

BIEN
BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK
NewsFlash Volume 28, no. 81, February 2015
www.basicincome.org

This is the newsletter of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), which was founded in 1986 as the Basic Income European Network and expanded to become an Earth-wide Network in 2004. It serves as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income. It fosters informed discussion on this topic throughout the world.

This NewsFlash, below, can also be downloaded as a PDF document on our website
www.basicincome.org.

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For up-to-the-date information about basic income, see:
<http://binews.org/>

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1. Special Editorial: proposal to change the definition of Basic

Income In BIEN's statutes

Usually the BIEN NewsFlash opens with an editorial from a member of BIEN's Executive Committee. This month, instead, comes an editorial from several of BIEN's life members, who have proposed an amendment to BIEN's statutes to alter the definition of basic income in the statutes. This proposal will be on the agenda at the next BIEN General Assembly meeting in Seoul, Korea in 2016. The members who have proposed it invite discussion of it. The proposal, in full, follows below.

You might want to do so by [leaving a comment on the online version of the proposal](#).

Proposal for commitment and modified statutes of BIEN (english)

From the following life members of BIEN: Dr. Lieselotte Wohlgenannt (Austria), Margit Appel (Austria), Prof. Dr. Manfred Füllsack (Austria), Adriaan Planken (Netherlands), Katja Kipping (Germany) and Prof. Dr. Michael Opielka (Germany)

From the following national affiliates of BIEN: Network Grundeinkommen (Germany), Network Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt Austria - B.I.E.N. Austria and Vereniging Basisinkomen (Netherlands)

We propose, that BIEN should amend the definition of basic income in its statutes to add the following fourth characteristic,

- which secures a livelihood (material existence) and enables participation in the political community (country) for everyone,

to the existing three characteristic

- which is granted to all on an individual basis by law,
- without means test and
- without obligation to work or for services in return.

We make this proposal because BIEN should support an unconditional basic income at an amount that could help

- to eliminate poverty and social distress in the respective political community,
- to increase individual freedom and
- to permanently improve the development opportunities of each individual and the social and cultural situation in the community.

BIEN's support for an unconditional basic income with the above-named four criteria does not exclude support for a partial basic income (not securing livelihood/material existence or not enabling participation), as long as it remains clear, that the final goal is the unconditional basic income with these four criteria and that the partial basic income is not coupled with social cutbacks.

The statutes of BIEN should be modified in section 1 with nothing removed and the following text (*shown in italics*) added:

"1. Purpose: BIEN's aim is to serve as a link between individuals and groups committed to, or interested in, basic income to stimulate and disseminate research and to foster informed public discussion on this topic throughout the world. Basic income i.e. an income, *which is high enough to secure material existence and enable participation in society and unconditionally granted to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement. BIEN's commitment for an basic income with the above-named four criteria does not exclude debates and projects concerning a partial basic income (not securing material existence or not enabling social participation), as long as it remains clear, that the final goal is the basic income with these four criteria and that the partial basic income is not coupled with social cutbacks.*"

Vorschlag zum Engagement und zu geänderten Statuten von BIEN (deutsch)

von folgenden Mitgliedern von BIEN: Dr. Lieselotte Wohlgenannt (Österreich), Margit Appel (Österreich), Prof. Dr. Manfred Füllsack (Österreich), Adriaan Planken (Niederlande), Katja Kipping (Deutschland) und Prof. Dr. Michael Opielka (Deutschland)

von folgenden BIEN angeschlossenen nationalen Grundeinkommensnetzwerken: Netzwerk Grundeinkommen (Deutschland), Netzwerk Grundeinkommen und sozialer Zusammenhalt - B.I.E.N. Österreich und Vereniging Basisinkomen (Niederlande)

Wir schlagen vor, dass BIEN die Definition des Grundeinkommens in seinen Statuten durch Hinzufügung des folgenden vierten Kriteriums

- das existenzsichernd ist und jedem Menschen gesellschaftliche Teilhabe im jeweiligen politischen Gemeinwesen (Land) ermöglicht -

ändern sollte, als Ergänzung zu den bestehenden drei Kriterien

- auf das ein individueller Rechtsanspruch besteht,
- das ohne Bedürftigkeitsprüfung und
- ohne Zwang zu Arbeit oder Gegenleistungen garantiert wird -.

Wir schlagen dies vor, weil BIEN ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen mit einer Höhe unterstützen sollte, das dazu beitragen kann,

- im jeweiligen politischen Gemeinwesen Armut und soziale Notlagen zu beseitigen,

- den individuellen Freiheitsspielraum zu vergrößern sowie
- die Entwicklungschancen jedes Einzelnen und die soziale und kulturelle Situation im Gemeinwesen nachhaltig zu verbessern.

