The context of work for a basic income faced many challenges in the past year, including the mental stress and grief many people are experiencing during the pandemic along with extreme weather events that are becoming more frequent. People who were income insecure before are struggling even more. The systemic problems that the pandemic exposed have not been remedied. Inflation and war are now driving new hardships and uncertainties.

BICN’s vision for a more hopeful future persists, however, alongside allies in Canada and around the world. The work is more important than ever. Canada has the capacity to show that societies, economies and governments function better when everyone can put food on the table and a roof over their heads. With basics met, people can be part of solutions to other problems.

BICN’s highlights of 2021-22 include our revamped website and newsletter, helping organize the first virtual North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress with US partners, and contributions to the virtual BIEN Congress centred in Glasgow. We made submissions to federal budget consultations, and supported the National Forum as a collective space for national, regional, and local organisations, experts and allies. The Forum, in turn, counts as a key success of the creation of a unified Basic Income Now campaign directed at the 2021 federal election.

A major success was the Green Resilience Project, a first of its kind initiative, bringing together 900 people for over 30 community conversations across Canada on the links between environmental and income security, documented in a powerful report on challenges and solutions.

At BICN and within the movement, we’ve learned we need to spell each other off at times, and to keep embracing new people, ideas and skills while respecting the accomplishments of those who have been on this journey longer.

BICN’s financial position is holding after pandemic losses but it needs a boost. We have applied for charitable status and are exploring new fund-raising strategies.

This year’s AGM is being held via Zoom on Thursday, May 26, 2022 at 7 pm ET. Board elections will be held electronically prior to the AGM.
REPORT -
APRIL 2021 TO MARCH 2022

CONTEXT

- Last year was one of ups and downs, but generally tough for people in Canada facing income insecurity, inequality, a pandemic, extreme weather events, inflation and now the spreading effects of war. Vaccine roll outs helped but covid is still with us. CERB’s positive effects in saving the economy, lives and livelihoods, reduced poverty and racial inequality. CERB was a great benefit to those who received it, but it was only temporary as pandemic benefits were reduced than withdrawn as the economy improved. But that doesn’t mean everyone is doing well. The need for a basic income is as great as ever.

- On the positive side, Canadian champions in Parliament continued to push for a basic income, resolutions at political conventions showed support for it, relationships with allies are growing, especially connections between income security and just transition goals. Even the appearance in March of an organised disinformation campaign opposed to basic income and Senate Bill S-233 calling for a national BI framework seems to have strengthened the resolve of supporters and even increased interest in the issue. These kinds of campaigns were linked to wider efforts to generate fear and anger, and to undermine democracy and trust in government. A basic income, can be seen, in contrast, as a good foundation for democracy.

ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The following are examples of contributions to the basic income arena in the past year. Increasingly, in leadership and supporting roles, BICN encouraged effective partnerships.

The Green Resilience Project

This project brought together 28 partners and about 900 people across Canada for 33 community conversations on the interconnections among climate change, income security and community resilience.
BICN Federal Engagement

In March, 2022, BICN made a written federal budget submission, again calling for a basic income designed in line with Option 1 in BICN’s Policy Options publication and supporting the need for a national framework in line with Bill C-223 and the same bill in the Senate as S-233. BICN was privileged to work with and support MP Gazan and Senator Pate as we did with MP Dzerowicz on her previous related Bill. We also wrote in support of parliamentarians working for a basic income in the face of disinformation campaigns designed to spread fear and distrust not just of this policy but of democracy and informed governance.

BICN participates among leading civil society groups invited to meetings of the All-Party AntiPoverty Caucus. In the spring of 2022, BICN Board members and allies also participated in the series of virtual public consultations held by the National Advisory Council on Poverty. The need for a basic income came up from many people in small group discussions at different themed sessions.

The final report of the Green Resilience Project presents the results, themes and recommendations drawn from conversations among diverse people including youth, Indigenous Peoples, artists and cultural workers, immigrants and other newcomers, some living in environmentally precarious and income-challenged communities.

The Green Resilience Project was managed and delivered by Energy Mix Productions, Basic Income Canada Network, Coalition Canada Basic Income – Revenu de base, Basic Income Canada Youth Network (BICYN), national experts, dedicated staff and local partners.

The Government of Canada provided funding support through Environment and Climate Change Canada’s Climate Action and Awareness Fund. The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Karina Gould, opened the event launching the final report. BICN is grateful to everyone involved and see community level and federal interest in this work as a positive sign for Canada.

