

BIEN Annual Report

For the General Assembly August 2023

By Chair and Vice-Chair with the support of Wolfgang Wopperer-Beholz

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Dear friends,

Only love can be unconditional. And only love gives hope. Hate, anger, sadness and fear are indications of absence of love, just as darkness is nothing but the absence of light. We as BIEN believe in unconditional love, and in doing so we believe that we are on the right path.

This report is a summary of BIEN's 2022-2023 activities and recent developments. We hope you will enjoy reading this report.

Updated mission and strategy

BIEN has clarified and expanded its mission and strategy, based on interviews with all EC members in autumn 2022 and a collaborative visioning and strategy workshop with the EC in spring 2023, facilitated by Wolfgang Wopperer-Beholz, our hubs coordinator.

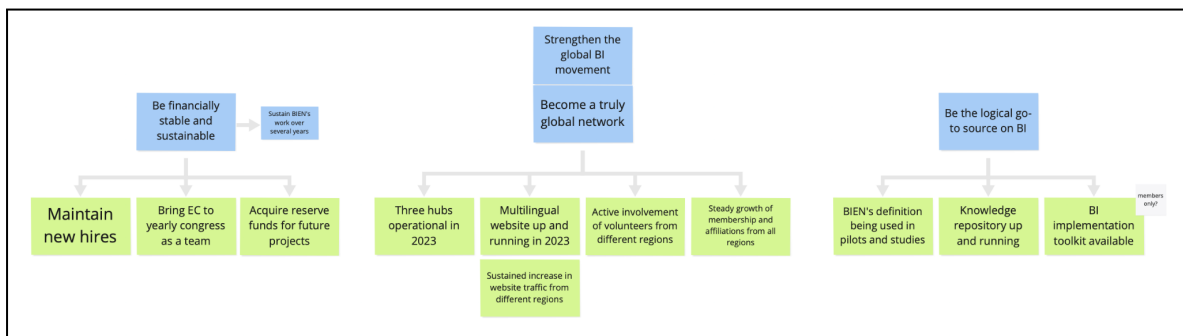
This resulted in the following mission statement:

Drawing on its unique Basic Income expertise built over decades of work, BIEN strives to be a globally trusted, go-to source of information and analysis around Basic Income.

We build connective tissue between people and institutions working on Basic Income, be these activists, campaigners, researchers, governments or civil society organisations.

We catalyse local and global debate and work to push the boundaries of what is possible, all in the direction of a more just, caring society.

To make this mission more concrete, three main strategic goals for 2023 and beyond were defined:



Reaching Every Last Mile: the Hubs project

With a view of becoming a truly Earth or global network, BIEN embarked on an ambitious journey of creating regional hubs; initially three: Africa, Latin America

and Asia/Pacific. The existing presence in Europe and the US will be strengthened, and we will build more on-going connections with existing players to create synergy. In the future one can think of more regions such as the post-Soviet and middle-east countries.

This work has been enabled by a considerable grant from the Mustardseed Trust, which allowed us to hire a Hubs Coordinator (Wolfgang) and regional coordinators for Africa (Chris Nwafor) and Latin America (José Brito) who are actively working in their roles. Together they have set up a basic governance and coordination infrastructure for hubs.

In addition to the initial grant, we were able to secure additional funding by Lankelly Chase, thanks to which recruitment for Asia/Pacific hub coordinator is about to start.

Inspired by the hubs project, we have also started to set up an organisation-wide infrastructure for decentralised decision-making.

Engagement in the UK BI ecosystem

In addition to our intensified international engagement, we are also more actively participating in the growing network of BI organisations in the UK, the country in which we are registered as a charity and in which both Wolfgang and a number of our EC members are living and working.

An example of this is the co-design and facilitation of a UK-wide networking conference in April in Sheffield, which helped connect a large number of BI organisations and activists and sparked a number of collaborative projects.

Building on that, we are currently actively participating in setting up a shared governance structure for the UK BI movement

Overhaul of our visual identity

To reflect these changes in the way we present ourselves to the world, we have started work with an external designer to overhaul our logo and overall visual identity; the designer is kindly offering this work pro bono to us.

The updated logo and general design direction have been approved by the EC and we have informed our affiliates about the upcoming changes. A first test of the new design was our appearance at the USBIG conference in Chicago, with great success.

