



# Annual Report 2018/2019

May 2019

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

## Overview

A basic income guarantee 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.

Because not all basic incomes are alike when moving from idea to policy, BICN promotes its framework document, the Basic Income We Want, and Primer series to help people new to the issue to effectively engage in the dialogue. These are important tools, especially in election years. BICN and the wider network have continued to connect people across sectors, create and disseminate news, add to the knowledge base, and make expertise and experience available to politicians, the media, businesses and the public.

Among key achievements for the past year: a highly successful North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress (NABIG) in Hamilton, ON; a petition to try to save the Ontario pilot; the Signposts to Success report on our survey of pilot recipients; extensive work designing and modelling progressive policy options; a submission to the British Columbia government's consultation on basic income; increasing social media presence and other communications and organizational capacity to gear up for the 2019 federal election.

BICN's financial position strengthened over the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019 and we are grateful to donors for that capacity, and the stability it provides to engage part-time paid personnel with particular skills to complement the invaluable work of volunteers.

Going forward, much of BICN's focus for the coming year is on making a national basic income a federal election issue and build relationships that we can pursue after the election.

This report provides further information on the past year and the upcoming one. The next Annual General Meeting (AGM) is planned, via conference call on May 28 (sometime between 11 and 3 EST). Board elections will be held electronically prior to the AGM.

## Report on 2018/19

### Context

- Plans last year were set in a public policy environment that included the rollout of Ontario's basic income pilot, announced in April, 2017 and expected to run for 3 years, as well as the 2019 federal election on the horizon. In the summer of 2018, however, the new Ontario government announced it was cancelling the pilot. This affected our planning.
- BICN's 2018/19 priorities were to raise public awareness and education, build collaboration across sectors, develop concrete policy options for Canada, and hold the NABIG Congress.
- 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 examples highlight the range of contributions to the basic income arena over the past year, ending March 31, 2019. Some activities are directly attributable to BICN. For others, credit is also shared among individual board and advisory council members, volunteers, local groups and people and organizations in the wider network. It is impossible in this brief report to identify every accomplishment or to name individuals as valuable as they all are.

#### North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress (NABIG) 2018

NABIG was held in Hamilton, Ontario from May 24 to 27, the culmination of many months of planning by BICN, USBIG, McMaster University and the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, with the support of the Mayor of Hamilton.

It drew the largest participation that NABIG congresses have had so far, with about 300 people attending, counting invited speakers, presenters, participants and volunteers. Its two themes - 'the converging paths leading to basic income as a key solution to many societal problems' and 'making basic income a reality' were addressed by a record number of high quality presentations. Many focused on the 'reality' theme, an indicator that the 'why' of basic income is becoming more accepted with more detailed attention now being devoted to 'how' to get it done.



It was particularly significant for this congress that several participants in the Ontario Basic Income Pilot attended and were among the presenters. It is one thing to debate the merits of basic income designs and strategies among those with academic, policy or advocacy perspectives and quite another to meet people who are living proof of the benefits a basic income is bringing to their lives. People living on low-income were included among the organizing team, presenters and participants. A music night was among new initiatives that put a focus on the importance of basic income to people working in cultural and artistic fields.

We have received wonderfully positive feedback indicating that NABIG 2018 was an exceptionally successful gathering that will continue to grow the movement.

### Signposts to Success

Shortly after NABIG, however, a set back arrived when the newly-elected Ontario government announced it was cancelling the pilot, and left recipients in limbo for many weeks. BICN and the Ontario Basic Income Network (OBIN) responded quickly by partnering with Leadnow to run a petition to restore the pilot and at least ensure recipients received the benefits they were promised. BICN also garnered as much media presence as we could and found it rewarding that support for the pilot came from many others as well. We believe that this pressure had the effect, at least, of extending the end date for the basic income payments to March of 2019.

The petition BICN/OBIN ran allowed those who signed (about 30,000) to indicate if they wanted to receive further contact from us and also to indicate to us if they were a pilot recipient. About 1500 people checked both boxes. When BICN determined that there was little potential for research to go forward, we decided to survey our database to learn what we could and help ensure that recipients had a voice and a way to share their experiences. The results of that survey (with 424 respondents) were released in our Signposts to Success report which indicated that the pilot was working well, benefiting people in many aspects of their lives. Through this report, participation at events at Queen's Park and in pilot communities, media attention and other activities, we continue to carry this message forward.

### British Columbia basic income consultations

We are grateful that we could play a positive role in Ontario but it did mean that BICN had to focus more on that one province than we had otherwise planned as a national organization. Towards the end of our fiscal year, however, we were able to turn what we learned from Ontario and other experience into a valuable submission to the BC government, along with other input we have had to their work.

## The Policy Options Project

It is a key priority for BICN to be able to develop and promote feasible basic income options that are in line with our goals and principles. This work is well underway by a volunteer team and benefited from a workshop in February 2018 with an outstanding group of policy experts, especially those with capacity to do statistical modelling, and from feedback received from a presentation at NABIG. The technical and conceptual challenges of the work, and our efforts over several months to respond to the unexpected cancellation of the Ontario Pilot, have extended our timeline for the policy options project, with release anticipated in 2019.