Senators Kim Pate and Rosa Galvez, on the launch of the report noted that, “Consistent with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Sixth Assessment Report, which emphasized that avoiding the worst consequences of climate chaos is still possible, but only if governments take immediate and decisive action by 2030, the Green Resilience Project identifies income security—not having to fear being unable to afford food, shelter and other necessities—as a key factor that empowers people and communities with options to participate in and drive climate solutions.”
Basic Income Now Campaign

In order to influence the 2021 federal election held in September, BICN other organizations and allies developed a unified campaign with common messaging, website and strategies to help get attention to basic income as an election issue, and to get supportive candidates elected. Cooperation across people and organizations, drawing on various strengths and capacities, made many new advances possible. Among the successes: a pledge to actively work for a basic income generated healthy competition among candidates and several who pledged got elected: champions were re-elected; and public support was made visible through a professionally produced powerful video, campaign signs, t-shirts, marches and other events in several locations across the country. We were thrilled that BICN’s modest subsidies for the purchase of signs and t-shirts, and for interpretation at a Montreal event, was a catalyst for exciting events.

With basic income in the political arena now more than ever, action under the BINow banner will be a critical force for those of us outside government. Building on the lessons of the federal campaign, the focus for 2022 so far has been on strategy for the Ontario election on June 2 led by the Ontario Basic Income Network. BICN was also pleased to work with an MPP on a basic income bill for that province and to provide information to other interested candidates.

National Forum and Movement Growth

The BINow Campaign developed as an ‘operational arm’ of the National Forum. First convened by BICN in 2020, the Forum has met quarterly in the past year, co-organized by the four national groups, BICN, UBI Works, Coalition Canada, and the Basic Income Canada Youth Network (BICYN) bringing together basic income organizations across the country (national, regional, local) as well as independent experts and allies from other organizations to discuss issues and movement strategy. Forum sub-committees are working on future movement growth, direction and coordination and BICN is committed to supporting all of this work.

BICN worked with BICYN other partners to build an inventory of what we call stakeholder groups, those with different core mandates that have in various ways also shown support for basic income, such as signing letters or petitions, including the topic in webinars and making recommendations in studies and reports. We aim to make this a basis for further collaboration and ally building on shared goals.
BICN Public Communications

We were excited to launch our new BICN website in April 2021, along with other communications tools, to better promote general and plain language information for people new to basic income issues, while remaining a credible resource for those looking for deeper knowledge. We feature our unique work, such as the stories people across Canada have shared with us, our survey of Ontario pilot recipients, and the state-of-the-art Policy Options publication.

In 2021-22, BICN continued to seek out, respond to, and support interest from allies in other organizations; collaborate to develop webinars and other activities; write articles and letters to the editor; respond to television, radio, print, and other media requests; support and amplify petitions and other activities; and connect people across Canada and around the world. A key article BICN published was an interview with Rabia Khedr, a leader in the disability movement. She shared her perspectives on the proposed new federal Disability Benefit and how she sees it as a step towards a comprehensive basic income guarantee for all.

The BIG Conference

The first virtual North American Basic Income Congress was held in June 2021, with BICN on the organizing team led by American organizations. With over 700 participants from many countries it was a great success. It enabled us to showcase work done in Canada and highlight particular strengths—federal political champions and a policy path that builds on existing income guarantees for seniors and children, large pilots, and BICN’s rigorous modelling in Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada. We also learned from American areas of strength, especially the growing alliance of mayors running local basic income pilots, and funding from foundations that enables growth and collaboration in the US movement.

Following that success, BICN and BICYN have been part of the US-led planning team for the newly named BIG Conference, being held in hybrid form this year. Portland, Oregon will be the site for in-person meetings on June 23 and 24, and virtually June 25, 2022. We have been working with several colleagues to plan specific virtual sessions on The Political Ecology of the Basic Income Movement in Canada.
BIEN Congress

The Basic Income Earth Network Congress organized by a team in Glasgow, Scotland was held virtually from August 18-21, 2021. The co-authors of BICN’s signature publication, Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada, shared this work with international audiences. A session that included colleagues from Québec, BICN, France, the US, the UK, and India was especially interesting from a Canadian policy design perspective, recognizing the importance of understanding existing national policy and political context and how we can learn from others.

GOVERNANCE AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The BICN Board has 13 director positions. There are seven two-year term positions open for election in 2022. Those eligible to vote include directors, a circle of advisors and representatives of regional basic income groups.

In May 2021, Brian Einarson (BC), Sid Frankel (MB), and Shari Laliberté (BC) were elected as new directors, along with re-elected members Sameer Nurmohamed (ON), John Rook (AB), and Pierre Stevens (NS). They joined continuing members Enrique Garcia (ON), Tara Kainer (ON), John Mills (ON), Hannah Pazderka (AB), Monika Viktorova (ON), Sheila Regehr (ON), and Jenna van Draanen (BC) whose terms are up in 2022. Enrique, John M., Hannah, and Sheila are seeking re-election.

