



BIEN - Basic Income Earth Network NEWSFLASH 50 March 2008

www.basicincome.org

The Basic Income Earth Network was founded in 1986 as the Basic Income European Network. It expanded its scope from Europe to the Earth in 2004. It serves as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income, and fosters informed discussion on this topic throughout the world.

The present NewsFlash has been prepared with the help of *Paul Nollen, David Casassas, Jurgen De Wispelaere, Claudia & Dirk Haarmann, Seán Healy, Dirk Jacobi, Rob Rainer, Guy Standing, Philippe Van Parijs, and Karl Widerquist.*

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

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1. 12th BIEN CONGRESS, June 2008, Dublin (Ireland)

There has been a huge response to the call for papers for the 12th International Congress of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) which will be held on 20-21 June 2008 in Dublin, Ireland. More than 75 papers have been accepted and these will be presented in 25 parallel sessions during the two days of the Congress. There will also be a series of plenary sessions with featured speakers. These featured speakers include:

- Peter Townsend (One of the world's leading authorities on social policy - London School of Economics)
- Michael Kitt (Government Minister, Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland)
- Vivienne Taylor (Chaired the South African Government's Task Force on Basic Income; Professor, University of Cape Town)
- Carole Pateman, (School of European Studies, Cardiff University, UK)
- Katja Kipping (Member of the German Parliament representing the Left Party)
- Hugh D. Segal (Senator, Canadian Parliament representing the Conservative Party)
- Pablo Yanes (Mexico)
- Charles M. A. Clark (Professor of Economics, St John's University, New York)
- Richard Caputo (Professor of Social Policy & Research, Yeshiva University - Wilf Campus, New York).

The theme of this World Congress is: **Inequality and Development in a Globalised Economy - The Basic Income Option**. This two-day event will be preceded by a one-day event (June 19, 2008) which will focus on Basic Income in Ireland and link it to development choices Ireland is currently facing. The 'Ireland Day' (9.45am to 5.00pm) is open to all participants in the World Congress at a discounted rate.

Among the parallel sessions there will be panels (three papers per panel for the most part) on Basic Income and topics ranging from global justice to gender and care, from migrants to the environment. Routes to introducing a Basic Income system will be identified and discussed. The experiences of many countries (from the global north and south) will be presented. Issues of social justice and the meaning of life, freedom and reciprocity and the institutional implications of Basic Income will be analysed. Global and regional issues will be discussed as will the economic implications of introducing a Basic Income. There will be detailed analysis of an example of Basic Income in practice and there will be detailed presentations on a variety of ways of funding a Basic Income system.

The full programme will be available at the Congress dedicated website www.basicincomeireland.com from April 23rd, 2008. The venue for Congress 2008 will be the Quinn Business School in University College Dublin (UCD). The terminus of one of the city bus routes is outside the door of the Quinn Business School so it will be easy to travel to and from the venue.

People can register for the Congress and pay their registration fee online by going to www.basicincomeireland.com and following the directions on the site. **To secure a place at the Congress registration must be completed and fully paid by May 19, 2008.**

2. EVENTS

* **CIUDAD DE MEXICO (MX)**, 23 February 2008: Public lecture on basic income (Ingreso básico universal y libertad real para todos)

A social and feminist activist, Patricia Mercado reached national fame when standing as a candidate at Mexico's 2006 presidential election without the backing of one of the big parties (PAN, PRD, PRI). Her movement, Voz alternativa, has a feminist-green-left-liberal flavour and has been paying great attention to the proposal of universal basic income. She organized and chaired in Mexico-City on the 23rd of February 2008 a public lecture delivered by Philippe Van Parijs (Louvain & Harvard) and the animated discussion that followed.

A video of the event is accessible on the internet: <http://video.google.es/videoplay?docid=-1091293154525118475>.