## Communications, News and Website

BICN's website is well-established as the leading Canadian site for resources at all levels, and as the premier source of basic income news. We have produced hundreds of stories and widely disseminated articles written by others.

New this past year has been the engagement of expert, part-time personnel devoted to social media to help us grow and keep the basic income conversation relevant in Canada. This has increased our presence enormously, as the charts below indicate. In the past year, our efforts made it possible for us to go from 2,300 to 4,600 subscribers on Facebook. Our monthly reach is around 100,000 people. Social media is a powerful tool to attract wide and diverse new audiences and inform them about basic income. This includes audiences that traditional media outlets may not reach, such as young people who tend to depend on online sources for information. Social platforms enable rapid dissemination and sharing to boost our messages further and help move basic income from the margins into the mainstream of public interest. They demonstrate to policymakers that support for basic income is growing.

Since January we've reached 1.3M people.





We've done well with traditional media too, with coverage in print, radio and television, including The Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator, Huffington Post, Global, CTV, CBC, National Post, NOW Magazine, Fast Company and several local radio stations). Much of it centred on Ontario and focused on the pilot but with interest coming from the US and Swedish media as well. Beyond BICN, it is rewarding that the issue of basic income is gaining wider attention, for example with the CEOs for basic income project garnering attention from media covering finance and business issues. The swift, widespread and very pointed condemnation of the cancellation of the Ontario Pilot by people not traditionally aligned with basic income could be an indicator of growing interest in the idea.

Towards the end of 2018, we began to bring on additional personnel with expertise in campaigning and public relations, to help get our messages out and, in particular, to gear up for the 2019 federal election. We began issuing periodic newsletters to keep our supporters up to date on developments and activities. We also engaged a general manager in early 2019 to enhance our organizational capacity overall and to improve coordination across our various communications functions to better serve supporters and the public.

## Other Activities

BICN and people in the wider network were variously organizers, invited keynote speakers, panelists, active participants, advisors and resource personnel in a range of meetings, events and initiatives, such as:

- BICN was represented on the planning committee for NABIG 2019 in New York City; several Canadians were accepted to make plenary and workshop presentations.
- BICN presented at a variety of conferences and workshops, such as: the 2018 ABLE Financial Empowerment Conference in Vancouver, BC that featured federal Minister Jean-Yves Duclos; two Tamarack-organized events, a Cities Income Security Panel online discussion with representatives of provincial and territorial governments, and the Cities Summit conference; a conference concerning violence against women in Ottawa; worker organized meetings in BC on the future of work; a student-organized conference at Wilfred Laurier University involving the public as well as economics and political science departments.

- The 'CEOs for basic income' initiative was created independently by two board members and they featured CEOs from different sectors and parts of the county in a well-covered press conference.

Local action across the country is very important and is taking place in many communities. For example, the Livable Income Vancouver local group held several successful events this year including a Town Hall with two MLAs, a public forum, and a film screening. There have been locally organized screenings of the Big Experience documentary about the impact of the 1970s Mincome pilot in Dauphin, Manitoba. In Hamilton, Lindsay and Thunder Bay, basic income proponents worked tirelessly with pilot recipients to have their voices heard during the pilot and to support them in facing its premature end.

The Kingston Action Group undertook a 5-year review of its action that in 2018 included:

- Coordinating the structural design of the officially adopted Ontario network (OBIN) and recruiting the first generation of the six Coordinating Team members
- Presenting 2 sessions at NABIG 2018 - "Basic Income Guarantee: How do we get students to care?" (the first ever outreach to youth at a NABIG Congress, and a major step in the founding of the Canada-wide Basic Income Youth Network); "Communicating Basic Income: Lessons from the Past/Choices for the Future"
- Integrating basic income into the curriculum of Health 101 at Queen's University for 2016-2018, and into the online curriculum for 2018, introducing more than 4,000 Queen's student to the study of basic income.

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## Governance and Election of Directors

The BICN Board has 13 director positions. The six continuing members are Stéphane Boisvert (Ottawa ON), Tara Kainer (Kingston, ON), Floyd Marinescu (Toronto, ON), John Mills (Hamilton, ON), Sheila Regehr (Toronto, ON), and Jenna van Draanen (Vancouver, BC) whose terms run until 2020.

There are seven positions open for election in 2019 for two-year terms. Stephen Brown (Brampton, ON), John Rook (Calgary, AB), Pierre Stevens (Halifax, NS), Lorna Turnbull (Winnipeg, MA), and Paul Vallée (Ottawa, ON) are seeking re-election. Maria Wong (BC) and Eleni Bakopanos (QC) have opted to serve on the Advisory Council. Nominations were sought in April and May. Following elections, the new Board will determine executive roles among its members. Please check the website following the AGM for new Board bios.