Die Unterstützung eines bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens mit den oben genannten vier Kriterien durch BIEN schließt nicht die Unterstützung eines partiellen Grundeinkommens (nicht existenz- und teilhabesichernd) aus, solange klar bleibt, dass das Ziel das bedingungslose Grundeinkommen mit den vier Kriterien ist und das partielle Grundeinkommen nicht mit Sozialabbau verbunden ist.

Die Statuten von BIEN sollten im Abschnitt 1 um folgenden Text ergänzt (*kursiv angezeigt*) werden:

"1. Zweck

Das Ziel von BIEN ist, die Vernetzung von Personen und Gruppen, die engagiert für oder interessiert an einem Grundeinkommen sind, um die Forschung darüber zu stimulieren und zu verbreiten sowie die öffentliche Diskussion über dieses Thema weltweit zu fördern. Grundeinkommen, das ist ein Einkommen, *das hoch genug ist, um die materielle Existenz zu sichern und Teilnahme an der Gesellschaft zu ermöglichen*, welches allen Menschen bedingungslos auf individueller Basis gewährt wird, ohne eine Bedürftigkeitsprüfung oder Arbeitsverpflichtung. *Die Unterstützung eines Grundeinkommens mit den oben genannten vier Kriterien durch BIEN schließt nicht die Unterstützung eines partiellen Grundeinkommens (nicht existenz- und teilhabesichernd) aus, solange klar bleibt, dass das Ziel das Grundeinkommen mit den vier Kriterien ist und das partielle Grundeinkommen nicht mit Sozialabbau verbunden ist.*"

2. Events

New York, NY: The Fourteenth Annual NABIG Congress, February 26 – March 1, 2015

The Fourteenth Annual North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress (a joint event of U.S. and Canadian Basic Income networks) will take place in New York City Thursday, February 26 – Sunday March 1, 2015. Most events will be held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Economic Association (EEA) at the New York

Sheraton Hotel and Towers .**The Congress will also involve free events including a public discussion Thursday ,February 26and a political movement meeting at the Brooklyn Commons** on Sunday March 1.

Featured speakers at the conference include **Marshall Brain**, futurist and author of *How Stuff Works* and *Manna*; **Peter Barnes**, environmentalist and author of *Who Owns the Sky?*, *With Liberty and Dividends For All*, and *Capitalism 3.0*; **Ann Withorn**, welfare rights activist and Professor Emeritus, University of Massachusetts Boston, author of *Serving the People: Social Services and Social Change* and co-editor of *For Crying out Loud: Women and Poverty in the U.S.*; **Jim Mulvale**, Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and Vice-Chairperson of the Basic Income Canadian Network (BICN/RCRG), **Mary Bricker Jenkins**, Professor of Social Work, Temple University, and US Welfare Rights Union leaders, and forty other speakers.

Event Calendar:

Thursday, February 26, 2015

6:30pm to 9pm: Public Discussion: “New Possibilities for the Basic Income Movement”
Location to be announced

Friday, February 27, 2015

8am to 7pm: Sessions at the Sheraton Hotel, 811 7th Avenue, New York, NY
Evening: social event to be announced

Saturday, February 28, 2015

8am to 6:30pm: Sessions at the Sheraton Hotel, 811 7th Avenue, New York, NY
Evening: social event to be announced

Sunday, March 1, 2015

8am to 12:30pm: Sessions at the Sheraton Hotel, 811 7th Avenue, New York, NY
12:45-m-2:15: Lunch meeting: organizational meeting of the USBIG Network

6:00pm: Meeting: “Are we ready to start an activists movement for BIG in the United States?” We’ll chip in for pizza and drinks, but we’ll share the food and drink unconditionally with everyone who comes—without means test or any requirement to make a reciprocal contribution. We will discuss this question without any more specific agenda. Karl Widerquist will moderate the discussion, but will not lead the discussion or any effort that might come out of it. Location: Brooklyn Commons, 388 Atlantic Ave. Brooklyn, NY. This event is free and open to everyone.

For updated information on featured speakers, registration, and accommodations as more becomes available, visit the USBIG website: www.usbig.net.

