



Basic Income Canada Network
Réseau canadien pour le revenu garanti

Annual Report 2015/16

April, 2016

Overview

A basic income guarantee (BIG) ensures everyone an income sufficient to meet basic needs and live with dignity regardless of work status. BICN promotes the adoption of a basic income in Canada by networking, raising awareness, fostering learning and sharing of information, and supporting policy development.

The past year has been a remarkable one that culminated in two provinces committing to initiatives towards a basic income. This has been generated by, and is further spurring, a growth in interest among Canadian individuals and organizations as well as all orders of government across the country.

BICN played a considerable role in this success, achieving our goals set out last year, and more. We created a new website to better serve what we do and then we made it the premier site for basic income news in Canada. We connected people across sectors, added to the knowledge base, and made expertise and experience available to politicians, the media and the public. We also planned the upcoming North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress in Winnipeg as a meeting place of ideas and diversity of stakeholders.

Looking forward, we will build on what works well. With governments now engaged, and many other actors likely to come forward, priority will shift to the realm of policy. We will advance principles and practical factors that underly the basic income we want, develop design ideas and ways to assess others' proposals in this light.

This report provides further information on the past year and the upcoming one. The next Annual General Meeting (AGM) is planned for May 15, 2016.

Report on 2015/16

Context

- Plans last year were set in a public policy environment that despite some interest among individuals within political parties and other spheres of influence, was, overall, not conducive to basic income prospects despite profound shifts in the economy, technology and society that are generating interest in the idea. Our priorities were: a new, more functional website; planning the next North American congress; communication tools; BICN governance.
- By the time of the federal election in the fall, the environment had started to change. It took another positive turn in early 2016 with Quebec and Ontario governments announcing that they were undertaking basic income initiatives.
- Within the basic income movement there is diversity of viewpoint and expertise on policy design details. This can be challenging but it also reflects Canadian reality and a wealth of ideas to contribute to public dialogue.

- BICN works in an open network model, with a volunteer Board, volunteer advisors, a range of supporters and donors, and without a physical office or staff. BICN is connected to local and regional groups and other individuals and organizations through informal associations.

Achievements

The following highlights our contributions to the basic income arena over the past year. Some activities, such as the website and NABIG, are directly attributable to BICN. For others, credit is also shared among individual board members, volunteers, local groups and other people and organizations. Overall, we had a very successful year, meeting our objectives and seizing opportunities created by a surge in interest in basic income among governments, media and the public.

New Website

- The website was launched in late summer as a go-to place for resources at all levels, whether people are new to the subject or looking for academic resources. In particular, it helps visitors understand that Canada already has forms of basic income for seniors and children and thus policy experience that we can learn from. This kind of framing began to show up more regularly in mainstream media and has helped shape the dialogue about what kind of basic income could work in Canada.
- The site enabled better networking across the country, learning and sharing, conference organization, volunteer coordination and fundraising. By the numbers:
 - the progress counter of people supporting the basic income idea grew from about 800 in the fall to about 4000 by the end of March;
 - 18 local and regional groups are now accessible through our website, about 2/3 in ON and the rest in NS, PE, QC, MB and BC;
 - dozens of new resources have been added to the site;
 - between 300 and 400 people are engaged as volunteers with BICN and/or a local or regional action group and/or as an individual advocate.
- Feedback on the site has been overwhelmingly positive and led to further upgrades to respond to growing needs. Rob Rainer was instrumental in the creation of the new website as a vehicle for our work. He ensured its functioning and performed the additional work of coordinating the growing number of individuals and groups wanting to connect and learn from each other's experience. The new website also owed a great deal to volunteers who contributed in areas such as communications, social media, translation, editing and fund-raising for the new site.

Outreach

- While aided by new tools, it is the people connected to BICN whose energy, creativity and determination are truly driving support for a basic income forward by reaching out to others. All across the country and beyond, many people worked to connect with individuals in their circles and with organizations, such as Upstream, the Broadbent Institute, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Campaign 2000, food security organizations, faith groups,

labour unions, poverty reduction groups, health and social service professionals, and many more. BICN supporters acted as a catalyst and resource for an increasing number of organizations that opened up dialogue on basic income and/or endorsed it in one way or another.