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* **BOSTON (US)**, 7-9 March 2008: Seventh USBIG Congress

The Seventh Congress of the USBIG Network was held at the Park Plaza Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts on March 7-9, 2008. More than 30 speakers discussed different aspects of the basic income debate. Sessions included a round-table on the question of what it means to be a free person, featuring Karl Widerquist, Phil Harvey, Michael Howard, and Kieran Oberman and Robert Jubb. Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds, both of the Council of the Religious of Ireland, discussed the efforts to put BIG on the political agenda in Ireland. Al Sheahan discussed the rise and fall of the Basic Income Guarantee Bill in the U.S. Congress. Steve Shafarman discussed how to make it an issue in the 2008 campaign. Richard Wamai and James Mulvale discussed the politics of BIG in South Africa and Canada, respectively.

Stephen Clark, Buford Farris, and Charles M.A. Clark debated the theological and moral aspects of BIG. Jurgen De Wispelaere, of Trinity College Dublin, discussed the problems of governing a social system with basic income. Yannick Vanderborght discussed the prospects for BIG in electoral politics around the world. Senator Eduardo Suplicy of Brazil presented a video documentary of his recent trip to Iraq to lobby the nation's leaders to adopt a basic income.

The issue of BIG and poverty was debated by Micheál Collins, Samuel Butler, Ernie Lightman, and Seong Gee Um. The issue of BIG and work was debated by Chirstain Roy, Phil Harvey, and Jeffery Smith. Various perspectives on distribution and redistribution were put forward by Roy Morriuson, Rabbi Carla Theodore, Gary Flomenhoft, and Dan O'Sullivan. Philippe Van Parijs, of Harvard University, spoke near the end of the conference with an overview of some of the sessions.

Guy Standing, of the University of Bath, reported on the basic income pilot project being conducted by the Basic Income Grant Coalition of Namibia. The project is organized by the Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition of Namibia and funded entirely by private donations. Standing made a request for donations to support the project (see “glimpses of national debates below).

(From USBIG Newsletter 48)

* **BERLIN (DE)**, 24 – 26 October 2008: Third German Basic Income Congress

“On the Way to Basic Income – Unconditional and Viable” (« Auf dem Weg zum Grundeinkommen - bedingungslos und existenzsichernd »). Under this title, the Berlin

Congress will discuss a wide range of approaches to basic income, from philosophical concepts to practical policy proposals. Current congress plans are published on the German Basic Income Network's website www.grundeinkommen.de. Presently, the schedule offers more than ten main events such as lectures and panel discussions as well as 36 workshops to be held in two blocks of two hours each.

For further information: <http://www.grundeinkommen.de> (see also NewsFlash 49).

3. SENATOR SUPPLY IN BAGHDAD

In January 2008, Co-chair of BIEN and Brazilian Senator Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy has spent a few days in Baghdad, where he met several Iraqi officials and defended basic income as a way to "democratize and pacify Iraq". Below is an excerpt of his report. The full version is available at http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/Newsletter_ProvisionalFile/SuplicyIraq.pdf. A 25-minute documentary on the trip is also available on Suplicy's homepage: <http://www.senado.gov.br/eduardosuplicy>

A Basic Income to Democratize and Pacify Iraq
by Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy

Last March, 2007, when Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the ex-Prime Minister of Iraq (02/23/05-05/20/2006) visited Brazil, I had the opportunity to have a conversation with him in Brasilia as well as in São Paulo. I told him that in April 2003, shortly before the Brazilian Sergio Vieira de Mello was nominated as the United Nations representative in Iraq, I had written to Mr. de Mello suggesting that the Iraqis could consider following the example of the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend system, a pioneer and successful example of a Citizen's Basic Income. Because of the country's huge oil reserves, Iraq could follow this path. I explained him how Sergio Vieira de Mello wrote back to me on April 30, 2003, saying that he considered the proposition a very positive one and that he would take it to the administrative authorities of Iraq.

