has co-organized several Out in the Cold events raising money and awareness of homelessness. Jenna has also worked to address the social determinants of health through contracts with the Region of Waterloo Public Health Department, Flemington Community Health Centre, the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, Aboriginal Services at the University of Waterloo, and the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

### **Sharon Murphy (renewal in 2014)**

Sharon Murphy has a Bachelor and Masters degree in Social Work. She has a 30 year plus social work career, most of which was spent at the mental health clinic in Amherst, Nova Scotia. Sharon took an early retirement in 1999 because of health problems. Since her retirement she has worked tirelessly on the issue of poverty and consider myself a community activist. She has been on many boards and committees over the years. While in Amherst she was chair of the Poverty Action Committee in Amherst for 15 years, and a board member of autumn house, a transition house for battered women and their children, for Eighteen years. She was also on the board of Family and Children Services; a board member of the Cumberland African Nova Scotia Association, and was Nova Scotia's representative on Canada Without Poverty for over five years. Since moving to Halifax, she has been a member of: the Community Coalition to End Poverty in Nova Scotia; The Community Advocates Network; Solidarity Halifax; and Kairos, an ecumenical group of churches who work on Poverty and the environment. Sharon is Chair of the Social Justice Committee of the Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers for the past five years. I have also been a member of the board of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia for four years. Sharon has received a number of awards over the years for her volunteer service, including in 2006 the provincial volunteer of the year award and in 2007 the distinguished service award by the Community Credit Union of Cumberland Colchester. She is also very involved with the labor unions. Sharon can be found rallying for a number of causes; the increase in tuition fees for students, Justice for Syria; Poverty and Peace. Growing up in a working poor family in the 50s she is personally invested in the issue of poverty, particularly Affordable Housing, and am convinced that a Basic Liveable Income is crucial to lifting people out of poverty and I am strongly motivated to make this a reality.

### **Jurgen De Wispelaere (renewal in 2014)**

Jurgen De Wispelaere is an occupational therapist turned political philosopher. He has just taken up a position as Research Fellow at the Montreal Health Equity Research Consortium (MHERC), Biomedical Ethics Unit, McGill University. Previously he held positions at the University of Montreal (CREUM), Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin, and was a visiting scholar at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, University of Oxford, University of East-Anglia, Université Catholique de Louvain, Australian National University and Columbia University. Before becoming an academic, Jurgen worked as a social worker and occupational therapist in an institution for children with visual and cognitive impairments. Jurgen holds degrees in Occupational Therapy and Moral Sciences from the University of Gent (Belgium), and is currently completing a PhD in Social Policy at the University of Tampere (Finland). He has a long-standing scholarly interest in basic income. He is a founding editor of the journal *Basic Income Studies* and co-editor of several volumes on basic income (Palgrave 2003, Blackwell forthcoming). His own work on basic income has appeared in many leading academic journals such as *Analyse und Kritik*, *The Political Quarterly*, *Basic Income Studies*, *Social Services Review*, *Policy & Politics*, *International Social Security Review*, *Political Studies* and *Politics*, as well as edited collections. In addition, Jurgen has been active in organizing many events on basic income in the UK, Ireland, and Canada (including the first joint BICN-USBIG conference in Montreal in 2010). He sat on the BIEN Executive Committee from 2002-2006 (currently International Advisory Board member) and also served for many years as a Trustee with the UK Citizen's Income Trust.

### **John Rook (renewal in 2015)**

Over the past eight years, Dr. Rook has led non-profit agencies working on the front-lines to provide housing and support to those at risk of and experiencing homelessness. John is the past President and

CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Dr. Rook was the Chief Executive Officer of Potential Place and the Co-Executive Director of The Alex Community Health Centre. From 2004 to 2010, Dr. Rook was the Chief Executive Officer of The Salvation Army Community Services. In these roles, he was responsible for children and family services, addictions recovery, affordable housing and emergency shelter.

Dr. Rook also has more than 15 years teaching at universities and colleges across Canada and is currently a faculty member in poverty studies at Ambrose University College. He has been an Adjunct Faculty Member of the University of Calgary since 2008 and an associate professor at McMaster University. Related to his current work, he has taught in the areas of poverty, mental illness and homelessness for which he received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Dr. Rook brought this wealth of experience and knowledge to his role as the Chair and President of the National Council of Welfare from 2007 to 2012. The Council was an arms-length body to the federal government which made recommendations to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada on poverty issues affecting all Canadians.

After university degrees in literature, psychology and divinity, Dr. Rook completed a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. He and his wife, Kim, have five children. In his spare time, Dr. Rook enjoys running road races.