Essential information:

Conference dates: Thursday, February 26 – Sunday, March 1, 2015
Locations: New York and Brooklyn, NY: The Sheraton Hotel and Towers, 811 7th Avenue, New York, NY, Hunter College, and the Brooklyn Commons
Organizing committee: Karl Widerquist <Karl@Widerquist.com> (organizer), Ann Withorn <withorn.ann@gmail.com>, Shawn Cassiman <scassiman1@udayton.edu>, and Jurgen De Wispelaere <jurgen.dewispelaere@gmail.com>
Website: USBIG.net.

London, UK: Book launch: Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India

Bloomsbury Publishing will host a book launch for the new book, *Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India*, by Sarath Davala, Renana Jhabvala, Soumya Kapoor Mehta and Guy Standing, on Tuesday 27th January 2015, at 6.30 p.m., at Bloomsbury Publishing, 50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP

RSVP via the [Eventbrite page](#).

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, CANADA: A Basic Income For Canada and Manitoba: Why

Not?

The University of Manitoba will host a one-day symposium, entitled, “A Basic Income For Canada and Manitoba: Why Not?”

The featured Speaker is Jurgen De Wispelaere, a Fellow at the Institute for Health and Social Policy at McGill University, Montreal Canada. He is a founding editor of the journal *Basic Income Studies*, co-editor of three books, and author of dozens of peer-reviewed articles. His research interests span the philosophical aspects of social policy and institutional design, including unconditional basic income, disability policy, adoption policy, and health.

The symposium will also include presentations by academic and community researchers who are working on Basic Income and related aspects of economic security:

Nicole Beasse, Faculty Of Law, UM□

Evelyn Forget, Department Of Community Health Sciences, UM

Sid Frankel, Faculty Of Social Work, UM□

Jim Mulvale, Faculty Of Social Work, UM□

Gregg Olsen, Department Of Sociology, UM□

Wayne Simpson, Department Of Economics, UM□

Harvey Stevens, Department Of Economics, UM□

James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner For Manitoba

This symposium is open to faculty members, students, and members of the community at no charge. Lunch will also be included.

FEBRUARY 5, 2015 - 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Hanley Hall – St. Paul’s College University of Manitoba
Free Event – Registration is required as seating is limited.
For more information and to register, visit umanitoba.ca/social_work

3. News

Alaska, United State: Drop in Oil Prices Causes Concern for the Future of Alaska’s

Permanent Fund Dividend

The recent drop in oil prices has had a devastating effect on the Alaska state government’s budget, most of which is derived directly or indirectly from current oil revenues. Alaska’s Permanent Fund Dividend (or PFD—Alaska’s small basic income) is not financed by current oil revenue and so is technically unaffected by fluctuating oil prices, but budgetary pressure from declining oil revenues could cause political pressure to divert revenue from the PFD into the main budget.

The PFD is financed by the Alaska Permanent Fund (APF), a sovereign wealth fund set up in 1976 to make some of Alaska’s oil windfall permanent. The APF is protected by the state’s constitution: the state can spend only the returns to the fund, not the principle. But the PFD does not have similar protection. It was created by an act of the state legislature in 1982, and even with 33 years of precedent, it is vulnerable to legislative decision. The PFD is so popular that it has been called “the Third Rail of Alaskan Politics,” meaning that any legislator who touches it dies. But budgetary pressure could change that political condition.

The recent decline in oil prices on top of a large tax cut the state government gave to the oil companies a few years ago has led to a very large budget deficit—currently projected at about \$3.5 billion. Legislators are discussing how to fill the deficit. Some legislators have [promised not to divert money](#) slated for the PFD, but [some recent editorials](#) have called to divert money from the PFD to the general budget.

Many different solutions are being discussed. [One legislator has introduced a bill](#) to amend the state’s constitution to permanently protect the PFD. [A recent editorial](#) calls for reversing the tax cut for the oil companies. [One plan being proposed](#) is to divert all new oil revenues to the APF, then use half of the returns from the APF for the PFD and the other for general revenue. [Another plan](#) calls for reintroducing the state’s income tax; the state has been without an income tax for as long as it has had the PFD. The absence of an

income tax has been nearly as popular as the PFD. It remains to be seen whether support for the PFD will remain strong in the face of the prospect of reviving the income tax.