On June 23 of that year, in the Reconciliation Summit of Amman, Ambassador J. Paul Bremer III who was responsible for administering Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, said that Iraqis could follow the Alaskan example so that all of them could feel as having a stake in the wealth of the nation. On August 1st, Vieira de Mello called me from Baghdad saying that the proposal was being positively considered and that the World Bank mission had deemed it to be viable. Unfortunately he was a victim together with 21 more persons in the attack of the UN Office in Baghdad on August 19 of that year. Ibrahim al-Jaafari today is a member of the National Assembly of Iraq and leader of Islamic Dawa Party, the main political party of the United Iraqi Alliance coalition that supports the government. He is a Shiite and was previously one of the two vice-presidents of Iraq under the Iraqi Interim Government in 2004. I also told him that the Brazilian National Congress had approved the Law 10.835 that institutes an unconditional Citizen's Basic Income, sanctioned by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in January 8, 2004. The law says that it will be established step-by-step, under the Executive Power's criteria, starting with those most in need, as the present Bolsa Família Program does, until the day when everyone in Brazil will have that right. As the proponent of the bill, and Co-Chair of the Basic Income Earth Network, BIEN, since 2004, I had been ready to go to Iraq to explain to their government and parliament how this instrument could contribute to the democratization and pacification of the Nation. Other economists and political thinkers such as Steve Clemons, Guy Standing, Steven Schafarman and the ex-Governor of Alaska, Jay Hammond, had also made the same proposal.

As a result, last April I received an official invitation from the President of the Iraqi National Assembly to visit Baghdad (...)

The full document is available at:

http://www.etes.ucl.ac.be/BIEN/Newsletter_ProvisionalFile/SuplicyIraq.pdf

4. GLIMPSES OF NATIONAL DEBATES

*** BRAZIL: HIGH TAKE-UP FOR BOLSA FAMILIA PROGRAMME**

The Bolsa Família Program (Family Scholarship Program), which is often seen as a step towards a basic income for all Brazilians, constitutes one of the main instruments of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to secure that all Brazilians may be able to feed themselves at least three times per day, to eradicate hunger and absolute poverty in Brazil. According to the law that defines the program, all families with income *per capita* below R\$ 120,00 may have access to the Bolsa Família. Currently US\$ 1.00 is equivalent to R\$ 1.72.

Families must show that their children up to six years of age are taking the vaccines recommended by the Ministry of Health, as well as visit the health posts to check their development and nutrition. The children above 7 must attend at least 85% of the classes in school. The parents, wherever possible, must endeavor to do literacy and professional improvement courses.

From March 17 of this year on, those families that attend those criteria and also have adolescents of 16 and 17 years of age that attend at least 85% of school classes have the right to receive the Youth Variable Benefit (Benefício Variável Jovem) of R\$ 30.00 for each one, with a maximum of two, that is, R\$ 60.00. Therefore, now the Bolsa Família benefit may vary from a minimum of R\$ 18.00 to a maximum of R\$ 172.00 per family.

In February 2008, there were 11.12 million families enrolled in the Bolsa Família Program. This is near 100% of the families that have monthly income per capita below R\$ 120.00. Taking into account an average of 4 persons per family, this corresponds to about 44.4 million or one third of the present Brazilian population of 186.5 millions today.

Presently the Minister of Social Development is coordinating efforts with the Brazilian Army to reach and find all Brazilians that still do not have their Identification Card. The Government estimates that there maybe 3 million Brazilians still without any registration.

In 2007, the Brazilian government spent R\$ 7.5 billion with the Bolsa Família Program. For 2008, with the adjustments in the benefit values, the Federal Government Budget estimates expenditures of R\$ 11 billion with the program. There is a consensus among analysts that the Bolsa Família program among other policies, has contributed for diminishing the Inequality Gini Coefficient of Brazil from 0.563, in 2002, to 0.541, in 2006.