**The Honorable Eleni Bakopanos, (renewal in 2015)  
Privy Council of Canada, Member of Parliament (1993-2006)**

The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos was first elected to the House of Commons in 1993 as the Member of Parliament for Saint-Denis and is the first Greek-born woman to be elected to the Canadian Parliament. She was the Member of Parliament for Ahuntsic from 1997 to 2006. From 2006 to 2008 Ms. Bakopanos acted as special advisor for caucus to the Honourable Stéphane Dion, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada and worked in the Office of the Leader of the Official Opposition of the House of Commons of Canada.

Ms. Bakopanos is presently the President of the Women's Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada (Quebec).

Ms. Bakopanos has served as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development with special emphasis on the Social Economy (2003-2004); as Assistant Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons (2001-2003); and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada (1997-1999).

In July 2004, Ms. Bakopanos was sworn-in by the Governor-General of Canada as a member of the Privy Council and appointed by the Right Honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Social Development with special emphasis on the Social Economy.

She has also served as Chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage in addition to serving on several other Standing Committees of the House of Commons of Canada, most notably Foreign Affairs and International Trade as well as Justice and Human Rights.

Prior to entering politics at the federal level, Ms Bakopanos had worked, for nearly 25 years, in provincial politics with the Liberal Party of Quebec as a policy advisor for the Quebec premier, the Quebec Minister of Immigration and Cultural communities and the provincial government. She was also a candidate for the Liberal Party of Quebec in the 2012 provincial election.

From 2009 to 2011 Ms. Bakopanos held the position of Senior Director for Government Relations at McGill University.

Ms. Bakopanos has been a community activist and tireless advocate for issues related to social justice and social cohesion, equality, at-risk youth, seniors, new immigrants, domestic and international human rights.

Her community activism and participation began in the late 1980's when she served for 10 years on committees, the Board and the Executive of Centraide Montreal.

She has worked with the Shield of Athena Family Services for the past 15 years and is the outgoing President of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Shield's art auction committee that raises funds to provide programs, services and shelter for women and children facing conjugal violence.

In addition, she serves on a number of non-governmental Boards including as Vice-President of the Montreal Council of Women and President of the McGill Women's Alumnae Association, as well as a number of organizations in the Hellenic Community of Greater Montreal including the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hellenic community.

Ms. Bakopanos has been recognized for her contributions both in Canada and internationally. She has received, to name a few, the Order of the Hellenic Republic, the Order of Portugal, the European Women's Achievement Award, Community Service Award of the National Ethnic Press, the Women of the Year award of the Montreal Council of Women and the Queen Elisabeth Diamond Jubilee medal.

Ms. Bakopanos holds a Bachelor of Arts with honors in political science and history from McGill University, where she also studied law.

She is married and is the mother of two daughters.

#### **Dan Meades (renewal in 2015)**

Dan Meades is originally from St John's Newfoundland where he studied English and Business at Memorial University before starting his career in community development and poverty reduction. Dan's work has led him throughout Canada, Europe, the United States and West Africa; all the while his focus has been on community change and civic empowerment. For nearly four years Dan served as the Executive Director of Vibrant Communities Calgary, is a non-profit organization that works collaboratively, with various stakeholders and partners, seeking to engage Calgarians and to advocate for long-term strategies that address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. Currently Dan serves as part of Vibrant Communities St. John's, and organization working to reduce poverty in Newfoundland Labrador.

#### **Rob Rainer (election in 2014, renewal in 2016)**

Rob was a key person in founding both the Basic Income Canada Network and founded the BICN's BIG Push. Rob has held public interest leadership positions since 1993, with experience at the community, Atlantic regional, national and international levels. Rob was for six years (2006-2012) the executive director of Canada Without Poverty, a national charity in which he played a key role in strengthening civil society leadership on domestic poverty issues. In recognition of this work, he was in December 2012 presented by Senator Hugh Segal with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. In April 2014 Rob became the interim executive director of the Green Party of Canada, covering the maternity leave of the incumbent executive director.

Rob is a Canadian Fellow of the international Leadership for Environment and Development network. In January 2013 Rob climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro as a member of an expedition raising money for Outward Bound Canada.

# **Discussion Document for the June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 NABIG Canada Session**

## **BASIC INCOME CANADA NETWORK**

Basic Income Canada Network / Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti provides information on Basic Income, promotes the idea, and educates the public and policy makers about ways to support a basic income.

### **OUR VISION**

BICN's vision is that by eliminating poverty, wellbeing for all Canadians is secured.

### **OUR FOCUS**

BICN is composed of individuals and organizations interested in promoting education around basic income. All of our members believe that guaranteed income could be a positive alternative to our current collection of income security programs.