For more information, see the following articles:

Alex DeMarban, "[Alaska Dispatch, Panelists suggest cuts, tapping Permanent Fund earnings to solve Alaska's fiscal woes.](#)" *Alaska Dispatch News*, October 5, 2014

Becky Bohrer, "[Permanent Fund Dividend eyed for constitutional protection.](#)" *Valdez Star*, Vol. 27 Edition 2, January 14, 2015

Becky Bohrer, "[Lawmaker's bill aims to guard Alaska Permanent Fund benefit.](#)" *Alaska Dispatch News*, January 9, 2015

Carey Restino, "[It's time to file for Permanent Fund Dividends, and contemplate changes.](#)" *The Bristol Bay Times*, January 30th, 2015

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner Editorial Board, "[Alaska needs budget leadership: Bold solutions needed to fill revenue hole left by low oil prices.](#)" *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, December 14, 2014

John Havelock, "Alaskans should be willing to pay their share with an income tax." *Alaska Dispatch News*, January 26, 2015

Katie Moritz, "[Senators: Everything but taxes, PFD on table to fix budget.](#)" *Juneau Empire*, January 21, 2015

KTVA "[Walker administration tries to rein in Alaska's budget.](#)" *KTVA CBS 11 News*, December 16, 2014

Merrick Peirce, "[Writing on the wall: time to dump SB 21.](#)" *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* community perspective, January 11, 2015

Ray Metcalfe, "[A formula for securing Alaska's financial future.](#)" *Alaska Dispatch News*, January 28, 2015

UNITED KINGDOM: Green Party's Basic Income Proposal Scrutinized by Experts

[Josh Martin]

Recent articles this week have been detailing the issues in the UK Green Party's proposal for a citizen's income, also known as a basic income. According to the Citizen's Income Trust, their current proposal to implement a revenue-neutral scheme that would give each citizen £72 a week would make 35.15% of households net-losers by losing more current benefits than the citizen's income would replace. This would especially hurt low-income households currently receiving multiple means-tested benefits. The Citizen's Income

Trust has given advice to the Green party frequently on their citizen's income policy, but it is their analysis that has uncovered some of the issues in the current plan.

Malcolm Torry, Director of the Citizen's Income Trust, said that this current citizen's income scheme is impossible to implement with its negative effects on low-income households, but he argues that the scheme would still be worthwhile if a means-tested component were included in the plan. This means-tested benefit would be necessary to maintain the benefit levels of those in low-income households, but the bulk of the benefits system would be the citizen's income, leading to significantly decreased marginal deduction rates. Torry details what such a plan might look like in the Citizen's Income Trust's first newsletter of 2015 in an article titled "A feasible way to implement a Citizen's Income".

Most of this negative press about the Green Party's citizen's income plan stems from an interview Natalie Bennett, leader of the Greens, had with Andrew Neil in which she stumbled while trying to explain the intricacies of the citizen's income plan among other Green policies.

For more information, click on the following links:

Patrick Wintour, "[Green party's flagship economic policy would hit poorest hardest, say experts](#)", *The Guardian*, 27 January 2015.

Groningen, the Netherlands: Discussion of a possible Basic Income Pilot Project

Guy Standing, honorary co-President of BIEN, visited Groningen in the last week of January 2015 to discussing with locals the possibility of launching a pilot basic income scheme around there. He does not know yet whether the project will happen, but he says, the group seems very grounded, and the man on the council in charge of social policy seems keen. The discussions were filmed by public Dutch TV with the programme due to be put out in March 2015.

INTERNATIONAL: Co-chair of the World Economic Forum summit in Davos calls for a minimum income guarantee

Oxfam International, whose executive director Winniw Byanyima, will co-chair the hugely influential World Economic Forum in Davos, has called for world leaders to implement a seven point plan which includes a minimum income guarantee.

The World Economic Forum's annual meeting also referred to as the Davos Summit, is a hugely influential meeting of world leaders including politicians, business leaders, academics, NGOs and others who meet to discuss issues of importance effecting the world.

The decision to invite Byanyima comes as Oxfam releases a report on global economic inequality which suggests that the global 1% own about half of the world's wealth. Oxfam's seven point plan is an attempt to address this issue. The full point regarding minimum income reads 'Ensure adequate safety-nets for the poorest, including a minimum-income guarantee.' Other proposals such as 'clamping down on tax dodging by corporations and rich individuals' and 'shifting the tax burden from labour and consumption to capital and wealth' are also included.

Other co-chairs include Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank, Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google and other businesspeople.

For more information, see:

Larry Elliott, Ed Pilkington, "[New Oxfam report says half of global wealth held by top 1%](#)", *The Guardian*, 19 January 2015

Oliver Cann, "[Meet the co-chairs for Davos 2015](#)", *Agenda*, 04 December 2014

World Economic Forum, "[About us](#)", World Economic Forum

4. BI Literature

Adam Cowden, "Moving forward after Ferguson and Staten Island"

Latest events about the death of African-American men, after encounters with the police, have generated flamed discussions in the USA. However, extreme poverty seems to be the underground generator of situations like this. In response, the universal basic income is discussed as a ground-breaking solution to this pervasive social problem.