*** CANADA: DISCUSSIONS ON A "GUARANTEED ANNUAL INCOME"**

Tory Senator Hugh Segal keeps promoting the idea of a "guaranteed annual income" in Canada. On February 11, 2008, he filed a motion asking that the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology "be authorized to examine and report on the implementation of a guaranteed annual income system, including the negative income tax model, as a qualitative improvement in income security, with a view to reducing the number of Canadians now living under the poverty line". In a recent speech given at the Fraser Institute Luncheon Series (Montreal, March 11, 2008), he defended Milton Friedman's negative income tax proposal: "A modern, productive and economically value-added country requires a clear, efficient, sustainable and direct means of bridging citizens who fall behind;

(...) When potentially, actually or previously productive citizens fall behind, they must have a bridge – a passageway, a “life-cost” allowance which sees them through the rough spots. The GAI-Negative Income Tax would and could do just that – and we should not dither on making it a real policy choice.” (see Segal’s website: <http://sen.parl.gc.ca/hsegal/>).

Another conservative figure, Reginald Stackhouse, a former Member of the Federal House of Commons, now principal emeritus and research professor at Wycliffe College (University of Toronto), had published a column in *The Toronto Star* (February 17, 2008), arguing in favour of a basic income programme for Canada. "Some ideas are rejected in the public forum not because they have been tried and found wanting but because they have been found challenging and not tried", Stackhouse writes. "One of them is a proposal that can really make poverty history in this country – no, not by increasing any or all of our existing social programs. Just the opposite. They will be replaced by a basic income policy, a.k.a. guaranteed annual income or negative income tax. It will provide all Canadians with an annual income, regardless of what other income they enjoy, earned or unearned." (column available at: <http://www.thestar.com/comment/article/304074>)

In the meanwhile, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) is still actively promoting the idea of a Canadian basic income (see previous issues of BIEN's NewsFlash). In March 2008, it engaged in a lively discussion with the *Canadian Auto Workers* Union (CAW, one of Canada's largest private sectors union, see <http://www.caw.ca/>).

CAW expressed some concern about how guaranteed income could undermine efforts to improve labour standards including the minimum wage. In an e-mail exchange with Rob Rainer, Executive Director of NAPO, Laurell Ritchie, National Representative of CAW-Canada, referred to the 1985 report of the famous "Macdonald Commission" and stressed that "the Macdonald Commission not only proposed eliminating social programs to pay for the Guaranteed Annual Income, but also proposed *cutting* Unemployment Insurance (reduce benefits to 50% of earnings, increase qualifying requirements, apply experience-rating, etc.) and *less emphasis on minimum wage laws* since the benefit would 'provide a wage subsidy for very low wage workers... this arrangement will allow governments to de-emphasize minimum wages as a policy device' The first draft reportedly called for an end to minimum wage laws (...)". Furthermore, according to Laurell Ritchie current proposals for the implementation of basic income in Canada imply a "incredible" cost. Which concessions, she asks, "are we expected to make?".

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Or Laurell Ritchie: laurell.ritchie@caw.ca

* **GERMANY: LIFE-MEMBER OF BIEN BECOMES GREEN MP**

Life-time member of BIEN Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn got member of the German parliament on the 4th of January 2008. His predecessor resigned and Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn took over the mandate for the Green party. He is now speaker for foreign trade policy. Wolfgang Strengmann-Kuhn is also known for his academic research on the reform and funding of social security systems, as well as on poverty issues.

Further information: <http://www.strengmann-kuhn.de/>

* **NAMIBIA: SECOND PAYOUT OF BASIC INCOME GRANT**

As was announced in BIEN NewsFlash 49, on January 15, 2008 the Namibian Basic Income Grant (BIG) Coalition started with the implementation of a basic income in one Namibian community, namely the Otjivero - Omitara settlement (consisting of about 1,000 people, some

100 km to the east of Windhoek) for a limited period of time (2 years,) to practically prove that income security indeed works and that it has the desired effects.

According to the coalition, the second payout of the Basic Income Grant in Otjivero-Omitara was a resounding success. The Namibian Pilot Project received strong support messages from Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Senator Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy (Brazil), General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko and many others. Deputy Bishop H. Kisting delivered the keynote address on behalf of Bishop Dr. Z. Kameeta to the community as well as the national media, and the Honourable Governor David Boois expressed his continued support.

USBIG also reports that at its congress in Boston on March 7-9, 2008, a presentation of the arguments for a basic income in Africa was made by Guy Standing, co-chair of BIEN. Afterwards, members of USBIG made individual contributions to a collection to be sent to Namibia as an expression of solidarity. The money will be used to supplement the small fund set up to finance the scheme.

