

# Basic Income Canada Youth Network

## Online Meeting Recap

**Date & Time:** April 1, 2020 at 19:00 ET

### Overview:

On Wednesday, April 1, 2020, from 19:00-20:00 Eastern Time, the Basic Income Canada Youth Network (BICYN) hosted an online meeting bringing together young people (10-35 years old) from across the country on Zoom.

There were 19 participants at the apex of the online meeting. The meeting consisted of a casual conversation and brief presentations on the history, key concepts, and contemporary application of a basic income (BI), delivered and facilitated by founding members of BICYN. Participants also asked a series of questions about BI in relation to student employment, climate change, the notion of universality, and the experience of other jurisdictions - like Finland - with BI. A representative from [Senator Marilou McPhedran's](#) office also spoke to the appetite for and work on BI in the Senate of Canada.

The next webinar is to be hosted on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, and will focus on answering and discussing specific questions from registrants.

### Summary of Presentations

**Topic:** [History of BI](#)

**Speaker:** Robert Kiley

- The idea that [when people have their basic needs met](#), they will participate effectively in society and avoid social downfalls, has been around since the Greeks and persists through modern political discourse (e.g. Thomas Moore in the 1500s and MLK and Milton Friedman in the 1960s) on both sides of the political spectrum.
- [BI has always appealed](#) to a broad range of stakeholders.

**Topic:** What is BI?

**Speaker:** Chloe Halpenny

- BI has [four characteristics](#) that are admittedly debated and defined differently within the movement:
  - BI consists of **cash transfers** (in contrast to food stamps, for example)
  - BI is provided to **individuals** (rather than family or child benefits, for example)
  - BI is **universal** (rather than *targeted* programs like programs for older adults)
  - BI is **unconditional** (rather than a *conditional* social program, like employment insurance)
- BI has been implemented on smaller scales, usually on an [experimental or trial basis](#) such as the Ontario BI pilot, from early 2018 to early 2019, which ended prematurely as the result of a change in government. Another well-known Canadian BI pilot is the [Mincome program](#) in Manitoba (1970s).

**Topic:** BI and Human Potential

**Speaker:** Daniel Snider

- BI gives individuals the time and flexibility they need to engage in the creative process, unbinding human potential especially in producing influential works.
- Automation is [changing the way our economy works](#) - we are excited about the possibilities that can emerge when people are able to work on more fulfilling projects without worrying about meeting their basic needs, especially through precarious work.
- BI also has many spinoff benefits such as supporting vulnerable populations, [addressing food insecurity](#), and alleviating burden on the health care system

**Topic:** BI in the news

**Speaker:** Kendal David

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- BI is increasingly found in public discourse [in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#). We are hearing lots about BI right now because of the massive economic impacts of the pandemic, and the massive [economic stimulus packages](#) and social supports being implemented at the federal level.
- Income insecurity is more visible right now (although has been a [facet of Canadian life for a long time](#)), and common assumptions about poverty are challenged by the disruptions faced by the pandemic (i.e. that poverty is an individual choice or character flaw).
- The emergency income provisions (like CERB and relaxed EI programs) are important, and sufficient for now, but are not what we are advocating for with BI.