Adam Cowden, "[Moving forward after Ferguson and Staten Island](#)", *Huffpost Students*, December 10 2014

Alyssa Battistoni, "Alive in the Sunshine"

[Josh Martin]

Battistoni's lengthy post highlights issues facing the environment today, especially focusing on consumption. Since consumption increases end up damaging the environment, Battistoni argues for policies that can decrease consumption, like shortened work weeks and the universal basic income, including proposals like the tax-and-dividend approach.

Alyssa Battistoni, "[Alive in the Sunshine](#)", *Jacobin*, January 2015.

Anthony Painter, "The need for new ideas- even if they seem crazy at first"

[Josh Martin]

Painter's post discusses the current fear of creative policy-making in government, and shows two ways that this creativity may finally be moving forward. First, Painter highlights far-left Syriza's victory in the recent Greek Elections, and then he mentions the Green Party's support for a Citizen's Income (a basic income) in the UK.

Anthony Painter, "[The need for new ideas- even if they seem crazy at first](#)", *RSA Action and Research Centre*, 26 January 2015.

Citizens Income Trust [UK], "2015 Issue 1," *Citizen's Income newsletter*, January 2015

The first issue of the *Citizens Income Newsletter* for 2015 includes news; editorials on "Predistribution," "The necessity and the feasibility of a Citizen's Income," "Benefits sanctions," and "Fair benefits;" a research note by Malcolm Torry entitled, "A feasible way to implement a Citizen's Income;" an extended article by Anne Miller entitled, "The prospects for a CI scheme in Scotland after the Referendum on Independence held on 18 September 2014;" and reviews of the following books:

Marshall Brain, *Manna: Two Visions of Humanity's Future*

Bob Deacon, *Global Social Policy in the Making*

Tony Fitzpatrick, *Climate Change and Poverty*

Bruce Nixon, *A Better World is Possible*

Fred Powell, *The Politics of Civil Society*

Julian Reiss, *Philosophy of Economics*

Paul Spicker, *Reclaiming Individualism*

Citizens Income Trust [UK], "[2015 Issue 1](#)," *Citizen's Income newsletter*, January 2015.

Diane Pagen, "Helping the poor must extend beyond the usual holiday turkey, coat drives: Opinion"

In the USA, institutions practice the traditional charity program of turkey and coats distributions on Thanksgiving. The author criticizes this practice as inefficient and ultimately not addressing root causes for poverty. Instead, direct income support and food stamps is suggested for alleviating poverty in the USA.

Diane Pagen, "[Helping the poor must extend beyond the usual holiday turkey, coat drives: Opinion](#)", *Star-Ledger*, December 8 2014

Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "Iran's Subsidy Reform: from Promise to Disappointment"

[Josh Martin]

Salehi-Isfahani details the Iranian subsidy reform of 2010, where they shifted funds usually allocated to energy subsidies totaling around \$100 per citizen to a cash transfer program of \$45 per person per month. This program implemented a form of a basic income, and this article details the economic impact of the reform on energy prices, inflation, and on poverty levels. In total, the cash subsidies had a significant impact on poverty and inequality.

Djavad Salehi-Isfahani, "[Iran's Subsidy Reform: from Promise to Disappointment](#)", *Economic Research Forum*, Policy Perspective No. 13, June 2014.

D S Wright, "Does Uber Make a Universal Basic Income Inevitable?"

[Josh Martin]

This article discusses how Uber, the un-unionized transportation service that is cutting into the unionized taxi market, is setting a dangerous precedent for the labor market that is increasingly moving away from unions. This precarious labor market would be made more palatable if citizens could count on a basic income each month.

DSWright, "[Does Uber Make a Universal Basic Income Inevitable?](#)", *Firedoglake*, 29 January 2015.

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Dylan Matthews, “Basic income: the world’s simplest plan to end poverty, explained”

[Josh Martin]

This article continues Matthews’s extensive series on the basic income on *Vox*. In this post, he provides an excellent, thorough introduction to the idea of the basic income, providing explanations for the varying political justifications for the basic income as well as a detailed history of basic income policies throughout the world.

Dylan Matthews, “[Basic income: the world’s simplest plan to end poverty, explained](#)”, *Vox*, 29 January 2015.

Evok3d, “BitNation—Decentralized, Borderless Government to Provide Universal Basic Income”

[Josh Martin]

This post discusses an idea to implement a basic income via the digital cryptocurrency Bitcoin through a platform named BitNation.