- We provided insights, research leads and other assistance to people working within the political process, including through: letters to Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Duclos; meetings with representatives across the political spectrum in all orders of government; help in drafting resolutions; enabling Kingston City Council and several other municipalities to endorse a basic income.
- In recent months, requests for connection and dialogue have more often come *to* us than *from* us and we are happy to oblige.
- BICN has a Canada/Finland connection as Board member Jurgen De Wispelaere is part of the research team engaged by the Finnish government for its basic income initiative.
- An Ontario-wide workshop was held in Kingston with a focus on organizing for action as well as on principles and policy design, with former Senator Hugh Segal providing inspiration.
- Author Guy Standing contributed his international expertise to a meeting with a group of health care professionals, researchers and basic income proponents from the Ontario region and conducted media interviews.
- Economists Evelyn Forget and Robin Boadway were invited to present to the federal Finance Committee during pre-budget consultations and their ideas on basic income were reflected in the committee's report and recommendations.

Communications

- Shortly after the website launched, BICN entered into agreement with journalist Roderick Bennis to help turn our website into the premier source of basic income news in Canada. Our social media presence has also grown and we ensured Canadian news was featured on international basic income sites. This, in turn, drew other journalists and members of the public to us. By the numbers:
 - more than 200 articles were written or curated, including through direct advocacy work with Canada's mayors to help create and sustain a municipal-level push; some led to articles in the Globe and Mail, National Post and an op-ed in The Star;
 - BICN nationally responded to 37 media requests from Canada, the US and the UK, and we were able to accommodate 34 of them. This includes interviews in English and French with sources ranging from the CBC to Global News and many local radio stations, such as CKLW in Windsor, Ontario. This is almost double the number of media requests received in the 2014/2015 fiscal year. Individuals have also engaged with the media based on local action or on particular subject expertise.

North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress (NABIG) 2016

- NABIG planning met and exceeded expectations. With prominent invited speakers and 40 varied presentations and panels on the program, there is no doubt our goal for the Winnipeg Congress in May 2016 to be a meeting place of ideas and diversity of stakeholders will be achieved.

- The program and participants reflect attention to policy concerns and activism on issues critical to basic income dialogue such as: health and well being; practical design details; gender equality; realities for Indigenous peoples, immigrants and racialized minorities; the history of social justice movements; and our high-tech future and changing economy.

Governance and Election of Directors

In follow-up to the Board's commitment last year to improve accountability and transparency, encourage interest in serving in various capacities, and invite greater participation in elections and AGMs, we made governance changes that will impact the 2016 AGM and future years. The number of Director positions has been increased from 10 to 13, and once the Directors are elected, they will select among themselves an executive committee that increases from four to five people. BICN is also creating an Advisory Council of up to 30 Members aiming to reflect a diversity of experience, expertise, influence and sectors, and to specifically promote representation of local and regional groups from different parts of the country. Applications were opened in March and successful applicants will be voting members, thus able to participate in electing Directors.

Last year, five Directors were elected or re-elected for two-year terms. In the coming year, eight positions will be available. Current Directors Sheila Regehr, James Mulvale, and Jenna van Draanen are seeking re-election, with Jurgen De Wispelaere moving to serve on the Advisory Council.

Financial Report

We are pleased with BICN's financial picture at the end the fiscal year (March 31, 2016), even as we also recognize the need for greater resources in the coming year and beyond. Of particular note:

- The Revenue and Expense statement indicates a deficit in accounting terms; in planning terms, however, we did very well, raising over \$5000 at the end of the 2014/15 fiscal year specifically in order to start the new website project in April 2015.
- Total revenue was similar to the previous year but a larger share in 2014/15 was one-time donations for website development. In 2015/16, donations from monthly contributors more than doubled to well over \$6000 from just under \$3000 in 2014/15. This is a positive sign that can lead to greater sustainability.
- NABIG 2016 planning was accomplished through volunteer work and in-kind support; the congress revenue and expenses will be presented in 2016/17.

BICN continued in the past year to deliver good value for money, achieving a great deal with very limited financial resources. Volunteer effort is what makes this possible, including from people who receive stipends for their work but whose time and skills go far beyond what is remunerated.

Looking to the future, with basic income now much higher on the public agenda, there are wonderful new opportunities for, and challenging demands on, basic income proponents in Canada. BICN will need greater financial capacity to support proponents in engaging with each

other, with governments as they consult, with other stakeholders and with the media. We must work to expand our gradually growing donor base, now at about 100 individuals. We hope we can encourage many more people to make donations, even if they can afford only small amounts, and to encourage individuals and organizations with greater means to contribute accordingly.