If anyone would like to contribute to the project, please contact the Namibian BIG Coalition at cd.haarmann@gmx.ne, or go to the Basic Income Grant Coalition's website (www.bignam.org) and download the pledge form with instructions on how to transfer money to the coalition's bank account. The project is being properly audited and is overseen by the BIG Coalition Namibia and an international advisory board. It may be a tiny scheme but it could be a harbinger of an effective way of tackling poverty in Africa, and one which will advance the cause of economic rights and global citizenship.

For further information contact: Basic Income Grant Coalition Secretariat: c/o Desk for Social Development (ELCRN) 5069 Windhoek, Namibia Telephone: +264 (61) 235466 Fax: +264 (61) 235499

Website: <http://www.bignam.org/> E-mail: cd.haarmann@gmx.ne

* SOUTH AFRICA: TRADE UNION OPPOSES WAGE SUBSIDY

On February 22, 2008, online newspaper BusinessDay (<http://www.businessday.co.za/>), reported that South Africa's main union confederation COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) opposed proposals made by Finance Minister Trevor Manuel for a wage subsidy to help bring low-income workers into the economy. Instead, it "called called for the money to be used for the implementation of a basic income grant (...). Cosatu reiterated its proposals for a basic income grant of R100 a month paid to every person legally resident in SA regardless of age or income". In the meanwhile, the *People's Budget Coalition*, an important NGO, also reiterated its call for a basic income grant as part of its national budget wish list.

For the story on COSATU, see

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/national.aspx?ID=BD4A711908>

On the *People's Budget Coalition*, see:

http://www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news_business/&articleid=332718

* UNITED STATES: Legislators propose to dip into the Alaska Permanent Fund

According to a USBIG report (Newsletter 48), the recent increase in energy prices has had contradictory effects on Alaska. The government and oil producers have benefited greatly from increased oil revenue, but most ordinary Alaskans have had to pay much more in energy costs. Thus the state has a huge budget surplus while most individuals have much tighter

budgets. Wesley Loy, of the Alaska Daily News, reports that the Alaskan legislature has been contemplating using the additional energy revenue to help ordinary Alaskans cope with their higher energy bills. The help might to come in the form of a US\$500 cash dividend on top of this year's Permanent Fund Dividend. However, this money would be taken from the profits of the Alaska Permanent Fund and it would therefore, decrease the size of all future dividends. Some legislators have questioned the wisdom of mortgaging future dividends to pay for high fuel prices this year when fuel prices are likely to remain high next year and perhaps for years to come. Some legislators have suggested financing the additional dividend through regular tax revenues without dipping into the profits of the Permanent Fund.

For Wesley Loy's Alaska Daily News report on the proposal, go to: <http://www.adn.com/politics/story/351745.html> For Sean Cokerham's report on the proposal go to: <http://www.adn.com/legislature/story/291117.html>

5. PUBLICATIONS

*ENGLISH

BIRNBAUM, Simon (2008), *Just Distribution: Rawlsian Liberalism and the Politics of Basic Income*, Stockholm: Stockholm University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Political Science, 242 pages, ISBN: 978-91-7155-570-0

Should liberal egalitarians endorse the idea of an unconditional basic income for all? This PhD thesis defends a politics of unconditional universalism, offering a liberty-respecting and non-perfectionist basis for maximin-guided policies. The argument starts off from a Rawlsian justification of basic income in the context of institutional ideal theory. This view is based on the aim of maximising the prospects of the least advantaged in ways consistent with a robust protection of people's effective freedom, the social bases of self-respect and access to meaningful activities at each stage of their lives.

Birnbaum then moves on to specify such a position in response to objections based on ideas of fair cooperation and strong reciprocity. Linking John Rawls' arguments on property-owning democracy to Philippe Van Parijs' case for 'gift-equalisation', the study defends the view that a basic income is not inherently exploitative or beyond the scope of justice. To the extent that unconditional universalism is tied to the idea of sharing gift-like resources, it is just a matter of distributing wealth to which nobody has a justified prior claim, not an unfair redistribution of labour income.