For there on, the design will be gradually rolled out, starting with a renovation and upgrade of the BIEN logo and colour scheme on the current website, followed by the development of a design manual for future presentations, posters, flyers etc. and finally the design and implementation of a new website that improves our

communication of who we are, what our mission is, how people can contribute, and why they should become a member.

Online knowledge repository

In addition to an overhaul of our organisational website, we are collaborating with the University of Bath and Jurgen de Wispelaere to create the go-to online source of information about BI.

A detailed project outline, some initial content and a website prototype are ready, and we are in active discussions with potential partners and funders. We hope to have clear path forward for the project by autumn.

BIEN podcast, and a BIEN-UBI TV in the near future

In terms of outreach and external communication, we are also happy to announce that BIEN will start a Podcast series, an initiative by Ahmed Elbas. The first recordings are being processed and will be launched soon, so stay tuned!

In addition to the podcast, we're exploring how BIEN can use videos on YouTube and/or similar platforms to disseminate information and educate about BI. We are in active talks with potential collaborators for that, so watch out for updates on this as well! We are visualising a potential UBI TV in the near future. We are discussing with potential collaborators who align with BIEN's values and vision.

Individual memberships

We have approximately 500 individual members, which is very little for a global movement. Furthermore, our membership has a high concentration in Europe and is very unbalanced in terms of gender (majority male). The aim remains to increase both our overall membership numbers and our female membership globally, and to diversify our geographical spread through the expansion of our regional presence via our hubs.

We are also persuading our affiliate organisations and individual members to actively encourage their members and others to become members of BIEN.

Affiliate engagement

With more than 40 affiliate organisations from as many countries we should connect more with these affiliates and more actively listen to their ideas and needs. Through the regional hubs we have started to facilitate collaboration between affiliates. In addition to that, an affiliate management role has been

created within the EC, and we are working on a more vibrant engagement with affiliates to mutually empower and strengthen the movement.

Volunteer engagement

After the end of our previous volunteer manager's term, Wolfgang has taken on volunteer management on an interim basis. After a consolidation of volunteer records and a volunteer survey, we had a first online volunteer meetup with the chair and are developing plans for ongoing volunteer engagement, e.g. through regular meetups, stronger 1:1 relationships between volunteers and EC members, and more collaborative work on specific projects.

Meet the Founders Process

As we are marching ahead with great motivation, passion and vigour, we want to connect to and seek the counsel of our founders so that we adhere to the values that have governed BIEN from the start. We have already had two such meetings. Going forward, we will meet once every six months, if possible more often, to share what we are doing and chat informally.

Fundraising

To live up to the expectations that the world in general and peers in particular have of BIEN, and to do it professionally and according to high aesthetic and technical standards, we need to not only employ people, but also hire technical services necessary to operationalise our vision and mission.

The EC has started process of fundraising necessary for that and has so far managed to raise about USD 200,000 to sustain BIEN's Hubs project for an initial run of three years. But this money only secures the functioning of the core project. To expand beyond the current regions and activities, we need more funds, and we are striving to raise them.

We would also like to encourage better-off members to make regular donations if they are able to do so. General Assemblies have consistently agreed to retain life memberships, which means that every new life-member generates one initial contribution to BIEN's funds and then no more unless they choose to make donations. The option to become a member with an annual fee is only occasionally used, something we are looking to change.

But either way, membership fees alone are not sufficient nor sustainable to maintain BIEN's expanding activities. We therefore welcome any ideas and contributions from our members to expand our financial base as well.

Engaging with the UN system

As a result of a letter sent to the Secretary General of the UN by 96 Basic Income organisations from all over the World in 2020, mobilised by our vice chair Hilde Latour and our secretary Diana Bashur with help of several other comrades, BIEN has been engaging with the UN system, particularly UNDP.

Given our ambition of opening conversations in every last mile, we need strategic partners who already have presence in countries particularly the Global South. With that objective in view, BIEN signed an MOU with UNDP to collaborate not only at the global, but also the individual country level. We are in the process of developing a UBI Tool Kit that will be available to policy makers and activists to stimulate conversations about basic income in their geographic region.

Beyond the collaboration with the UNDP, we are also reaching out to the Office of the UN Secretary General in order to influence their thinking and move in the direction of having basic income on their agenda. Recently some of us at BIEN – Diana Bashur, Guy Standing and Sarath Davala – made a presentation to the senior management of UN SG's office. Further, Diana Bashur continues her work with them, and now the UN SG's senior management team is planning a day's internal workshop on Basic Income.