Balance Statement	
Assets	
Accounts receivable	0
Total Assets as of March 31, 2016	\$6,408.22
Liabilities	
Accounts payable	0
Equity	
Accrued income - previous years	\$8,745.11
- 2015/16	-\$2,336.89
Total Equity	\$6,408.22
Total Liability and Equity	\$6,408.22

Revenue and Expenses	
Revenue	
BICN Board	\$3,185.00
Donations - Monthly	\$6,363.00
Donations - Other	\$8,092.00
Other	0.29
Total Revenue	\$17,640.29
Expenses	
Operating (insurance, banking, phone)	\$3,257.50
Contract personnel	\$8,250.00
Website	\$8,469.68
Congress/meetings/travel	0
Total Expenses	\$19,997.18
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	-\$2,336.89

Plans and Priorities 2016/17

Context

- Governments are now more engaged and some have committed to action in various forms. This marks a significant change in the basic income arena, giving new legitimacy to basic income as an important public policy idea. As a consequence, more people will become engaged, many of them supporters whose voices have not yet been heard. It is also likely to draw out voices of opposition and may highlight differences that will have an impact on the way a basic income gets designed. There may be stakeholders who have not previously focused on this issue and will be challenged to effectively participate in public dialogue.

Priorities and Expected Achievements

BICN will continue to work to support informed, constructive public discussion in this new context.

NABIG 2016:

- The North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress being held in Winnipeg in May is our first priority for the first part of the 2016/17 fiscal year. The timing is important in the new Canadian context especially because it offers precisely the kind of forum and opportunity that is needed to: 1) take the basic income conversation from general idea and theoretical underpinnings to principled and practical policy design ideas; and 2) to build capacity among community activists to effectively engage with governments and other stakeholders.

Focus on Policy, Principles and Design:

- BICN expects to give greater attention to matters of policy. As governments consult, and policy options are proposed and debated, we need to work amongst proponents, on the basis of shared principles like the ones listed on our website, and with other stakeholders in order to achieve the kind of basic income we want. There are many more players on the field now, making this an essential and demanding undertaking.

Fundraising and Organizational Growth:

- This is a particular priority this year to meet new demands. Along with efforts to improve financial capacity, we'll partner with other organizations, create mutual opportunities for dialogue, and coordinate with growing numbers of members and volunteers.

Website and News:

- These areas are both ongoing priorities as they serve all of our work. Website management, upgrades, new functions and technical support will be required. The ability to track, deliver and shape the news remains a critical contribution that BICN makes to basic income supporters and the public.

Thank you and acknowledgments

The Board of BICN extends its sincere appreciation to its volunteers, supporters, donors, sponsors and contractors across the country for their valuable contributions. This year we especially acknowledge and welcome the engagement of people in political spheres - elected and appointed officials, public servants and party members and supporters. We also extend profound thanks to researchers, writers, journalists, activists and others everywhere, some in this movement for decades and others bringing new energy and insights, to keep us moving forward.

Appendix - Board Bios 2015/16¹

Eleni Bakopanos

The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos has over 40 years experience in public service, including as a Member of Parliament (1993-2006), serving as Parliamentary Secretary for Justice and social economy portfolios and as Assistant Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. She is presently President of the Women's Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada (Q), promoting policies such as social cohesion and inclusion, a guaranteed basic income, immigrant and women's rights. She served as senior policy advisor to Quebec's Premier and the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities. Eleni recently held the position of Senior Director for Government Relations at her Alma mater, McGill University, where she is currently President of the Women's Alumnae Association. Her extensive community activism began in the 1980's as a volunteer on several Boards, including Centraide Montreal (Executive member), the Montreal Council of Women (VP) and the Shield of Athena Family Services (President; Chair of fundraising) which assists women and children facing conjugal violence.

Jurgen De Wispelaere

Dr. Jurgen De Wispelaere is an occupational therapist turned political theorist and policy scholar. A former Research Fellow at the McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy (IHSP) he is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Tampere, where he coordinates a course on basic income, and a Senior Researcher with the Kela-led working group preparing the first national basic income experiment in Finland. He has taught or held visiting positions at several distinguished universities, including Université de Montréal, Trinity College Dublin, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Oxford University, Université Catholique de Louvain, and the Australian National University. His work on basic income has appeared in many leading academic journals, such as Social Service Review, International Social Security Review, Political Studies, Journal of Public Policy and Journal of Social Policy. Jurgen is a founding editor of the journal Basic Income Studies and has recently co-edited Basic Income: An Anthology of Contemporary Research (Wiley, 2013). He has organized important events on basic income in the UK, Ireland, and Canada, including the 2014 BIEN Congress in Montreal.