Introducing a problem of feasibility, however, Simon Birnbaum also argues that unconditional wealth sharing may fail to meet liberal commitments and to counter structural exploitation unless constrained by other requirements of justice. The latter include a minimal autonomy constraint on maximin-objectives and the set of in kind transfers and social infrastructure needed to foster the activities and virtues on which the stability of this ideal relies. The thesis concludes with a study on the application of such standards to real-world conditions. It is argued that policy options combining a modest basic income with work-based social insurance and universal access to social services are more promising than strategies where a high basic income would replace core components of the welfare state.

For further information : <http://www.diva-portal.org/su/theses/abstract.xsql?dbid=7385>

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BUICK, Adam (2008), 'Basic Income: A Dangerous Reform', *Socialist Standard*, 104 (1243), March 2008, p.12.

The *Socialist Standard* is the monthly journal of the *Socialist Party of Great Britain*. In this article, former Party's General Secretary Adam Buick attacks the idea of a basic income, as is being defended by the *Green Party of England and Wales*. According to Buick, "if a Basic Income scheme is ever introduced, it's not likely to be more than some limited reform of the tax and benefits system. But even it were to be introduced in full it could turn out to be counter-productive for the working class by leading to an across-the-board decrease in wages." In his article, Buick also refers to Daniel Raventos' recent book on the topic (entitled "Basic Income: The Material Conditions of Freedom", it has been published by Pluto Press, see NewsFlash 48, November 2007).

Buick's article is available at <http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/mar08/page12.html>

CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS OF IRELAND (2008), *Planning For Progress and Fairness*, Dublin: CORI, 233 pages.

The Justice Department of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) has published the 2008 edition of its annual Socio-Economic Review. This 233-page document entitled *Planning For Progress and Fairness*, contains detailed analysis on a wide range of issues including: the economic context, the social context, meeting commitments, establishing priorities, income distribution, poverty, taxation, work, public services, housing and accommodation, healthcare, education and education disadvantage, migration and intercultural issues, participation, sustainability, environment, rural development, the Developing World and values.

One section of the Review is entirely devoted to basic income. As CORI Justice has designed it, "a basic income system would replace social welfare. It would guarantee an income above the poverty line for everyone. It would not be means tested. There would be no "signing on" and no restrictions or conditions. In practice a basic income recognises the right of every person to a share of the resources of society." Basic income, CORI argues, "ensures that looking for a paid job and earning an income, or increasing one's income while in employment, is always worth pursuing, because for every euro earned the person will retain a large part. It thus removes the many poverty traps and unemployment traps that may be in the present system. Furthermore, women and men get equal payments in a basic income system. Consequently the basic income system promotes gender equality because it treats every person equally."

The review can be accessed via the front page of CORI's website at www.cori.ie or directly from this link: <http://www.cori.ie/Justice/32-News/514-cori-justice-publishes-annual-socio-economic-review2008>

DOUGLAS, Paul H. (1924), 'The British Discussion of Family Endowment', *Journal of Social Forces*, 3 (1), (Nov., 1924), pp. 118-124.

In this article published in November 1924, Paul H. Douglas discusses several proposals for 'family endowments' in the British context. The article includes a discussion of the 'State Bonus Scheme', a basic income for all proposed by Dennis Milner within the Labour Party. As is stressed by Douglas, Milner's proposal was rejected by the Labour Party in 1922.

The article is available at JSTOR (suscribers only): <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1532-1282%28192411%293%3A1%3C118%3ATBDOFE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-4>

SHAFARMAN, Steven (2008), *Peaceful, Positive Revolution: Economic Security for Every American*, Aurora: Tendril Press, ISBN 978-0-9802190-1-2

This is the fifth book by Steven Shafarman, founder and president of the Citizen Policies Advocates and a member of the coordinating committee of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network. He writes: "Citizen Policies will unite ordinary Americans and empower us to get the government we want and deserve. Together, we can end hunger and homelessness. We can reform our education and health care systems. We can revitalize our towns and cities. We can reverse global warming. We can have peace in Iraq, the Middle East, and everywhere." (from USBIG Newsletter 48)

See : www.CitizenPolicies.org

* FRENCH

DAMON, Julien (2007), 'Revenu universel et dotation en capital: trois orientations', *Les Echos*, December 13, 2007, p.15.