Evok3d, “[BitNation—Decentralized, Borderless Government to Provide Universal Basic Income](#)”, *Coins Source*, 16 January 2015.

Geoff Simmons, “Ten Types of People Who Would be Better Off with an Unconditional Basic Income”

[Josh Martin]

Writing from New Zealand, Simmons writes on ten types of people who would especially benefit from a basic income: one income families, caregivers and volunteers, beneficiaries, students, the working poor, people without children, welfare organisations, anyone on infrequent income, anyone chasing their dream, and taxpayers.

Geoff Simmons, “[Ten Types of People Who Would be Better Off with an Unconditional Basic Income](#)”, *Gareth’s World*, 21 January 2015.

George Monbiot, “Follow your convictions—this could be the end of the politics of fear”

[Josh Martin]

Monbiot discusses voting patterns in the UK, arguing that the two party system of Labour and Conservatives is a product of voting fearfully. Instead, he implores left-leaning

voters to seize the opportunity to vote for parties like Syriza, Podemos, Sinn Féin, and the Green party. In his argument he mentions some of the policies these parties support, including the basic income.

George Monbiot, "[Follow your convictions—this could be the end of the politics of fear](#)", *The Guardian*, 28 January 2015.

Giorgos Kallis, "Podemos party's plan to 'stimulate consumption' needs more ambition"

[Josh Martin]

Kallis discusses the far-left Spanish political party Podemos's economic plan to 'stimulate consumption' but claims that it does not go far enough to reorient the economy. One of Podemos's policies is a basic income, but only for those who cannot find work. Kallis suggests making it truly universal.

Giorgos Kallis, "[Podemos party's plan to 'stimulate consumption' needs more ambition](#)", *The Guardian*, 15 January 2015.

Glenn Drover, Allan Moscovitch, and James Mulvale, "Promoting Equity for a Stronger Canada: The Future of Canadian Social Policy."

Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) published their report titled "Promoting Equity for a Stronger Canada: The Future of Canadian Social Policy." A co-author is Dr. Jim Mulvale, Dean of Social Work at the University of Manitoba and Vice-Chair of Basic Income Canada Network (on the board of which I also serve).

Pages 10-22 of the report focus on "income equity" generally and basic income specifically: this section defines basic income, summarizes basic income's history in Canada, flags key practical matters, discusses costs and the need for federal leadership, and includes CASW's recommendation "that the federal government initiate a process to review and renew the income security system in Canada with a view to the possibility of developing a targeted and affordable basic income."

This report provides introductory information on basic income within the Canadian context. CASW's recommendation may mark the first time a national professional association in Canada has voiced its strong support for basic income.

Glenn Drover, Allan Moscovitch, and James Mulvale, "[Promoting Equity for a Stronger Canada: The Future of Canadian Social Policy](#)." Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), 2014

Jamie Klinger, “How I thrived on a Basic Income of \$11,000 last year in Montreal”

[Josh Martin]

This post details Klinger’s past year where he managed to live on \$11,000, which is a possible level for a basic income. He spent 51% of his budget on rent, 19% on food, 2% on transportation, 10% on vacation, 3% on fun/vices, 3% on health, and 5% on communications. While many might think it very difficult to live on only \$11,000, Klinger argues that it’s largely down to your attitude.

Jamie Klinger, “[How I thrived on a Basic Income of \\$11,000 last year in Montreal](#)”, *Medium*, 23 January 2015.

Jamie McMillan, “Basic Income Scheme: How to Pay for it”

[Josh Martin]

McMillan writes in response to the headlines going around the UK stating that a basic income would cost 280 billion pounds, instead arguing that it would be far less, simply by replacing and redefining already existing programs like Jobseekers Allowance, tax allowances, and pensions.

Jamie McMillan, “[Basic Income Scheme: How to Pay for it](#)”, *Planet Rant*, 26 January 2015.

Jeremy Griffith, “Libertarian Perspectives on Basic Income”

[Josh Martin]

Griffith discusses the libertarian arguments for a basic income, citing major thinkers like F.A. Hayek, Charles Murray, and Veronique de Rugy.

Jeremy Griffith, “[Libertarian Perspectives on Basic Income](#)”, *Unfettered Equality*, 15 January 2015.