BICN's Advisory Council membership has changed throughout the year, as individual circumstances change and with non-members also actively participating in sharing information and action across the country. This body may evolve as we explore further ways to expand the basic income movement and support diversity of experience and perspective.

## Financial Report

BICN's financial picture continues to improve. At the end the fiscal year, March 31, 2019 the balance statement was well over \$52,000 compared to last year at just over \$20,000. Our committed donor base plus very high attendance at NABIG contributed to our ability to build up equity and to develop longer-term plans, especially for the 2019 federal election year. In particular, the ability to bring in paid expertise and services amplifies our effectiveness and complements the invaluable work of volunteers.

BICN still needs to put renewed effort into fundraising beyond our regular support base. One possibility for us to explore emerged from recent legal changes that may make it more feasible in the future for BICN to attain charitable status and provide tax receipts for donations.

BICN Balance Statement 2018/2019	
Assets (PayPal & Cash in Bank)	\$52,628.87
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$52,628.87</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable	\$0.00
<b>Equity</b>	
Accrued Income Previous Years	\$20,192.35
Income 2018/2019	\$32,436.52
<b>Total Liability and Equity</b>	<b>\$52,628.87</b>

BICN Revenue and Expenses 2018/2019	
<b>Revenue</b>	
BICN Board	\$21,838.00
Members	\$1,470.00
Support (public donations)	\$31,367.00
NABIG Conference	\$28,691.18
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$83,366.18</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Operating (insurance, legal, bank fees)	\$4,136.67
Phone/Communications	\$510.67
Projects (news/media, policy options, primer)	\$26,594.87
Website	\$3,112.45
NABIG 2018 Congress	\$16,574.90
Other	\$0.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$50,929.66</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$32,436.52</b>

The table below provides the budget for NABIG 2018; it extends over two fiscal years, incorporating the planning period and the Congress itself. Some funds and expenses flowed through BICN and others through McMaster University. In addition to financial contributions, in-kind personnel and other support from McMaster, the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, BICN and USBIG were also worth a great deal as Congress resources.

NABIG 2018 Budget (over 2 years)	(rounded to nearest dollar)
<b>Revenue</b>	
Registrations (255)	\$37,700
McMaster University	13,000
BICN	6,800
Hamilton Community Foundation	1,800
Sisters of Providence	950
Individual donations	2,075
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$67,325</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Travel and accommodation for invited speakers	\$10,283
Live streaming and publication	3,500
Personnel	15,800
Meeting facilities and related	11,375
Catering	15,230
Eventbrite fees	1,885
Subsidies for low-income participation	3,781
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$61,854</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>\$5,471</b>

## Plans and Priorities 2018/19

### Context

- The federal election in 2019 is a pivotal time to promote basic income to the public and election candidates. Work will be needed to move basic income resolutions from policy books to party platforms and electoral debate. There are many policy debates competing for attention.
- BICN has helped the public understand that our successful seniors and children's benefits are forms of basic income; references to this are found in media articles, books and government statements, but it is still not well understood. This link to established policy may help satisfy an appetite for bolder, more hopeful policy without seeing it as unduly radical or risky.

### Priorities and Expected Achievements

For the coming year, much of BICN's focus is on making a national basic income a federal election issue. We want to promote understanding that this is a critical economic necessity for individuals and families as well as the economy as a whole. We are developing strategies to influence the public, candidates and leadership debates and to build relationships that we can continue after the election. This includes communications tools and other supports for basic income proponents across the country to use in their communities to complement local initiatives. For example, we have made commitments to speak at and/or support conferences being organized in eastern and western Canada.

A related goal is to encourage people who could most benefit from a basic income to vote, given that precarious, low-income workers and youth, for example, tend to be underrepresented in voting. Youth were a group key in the last federal election and could be this time too. For those who do tend to vote in higher proportions, for example seniors and middle class families who already receive a form of basic income, we want to encourage them to support a basic income for other Canadians. Specific initiatives include:

- Promoting the success stories of the Ontario Pilot
- Drawing attention to the successes of benefits for seniors and families with children, as existing forms of basic income
- Releasing the Policy Options Report
- Participation at NABIG 2019 in the US and initial planning for NABIG 2020 in Canada

- Continuing with longer-term efforts to build support among a range of constituencies. BICN Board members have advanced the successful basic income case for CEOs, and BICN is providing financial and other support for convening people with diverse expertise to develop a workers case for basic income. Other potential in this vein includes small business, youth, and people with disabilities, among others.

## Thank you and acknowledgments

The Board of BICN, as always, extends its sincere appreciation to volunteers, supporters, donors, sponsors and contractors across the country, and beyond, for their valuable contributions. We acknowledge and welcome the increasing engagement of people in policy and 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 in Canada and around the world, some who have been in this movement for decades and others bringing new energy and diverse insights, to keep us moving forward. This year, in particular, we send best wishes to former Ontario pilot recipients. The pilot has been cancelled but your experiences cannot be undone; you are living proof of basic incomes benefits and that inspires hope.