Just a few months ago, Monika Viktorova, who was a key part of the BINow march in Toronto in 2021, stepped down from the Board as she moved to take up a new career opportunity in the Netherlands. Tara Kainer, a basic income advocate for many years in different roles, is stepping down when her current term ends and is devoting attention to the revitalized, active local group in Kingston. Jenna van Draanen, BICN’s long-standing member of BICN’s executive team, Cochair for the last few years, and a former executive member of BIEN is also stepping down at the end of her term as she has taken on new and very demanding responsibilities at the university where she teaches.

We want to express our deep appreciation to departing directors who have offered so much wisdom and guidance. We wish them well, knowing their commitment to basic income is as solid as ever. We look forward to new members coming on board with their own talents and strengths to offer.

Following elections, the new Board will determine executive roles among its members. Please check the website after the AGM for results.

BICN Annual Report 2021-22
FINANCIAL REPORT

BICN’s financial picture is fairly stable although we did lose funding during the pandemic, had to draw down funds for a second year, and the donor situation is still precarious for us and many other non-profits. We have continued to be highly effective, however, during a period when interest in basic income is high and the need for it is growing.

We were fortunate that the Green Resilience Project, our largest partnership project ever, was funded entirely by the federal government. It allowed talented staff to be hired to carry it out with amazing success while BICN, in partnership with Energy Mix Productions, provided resources in terms of leadership, time, expertise and connections across the country.

While the number of basic income groups being formed is increasing, BICN is the only national registered non-profit organization and we want to find ways to increase capacity to support regional and local action. We have applied for charitable status and are awaiting a decision. Having this status would not only allow us to provide tax receipts to donors, it would open doors to foundations and other institutional funders. We have also been exploring ways to improve our fund-raising capacity to support BICN’s work and wider movement activity.

| BICN Balance Statement  
(March 31, 2022) |  |
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<td>Accrued income - previous years</td>
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<td>- 2021/22 deficit</td>
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<td>Revenue</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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PLANS AND PRIORITIES
2022/23

CONTEXT

- We anticipate another year of uncertainty and anxiety. An even stronger public push for basic income will be needed, including with allies seeking greater equality and a just transition. The positive effects of pandemic benefits in reducing inequality were temporary. Inequality and hardship are worsening again, with inflation, another wave of Covid, and climate chaos adding pressures on individual and community capacity to meet needs.

- There was no mention of income security in the 2022 Federal Budget, not even the Disability Benefit. The Liberal/New Democratic Party accord identifies other priorities, although both parties seem to indicate that more is needed than was specified. To ensure progress we must push for transformational change to prevent government path-dependency on outdated income security program models.

PRIORITIES AND EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2022/23

- Some plans are firm while others may be more fluid, depending on political and other circumstances.

- We will organize sessions during the BIG Conference virtual day, June 25, focused on the ‘political ecology of basic income in Canada’ to strengthen the effectiveness of our actions. BICN and Energy Mix Productions will also hold a session on the Green Resilience Report.

- We will promote and amplify the results of the Green Resilience Project, further engage the federal government on its recommendations and explore how the project could evolve. We want to support work that brings diverse people together and engages the wider public such as through community conversations, webinars, local townhalls and other creative initiatives. We hope our fundraising and stakeholder efforts will expand the possibilities.

- We will continue our work with colleagues on the BiNow Campaign for the Ontario election and take lessons from that to help hone political strategy in other provinces, territories and municipalities. We’ll support and encourage political champions in all jurisdictions.
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 are thrilled to have tenacious political champions at all levels of government. We also extend profound thanks to researchers, writers, journalists, activists, and others in Canada and around the world, some of whom have been in this movement for decades and others bringing new energy and diverse insights to keep us moving forward. As the Green Resilience Project clearly showed, people want to be part of the solutions our societies need. Our governments in Canada have the capacity to empower them.

**THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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 are thrilled to have tenacious political champions at all levels of government. We also extend profound thanks to researchers, writers, journalists, activists, and others in Canada and around the world, some of whom have been in this movement for decades and others bringing new energy and diverse insights to keep us moving forward. As the Green Resilience Project clearly showed, people want to be part of the solutions our societies need. Our governments in Canada have the capacity to empower them.

**DONATE**

Millions of people across Canada support basic income because...
- Participants in pilots held in Ontario and Manitoba report improved health and wellbeing without significant work disincentives.
- Teenagers were able to complete high school instead of working to support their families.
- The economic benefits of a guaranteed national basic income program are predicted to stimulate the economy. We are in the thick of the action. Join hands with us to work towards making Basic Income a reality for all in Canada we urgently need to rebuild our finances for future action.

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

Website: https://basicincomecanada.org/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BasicIncomeCanada/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/basicincomecdn

If you have feedback, questions, or thoughts to share, please reach us at info@basicincomecanada.org

Read news, events, happenings about basic income on our 'In the News' section

Sign up for our newsletter at https://basicincomecanada.org/newsletter/

BICN Annual Report 2021-22