

Social Outreach

Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN)

Report to the General Assembly 2022

Julio Linares

Basic Income or Catastrophe

This will be my fourth year as a member of the Executive Committee of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN). Serving BIEN has been an interesting and mysterious journey so far, especially given the current turmoils in the world. We are living in the wake of new wars that resemble old wars far too much, climate collapse, the totalitarian annihilation of whole peoples, nations and life-forms forever lost, a civilizational crisis, for short. Basic income is less becoming an opportunity and more becoming a necessity. The question today is not "if" basic income will happen. The question is "how" and under which conditions it will take place. As we enter new levels of crisis, basic income systems will allow for adaptation in a fast changing world. The choice then, is between implementing basic income for the majority of people on the planet or face the worst violences of capitalism. This conversation cannot be separated from the geopolitics and monetary politics of the present. Rising inflation, the dusk of US dollar super imperialism, Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs), surveillance-enabled digital technologies as well as the different wealth policies being considered by countries around the world and complementary proposals to basic income. It is of utmost importance that BIEN plays a role in the weaving of relations that will give rise to income systems that are truly unconditional and universal.

Here is a short summary of our achievements so far as Outreach for BIEN:

- **LABIN:** Successfully started the organisation of the Latin American Basic Income Network (LABIN), which unites voices from all countries in Latin America to discuss basic income in the region. After co-organising the beginnings of LABIN, several networks in different countries in Latin America have begun to spring into being. Among which, the Chilean Network for Basic Income is worth noting, as they have taken the leadership not just to establish their own network, but are now in the process of organising the first LABIN congress next year, 2023, in Valparaiso, Chile. Networks in Central America and several other countries have started to constitute themselves. In the next report, I will outline how the first ever LABIN congress went and next steps for the network.
- **BIRAL:** We have recently established the Basic Income Research and Action Lab (BIRAL), to organise practice oriented research seminars, connecting the various already existing basic income systems of the world. The first paper of BIRAL is titled *Towards Municipalist Basic Income Systems*. It explores the comparative political economy of three basic income systems that have emerged in South Korea, Brasil and Berlin, all as social currencies. It is a collaborative research project which puts together the Gyeonggi Research Institute in South Korea (GRI), the Federal Universidade Fluminense in Brasil (FFU), the Freiburg Institute of Basic Income Studies (FRIBIS) and BIEN. BIRAL has furthermore released its first podcast, with an interview from Expedition Grundeinkommen in Germany, an initiative that tries to bring basic income to Berlin via a plebiscite signature collection campaign. The second one is an interview of a researcher at the GRI institute, outlining the workings of the Gyeonggi-do system. We conducted an international survey together with

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Annie Miller and other BIEN members, to understand government responses to COVID-19 In relation to UBI, which was presented at the Scottish congress in 2021.

- **Blockchain & UBI:** Lastly, I have been on a special mission during the last four years, in my role as outreach for BIEN and as an economic anthropologist. I have been doing ethnographic work within the world of blockchain, particularly the Ethereum blockchain, exploring basic income systems enabled by decentralised ledger infrastructures, with a focus on a credit money system by the name of Circles. In my powers as Outreach, in 2022 I organised the first ever meeting of both the UBI and the "crypto" world, by inviting the BIEN EC to take part in a decentralised application congress (Dappcon 2022) in Berlin, the largest of its kind. This is the first time that such congresses have a full day dedicated to UBI. Members of the EC joined to give talks about BIEN's definition, basic Income as a peacebuilding tool, the problems and contradictions of blockchain-enabled basic income systems and the role of BIEN in such matters. The outcome of the exchange has been positive so far and BIEN's leadership is currently reviewing a strategy to move forward. Later reports will follow up on this.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve BIEN as social/public outreach and I look forward to serving it for another year. If I am still alive and kicking, I will try to run for another term and keep building on the labour of love done so far with the truly wonderful group of individuals which make up the Executive Committee today. I look forward to what is coming.

Unconditionally,

Julio Linares
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Basic Income Earth Network