We provide information on Basic Income, hold events to promote the idea, and educate the public and policy makers about policy to support a basic income.

If a basic income is implemented then we hope the result will be that the wellbeing of all Canadians would improve, poverty would be drastically reduced, even eliminated, and the social justice problems associated with disparity will be significantly diminished.

### **OUR GOALS/OBJECTS**

1. To initiate and participate in research on Basic Income
2. To generate and disseminate information and knowledge on Basic Income
3. To educate for the establishment or augmentation of Basic Income as a means for preventing and alleviating poverty, reducing income and wealth inequality, and promoting income and social security

### **A BASIC INCOME**

A basic income is a minimum income that is able to pay for the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter; which all people receive without condition, means test or other requirements.

### **ABOUT US**

The Basic Income Canada Network is a Canadian not-for-profit organization.

Basic Income Canada Network was founded at the 2008 international BIEN Congress to promote dialogue, public education and networking about basic income in Canada.

Our membership comes for all walks of life, including many academics, social policy makers, economists, labour representatives, politicians, and interested citizens.

# Proposed Guiding Principles and Parameters for a Basic Income

## A BIG idea whose time has come!

### WHAT IS BIG?

BIG is a basic income guarantee for all that provides financial security to live decently. It is a foundation for a healthy society and economy.

### WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR A BASIC INCOME?

#### *Guiding Principles*

Universality: This means that all people have access to a basic income throughout life. For some this means providing a payment directly to all individuals, rich, middle- and low-income alike, then other income is progressively taxed back. For others, universality is understood similarly to our universal health care system, there for all to be accessed when needed.

Unconditionality: In reality, some minimal conditions will no doubt apply - residency, for example. But there must be no requirement for paid work or other activity. Conditions like this undermine universal access and involve costly enforcement. An income test is a condition in a number of proposals, to ensure those with lower incomes are helped most, as is the case now for seniors and children. This is not a 'means' test of the sort used by governments for various income security programs that force depletion of savings and other assets before qualifying.

Meaningful Work: Paid meaningful work and the pursuit of opportunity must be rewarded to enable people to improve their wellbeing. This principle affirms the right to paid work, without coercion. Decisions will need to be made about tax rates on earnings and other income. If an income test is used there will also need to be decisions about the point at which the basic income amount starts being reduced and when it ends. The principle of rewarding work in the labour market, or pursuing economic opportunity, should not preclude additional support for people with serious work limitations.

Gender Equality: Adults spend a portion of their time in socially useful work that is not paid. But some work is not an option, especially raising children. Only women can have babies. And parents (the vast majority mothers), especially lone parents with young children, are highly restricted in their options to pursue opportunities and work for pay because they have an essential, non-discretionary duty to care for dependent children. These realities are reflected in some current policies, like maternity and parental benefits. The Canada Pension Plan ensures that primary caregivers (again mostly mothers) are not penalized for periods of low or no earnings while caring for a child under 7 years of age. There are also a range of tax benefit and other measures that provide support for lone parents. A BIG should similarly contribute to gender equality along with contributing to greater overall income and economic equality.

Security: The principle of security is essential and it requires income to be regular, stable and predictable to enable pursuit of opportunity and/or planning for the longer-term.

Adequacy: The BIG should be sufficient to meet basic needs and to participate in society. There are several measures of low income in Canada that can help set a good standard. A basic income level should thus be indexed to increase with the cost of living so their value does not erode. Some have suggested indexing to increases in GDP, to reflect a better sharing of the growth in our country's overall



wealth. Anything lower, and especially anything so low that it does not meet basic needs will perpetuate the harm and cost that poverty creates.

Autonomy: Some prefer that a basic income be provided to every individual, regardless of any other factor. This provides the highest degree of autonomy for each person to make their own life decisions, including whether to form or dissolve personal relationships. Taking family situation into account in some way, however, may be important to ensure fairness for single people and lone parents. Canadian policy often uses a combination of individual and household considerations. The overall benefit amount may be based on the size and composition of the household, but payment is made to each individual in a couple, usually on an equal basis. With a BIG, autonomy could be further supported by a variable split so that the individual with the smaller share of the household's other income, gets a larger share of the BIG.

Dignity: There must be no stigma attached to the basic income guarantee and no discrimination allowed on the basis of its receipt.

Complementarity: It is important to develop a BIG that fits well with other valued systems like health care and other benefits delivered through the tax system, and that we learn from experience and build on our strengths and successes. The basic income should not be lower than benefits that are currently available through programs designed to assist low-income Canadians.

Value for money: There must be an investment approach to a BIG. Our social programs do not operate in silos they are interconnected and only a cost-benefit analysis that captures both direct and indirect costs and benefits will give us true value for money.