Dan Meades

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, 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 Provincial Coordinator for the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

James Mulvale, Vice Chairperson

Dr. James Mulvale is Dean of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. He is a founding member of the Basic Income Canada Network, and is active with the Basic Income Network of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council. Jim's research interests include basic income and the theoretical foundations of Social Work. He teaches Canadian social welfare history, and has an interest in the use of distance and distributed learning to enhance teaching effectiveness and equity in post-secondary education. He has professional social work experience in community development in the fields of developmental disability and mental health. Jim has also been an Executive Committee Member of the Basic Income Earth Network and co-editor of Basic Income Studies.

Sharon Murphy

Sharon Murphy, with a Masters in Social Work and a 30 plus year career, primarily at a mental health clinic in Nova Scotia, has also been active on boards and committees in her province. These include: the Poverty Action Committee in Amherst, which she chaired; a transition house for battered women; the Cumberland African Nova Scotia Association; the Association of Social Workers; and the Affordable Housing Association. She has received awards for

¹ Bios for the new Board will be made available on the website following the May 2016 AGM.

her work, including the provincial volunteer of the year award (2006) and a distinguished service award (2007). She was also active at the national level with Canada Without Poverty and Kairos. In retirement, Sharon continues to work as a community activist. Growing up in a working poor family she is convinced that a basic liveable income is crucial to lifting people out of poverty.

Sheila Regehr, Chairperson

Sheila Regehr is a founding member of the Basic Income Canada Network and former Executive Director of the National Council of Welfare. Her 29 years of federal public service spanned front-line work, policy analysis and development, international relations and senior management, with a focus on improving fairness and equality, and on gender and race in particular. She has policy expertise in areas of income security and taxation, such as child tax benefits, child support, maternity/parental benefits, pensions and social assistance. Her insight also comes from experiencing poverty as a young parent. Sheila is grateful, in her retirement, to have resources, time and health to do volunteer work and help care for twin grandsons.

John Rook

Dr. John Rook is founding director of the Canadian Poverty Institute at Ambrose University in Calgary and currently Director of Programs & Strategic Initiatives at The Mustard Seed. He is past President and CEO of the Calgary Homeless Foundation, was previously CEO of Potential Place, Co-Executive Director of The Alex Community Health Centre, and CEO of The Salvation Army Community Services. John was an Associate Professor at McMaster, holds an adjunct faculty position at the University of Calgary, and lectures primarily in areas of poverty, mental illness and homelessness. He brought this experience and knowledge to his role as Chair of the National Council of Welfare (2007-2012) and the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness (2013-2014).

Pierre Stevens, Treasurer

Pierre Stevens grew up in the Netherlands where he benefitted from a government-funded post-secondary education that would not have been possible otherwise. In Canada since 1973, he taught for 33 years, primarily as a Senior Instructor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Dalhousie University. He has been active in the Faculty Association, serving as an executive member, as treasurer and on the negotiation team. Pierre is guided by his belief that every human being has the right to a fair standard of living, and that as a society, as a community, we have an obligation to make this possible for all. As treasurer, he wants to support the Basic Income Canada Network in achieving its goals, especially eradicating poverty and securing fair income redistribution.

Paul Vallée

Paul Vallée is a highly successful entrepreneur and a fluently bilingual Francophone. Paul began his career as a data scientist and systems architect, and then in 1997 founded Pythian which has become a global leader in data consulting and managed services, with 400 employees across offices in North America, Europe, and Asia. Paul is Pythian's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Through his work in the IT sector, Paul is witnessing first-hand the phenomenon of technological unemployment, which has led him to the cause of basic income. Paul's business acumen was recognized in 2011 with an Ottawa Forty Under 40 award and, in 2014, the Trudeau Medal: this medal is the highest honour given by the Telfer School of Management to its University of Ottawa alumni, recognizing leadership, initiative and contributions to the business world, the community and the recipient's alma mater. In addition to social equity, Paul's other community interests include gender equity and immigration.

Jenna van Draanen, Secretary

Jenna van Draanen is pursuing a PhD at the University of California Los Angeles, and is 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.