In this short review article, Julien Damon (Associate Professor at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris) discusses three recent publications on basic income and capital grants: Charles Murray's *In Our Hands* (2006), Paxton, White & Maxwell's *The Citizen's Stake* (2006), and Ackerman, Alstott & Van Parijs' *Redesigning Distribution* (2006).

See: <http://www.lesechos.fr/>

* PORTUGUESE

SUPLICY, Eduardo Matarazzo (2008), 'Uma experiência pioneira de Renda Básica', *Jornal do Brasil*, April 1, 2008.

A short newspaper article by co-chair of BIEN and Brazilian Senator Eduardo Suplicy, giving some details on Namibia's basic income pilot project (see NewsFlash 49).

See: <http://jbonline.terra.com.br/>

* SPANISH

ACKERMAN, Bruce, Anne ALSTOTT & Philippe VAN PARIJS, *Repensando la distribución. El ingreso básico ciudadano como alternativa para un capitalismo más igualitario*, Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre ("Derecho y Sociedad"), Traducción y comentario de Everaldo Lamprea Montealegre, 2008, 360p.

This is a Spanish translation of the volume previously published in English in Erik O. Wright's "Real Utopias series". It contains all the original essays - the lead pieces by Ackerman and Alstott (Yale University) on basic capital and by Philippe Van Parijs (Louvain and Harvard) on basic income and their respective replies, and comments by Barbara Bergmann, Julian Le Grand, Irwin Garfinkel, Carole Pateman, Guy Standing, Stuart White and Erik Wright. In addition, the volume includes a brief prologue by César Rodríguez Garavito (Universidad de los Andes, Bogota) and a fifty-page long concluding essay by the translator Everaldo Lamprea Montealegre (also Universidad de los Andes) on the relevance of

this "North-Atlantic" debate for the "Global South". The latter, he argues, offers a greater potential for universal basic income proposals than North-Atlantic countries, which are stuck with more developed, yet highly conditional transfer systems. Evidence for this is the fact that Brazil is the only nation in the world which, since January 2004, has a law that attributes to each citizen a universal basic income. However, as Lamprea recognizes, the provisions in the law itself stipulate that it will be introduced gradually, starting with the neediest. And Brazil's subsequent public debates and policies remain at the level of means-tested schemes. The way forward, he believes, for both Brazil and Colombia, consists in introducing universal schemes for either the old or the young. And owing to their far greater impact on poverty and inequality, universal child benefits are to be preferred to universal old-age pensions.

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PEREZ MUNOZ, Cristian & REY PEREZ, José Luis (2007), ¿Garantías del ingreso para garantizar el trabajo?, *Revista de ciencia política* (Santiago, Chile), 27 (1), p.89-109. ISSN 0718-090X.

In this paper, the authors offer a normative evaluation of the Universal Basic Income proposal (UBI), contrasting it to the "guaranteed job" and "right to work" proposals. Firstly, they present the main arguments that justify a UBI. Secondly, they examine some of the most relevant reasons to believe that a UBI can be a desirable redistributive plan. Thirdly, they analyse the idea that an unconditional and universal income redistribution policy violates the reciprocity principle. They argue that a redistributive policy like UBI is a better way to achieve the objectives put forward by "guaranteed job" promoters, especially by those advocates of the present workfare policies.

The article is available online at

http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_serial&pid=0718-090X&lng=es&nrm=iso

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YANES, Pablo ed. *Derecho a la existencia y libertad real para todos*, Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México & Secretariado de Desarrollo Social, Mexico, 2007, 278p.