## **HOW WOULD IT WORK?**

### **Doesn't Canada already help everyone in some way?**

We have a type of basic income for seniors that has greatly improved quality of life compared to previous generations. We also have a variety of income support and income supplement benefits. But no program applies to all Canadians, nor do all programs provide a sufficient level of income to meet basic needs.

For adults raising the next generations and driving current and future prosperity, there is very little. A job, a good work history and even a good education don't necessarily offer security in today's economy. Our last and sometimes only resort, 'welfare', is the opposite of a BIG. With few exceptions, it provides too little, too late, with too many conditions. It produces stigma and suffering; it penalizes work--that's not decent. It entangles workers, clients and other Canadians alike in an unhealthy, expensive and complicated trap.

A basic income is not welfare. A well designed basic income could eliminate the need for welfare and related programs as they are currently designed in Canada.

Finally, most Canadians already live with an earned income that provides the basics – and more. A basic income guarantee is proposed to support people's ability to earn a living, pursue opportunity, be self-sufficient and get ahead. As such, a well-designed BIG provides all Canadians with greater opportunity to participate actively in the economy and improve their earnings.

## **What are some ways BIG might make a difference?**

First, it's relatively simple. With the security of a regular, direct basic income, all Canadians are free to manage their own and their family's unique circumstances much faster and more effectively than any bureaucracy can.

Second, it provides a better safety net without taking away people's ability to pursue opportunity. Women and men can better rebound from financial setbacks, balance shifting employment and family care needs, protect their health and recover from illness or injury. Parents can save and plan a better future for their children. Adults can take positive steps like getting more education, retraining or trying a job in an emerging sector of the economy, without the fear and real risk of losing almost everything if it doesn't work out.

Third, it prevents poverty. That means many expensive and often long-term health, social, and societal consequences of poverty are avoided.

Fourth, a BIG doesn't just help individual recipients--it has a larger impact because it reduces excessive inequalities and human insecurities that are at the root of many societal problems.

Fifth, it fosters resilience and flexibility in a changing economy.

Sixth, it's good for cities struggling to create vibrant neighbourhoods and strong communities.

Seventh, it's good for democracy because as much as voting in elections matters, in our monetized society we vote every day with our dollars for the kind of life we want. A basic income for all would give a very meaningful reminder that all citizens benefit from involvement in our democracy.

Eighth, it may be a far cheaper alternative to the enormous costs of poverty.

Ninth, it could be a far more efficient way to redistribute income than the current collection of stigmatizing social programs.

Tenth, it can contribute to efforts to ensure our society's wealth is more fairly distributed among all citizens.

## **Wouldn't giving people money erode Canada's work ethic and productivity?**

No. A basic income program is not proposed to replace work effort, pursuit of education, or motivation to pursue opportunity. Designed well, it can better enable people to pursue their talents and aspirations. Studies on basic income trials suggest that work effort and motivation to pursue a better life does not erode when basic needs are secure. In fact, the opposite occurs, people are better supported to pursue education and/or better their employment prospects.

## **Surely a basic income guarantee can't solve everything?**

No, it can't and shouldn't be expected to. It does not lessen the need for labour laws that govern workplace conditions, protect contracts and support unionization, or the need for good economic policy. It does not diminish the value of other public services, such as child care, or supports for people with physical or mental illness and people who need help to navigate complex programs, such as seniors or new Canadians.

It is a powerful complement to help other systems, especially health care, education and programs addressing historical disadvantage, to get better results. It can also complement existing income

security measures. Some of these may be less needed with time but remain important, especially during a transition period. The legacy of past problems will not disappear overnight and other gradual transformations will unfold as this bold and practical social innovation matures.

### **How much will it cost?**

It costs billions to keep people in poverty. A basic income will cost no more or less, and only a small fraction of our nation's wealth, than the costs of maintaining a large population living in poverty. So yes, we can afford it. The more important question is 'Will we get value for our money?' Even conservative estimates of the indirect costs of poverty (e.g., in health care, education, crime, lost productivity) are far higher than the costs of actually bringing Canadians out of poverty. For the billions we are paying now, the result is....more poverty and social problems. A BIG can change that. It is an investment where we get something back for our money--a decent living and better quality of life for all of us--and it pays for itself. Depending on the design of a BIG, we can be more or less ambitious in the financial security we provide; that will be reflected in both the costs and the benefits. It can be one of the great bargains of the new millennium!

### **What are the specific policy options to implement a BIG?**

There are a number of options and practical considerations being explored. In the world of public policy, it is rare that everyone gets everything they desire, even in the case of a basic income that has advantages from so many perspectives. The guiding principles set out above must be weighed and balanced to get the best possible BIG for Canadians.