John Higgs, “Why ‘unconditional basic income for all’ fails the ‘splutter test’ but would liberate the world”

[Josh Martin]

Higgs begins by discussing the recent political phenomenon of catering to the middle by Labour, Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats in the UK, and argues that this disenfranchisement with their traditional bases has led to the rise in popularity of the

fringe parties like the Scottish National Party, UKIP, and the Greens. Higgs then jumps into the Green Party's manifesto to highlight one policy that could liberate everyone, but causes a knee-jerk, negative reaction: the Citizen's Income, also known as the basic income. Higgs then goes on to explain some of the major benefits of the Citizen's Income.

John Higgs, "[Why 'unconditional basic income for all' fails the 'splutter test' but would liberate the world](#)", *UsVsTh3m*, 23 January 2015.

John McDermott, "The basic problem with basic income is basic mathematics"

[Josh Martin]

McDermott's article provides a good introduction to the main discourse on basic income, raising important questions and then answering them. He writes mostly in response to the UK Green party's proposal to implement a basic income of £71 per week for adults aged 25 to 65.

John McDermott, "[The basic problem with basic income is basic mathematics](#)", *Financial Times*, 30 January 2015.

London, UK: The case for the Universal Basic Income—London Futurists

[Josh Martin]

The London Futurists are holding a meeting titled "The case for the Universal Basic Income" on 14 February 2015 in London at Birkbeck College. With increasing levels of automation in the business sector, jobs may be disappearing faster than previously thought, and a basic income may be a requirement of a new social contract of sorts. The London Futurists will speak on issues like these in relation to the basic income at this event.

Entrance is 5.00 pounds per person.

For more details, you can [click here](#).

Maciej Szlinder, "Basic Income in the Spotlight in Spain: Interview with Daniel

Raventós"

[Josh Martin]

Originally written in Polish, Szlinder interviews Daniel Raventós, President of Red Renta Básica (The Spanish Basic Income Network) about the history of the basic income

movement in Spain as well as its recent resurgence with Podemos. Further, he discusses region specific ideas in Catalonia, and different fractions within basic income supporters.

Maciej Szlinder, "[Basic Income in the Spotlight in Spain: Interview with Daniel Raventós](#)", *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, 30 October 2014.

Roberto Merrill, "Pré-distribuição [Pre-distribution]"

The author distinguishes "weak" and "strong" (economic) pre-distribution. The former amounts fairly to what already exists in some countries (welfare state); the latter consists in the unconditional basic income (UBI). The article defends that it is the "strong" pre-distribution which may more drastically promote social equality, justice and freedom.

Language: Portuguese

Roberto Merrill, "[Pré-distribuição \[Pre-distribution\]](#)", *Económico (online)*, September 19 2014

Robin McGhee, "Opinion: Universal Basic Income is the way forward for the Liberal Democrats"

In Britain, it is argued, the present welfare system does not work. To eradicate poverty, emancipate workers and raise working standards, the UBI is defended. To finance it, according to the Citizen's Income Trust, only 2% over the cost of the welfare system for 2012-2013 would be needed.

Robin McGhee, "[Opinion: Universal Basic Income is the way forward for the Liberal Democrats](#)", *Liberal Democrat Voice*, December 19 2014

Scott Santens, “Will Replacing Current Benefits With Cash Tomorrow Leave Today’s Recipients Better or Worse Off?”

[Josh Martin]

Santens analyzes the current US welfare system and discusses the benefits of switching to a basic income of \$12,000 for adults and \$4,000 for children. Utilizing the case study of a single parent with two kids, Santens considers multiple cases of different income levels, and on each one the basic income will leave the household better off, even with a 40 percent flat tax, which Santens also recommends. He settles on the \$12k/4k plan partially due to the fact that a single parent with two kids and no labor market income currently receives \$20,000 from all of the cash replaceable benefits (not Medicaid, childcare, or CHIP benefits).

Scott Santens, “[Will Replacing Current Benefits With Cash Tomorrow Leave Today’s Recipients Better or Worse Off?](#)”, *Scott Santens*, 18 December 2014.

Scott Santens, “If we no longer force people to work to meet their basic needs, won’t they stop working?”

[Josh Martin]

Santens writes extensively on the question of what motivates us to work and whether or not anybody today can work for reasons other than for survival. He outlines three choices: working for others, working for ourselves, or doing zero work. Santens argues that under the current system only the first option is possible, but that with a basic income people could finally reach option two or three.

Scott Santens, “[If we no longer force people to work to meet their basic needs, won’t they stop working?](#)”, *Scott Santens*, 27 January 2015.