On the 6th and 7th of June 2007, an international seminar on basic income was held in Mexico City at the initiative of the prospective Mexican branch of BIEN (the Grupo Promotor del Ingreso Universal en México, or ICU-Mexico), with the participation of Eduardo Suplicy (Sao Paulo), Daniel Raventos (Barcelona), David Casassas (Oxford), Maria Julia Bertomeu (Universidad de la Plata) and a number of Mexican speakers.

The full proceedings of the meeting have been published in an attractive book format. They contain some contributions that cover the history of the proposal and general arguments in its favour, and other contributions that focus on its relevance for Mexico. Among other original components, there is an instructive account of the Argentinian debate by Maria Julia Bertomeu, and a remarkably vigorous introduction jointly signed by Rector Manuel Pérez Rocha (Autonomous University of Mexico City) and Minister Martí Batres Guadarrama (Secretary for Social Development, Federal District of Mexico). It even mentions a plan to create a study programme devoted to the interdisciplinary study of the universal basic income proposal. The important meeting recorded in this book can be regarded as the founding event of a basic income network in Mexico. America's four biggest countries now have one.

Contact: www.icu.org.mx

6. NEW LINKS

* BASIC INCOME ENCYCLOPEDIA READY TO START

Belgian basic income activist Paul Nollen has launched a Wiki Basic Income Encyclopedia, and asks for the cooperation of all persons interested in basic income. The link is <http://wiki.basicincome.be> Everyone may work on the wiki, but it is necessary to subscribe. The way to work on the wiki is the same as in "Wikipedia". In order to start working on the wiki after logon <http://wiki.basicincome.be/logon/> please visit the discussion page of the home page <http://wiki.basicincome.be/wiki/Discussion%3AHomePage/> and the "starting a page" info http://wiki.basicincome.be/wiki/Discussion%3AHomePage/#Starting_a_Page

* SUPPLY ONLINE

Co-chair of BIEN and Brazilian Senator Eduardo Suplicy now has his own website: <http://www.senado.gov.br/eduardosuplicy>

* CITIZEN'S INCOME IN CANADA

A citizen's income website has been launched at <http://www.citizensincome.ca> Furthermore, the Canadian Social Research website has a page dedicated to a "Guaranteed Annual Income": <http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/gai.htm>

* WIN WIN ECONOMICS ON THE NATIONAL DIVIDEND

A special issue of the online journal 'WIN WIN ECONOMICS' (USA) devoted to a discussion of a 'national dividend' proposal.
See: <http://community.icontact.com/p/qualitylifeplan>

* VIDEO ON BASIC INCOME

In this short conference, Professor Jim Mulvale (University of Regina, Canada) and Professor Rhonda Breitreuez (University of Alberta, Canada) argue for a guaranteed basic income for all in order to ameliorate or eliminate poverty. The video is available at <http://www.thoughtware.tv/videos/show/1522>

* 23 THESES ON BASIC INCOME

An English translation of an article on basic income by freelance researcher Theophil Wonneberger's is available at: <http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2008/02/371801.shtml>.
The original version (in German) is available at <http://theophil.de/>

* GERMAN PETITION IN FAVOUR OF BASIC INCOME

Heiner Holzapfel has launched a petition in favour of basic income, which he has the intention to submit to the German Federal parliament. For further details: www.grundrechtsschutzinitiative.de or contact Holzapfel at ...

* ITALIAN WEBSITE DEVOTED TO BASIC INCOME

Nereo Villa (Piacenza, Italy) has designed a website for the discussion of basic income and related proposals.
http://digilander.libero.it/EpikieiaVostrAmata/proposta_di_nereo_villa_per_una_vita_conviviale.htm

7. ABOUT THE BASIC INCOME EARTH NETWORK

Co-chair:

Eduardo SUPPLY, Federal Senator, Sao Paulo, Brazil

Guy STANDING, Professor of Economic Security, University of Bath, and Professor of Labour Economics, Monash University

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

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 David Casassas <david.casassas@uab.cat> Secretary of BIEN, 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.

B(I)ENEFACTORS:

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