Stanislas Jourdan, “ECB’s Quantitative Easing Must Target the Real Economy”

[Josh Martin]

Writing after an announcement from the European Central Bank that they were going to move forward with its quantitative easing (QE) program to counter-attack deflationary pressure by giving funds to banks, Jourdan argues that such QE measures have failed in the UK and US, instead advocating a QE for the people. Jourdan believes that using the funds available for QE to distribute a basic income of sorts to all EU citizens would be a more effective way of fighting inequality and stabilizing the economy.

Stanislas Jourdan, "[ECB's Quantitative Easing Must Target the Real Economy](#)", *Unconditional Basic Income Europe*, 23 January 2015.

Scott Santens, "The Potential Effects of a Universal Basic Income Guarantee on Student Loans"

[Josh Martin]

Santens writes this post following his final college loan payment and muses on a basic income's potential impacts on student loans. He claims that the high levels of student loans are currently preventing millions of citizens from spending more in the economy, and that a basic income of \$12,000 would effectively cover every student's room and board (as well as books), leading them to take out loans only for tuition.

Scott Santens, "[The Potential Effects of a Universal Basic Income Guarantee on Student Loans](#)", *Scott Santens*, 30 January 2015.

Scott Santens, "Fit for work and fit to die"

Means testing reflects the conditionality of many social security systems around the world. The article lists some cases of recipients who ended up dead in part due to benefit withdrawal, concluding that this social ail can only be resolved with an unconditional basic income, removing conditionality from the system.

Scott Santens, "[Fit for work and fit to die](#)", *Medium*, December 11 2014

Social Agenda, "Marianne Thyssen, job creation and a fairer society"

New EU Commissioner, Marianne Thyssen, in an interview for Social Agenda magazine is asked "How can the EU Economic and Monetary Union become more social?" answering, in part "We should think in terms of minimum standards. For example, having a minimum income in every EU country, based on a reference budget."

Social Agenda, "[Marianne Thyssen, job creation and a fairer society](#) (p23)", *Social Agenda*, 23 December 2014

Yves Smith, "The failure of past Basic Income Guarantee, the Speenhamland System"

The article aims at criticizing Basic Income Guarantee (BIG), while praising a Jobs Guarantee (JG) system. However, it is relevant that some of the reader's comments provide counter arguments supporting BIG, exposing frailties of the JG system.

Yves Smith, "[The failure of past Basic Income Guarantee, the Speenhamland System](#)" (and following discussion), *Naked Capitalism*, January 15 2015

5. Audio-Video

VIDEO: Professor David Graeber Discusses Pointless Jobs and Basic Income

[Josh Martin]

In this video, David Graeber, Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics, is interviewed about the rising idea that people have “pointless jobs” where they do not actually do much work. Graeber discusses the reasons behind these pointless jobs and claims that while they fail to make sense in a truly capitalistic setting, they do make sense within businesses where people may be more powerful if they have more people working under them. Graeber then goes on to explain why he believes a basic income could solve the problem by freeing people from these pointless jobs in order to pursue their passions.

RT UK, "[Prof David Graeber 9pm](#)", *RT UK*, 12 January 2015.

6. About the Basic Income Earth Network and its NewsFlash

BIEN NewsFlash:

Editor: Karl Widerquist

The BIEN NewsFlash is the newsletter of the Basic Income Earth Network. It is mailed electronically every two months to over 2,000 subscribers throughout the world. If you would like to be added or removed from the subscription list, please go to:

<http://www.basicincome.org/bien/subscribe.php>.

BIEN's news website is BInews.org. It includes many of the articles from the NewsFlash, daily news on basic income, book reviews, opinion, and more.

Items for inclusion or review in future NewsFlashes and BI News please contact BIEN's

News Editor, Karl Widerquist <Karl@widerquist.com>

Or go to the following page on the BI News website: <http://binews.org/contribute.php>

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Further details about **BIEN's Executive Committee and International Board** as well as further information about the **Recognised National Networks** can be found on our website www.basicincome.org

MEMBERSHIP

All life members of the Basic Income European Network, many of whom were non-Europeans, have automatically become life members of the Basic Income Earth Network. To join them, just send your name and address (postal and electronic) to Secretary of BIEN <biensecretary@gmail.com>, and transfer EUR 100 to BIEN's account 001 2204356 10 at FORTIS BANK (IBAN: BE41 0012 2043 5610), 10 Rond-Point Schuman, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium. An acknowledgement will be sent upon receipt.

BIEN Life-members can become "B(I)ENEFACTORS" by giving another 100 Euros or more to the Network. The funds collected will facilitate the participation of promising BI advocates coming from developing countries or from disadvantaged groups.

For a list of members and B(I)Enefactors go to www.basicincome.org.

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