

UBI TIMES

BASIC INCOME
EARTH NETWORK
ASIA-PACIFIC

May, 2025 #3



Public Lecture & Strategic discussion on UBI at DPP PKB Party Headquarters, Indonesia

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Message from the Hub Manager John Michael


Dear readers,

Warm greetings from the BIEN Asia-Pacific Hub. It gives me great joy to welcome you to this third edition of UBI Times, one that comes after a powerful period of learning, travel, and exchange across the region.

Over the last two months, I've had the privilege of working closely with our friends and partners in Malaysia and Indonesia, where the basic income conversation is growing rapidly shaped by local realities and fueled by deep community wisdom. These journeys have been a reminder that some of the most meaningful work on UBI is happening outside the English-speaking world in languages, spaces, and communities often left out of global narratives. The workshops and conferences we co-organized were not only full of rigorous debate, but also moments of co-creation. Pilots are being designed. Policy pathways are being explored. And a growing base of citizens, academics, and activists is coming together to demand a more just, secure future.

Importantly, in both Malaysia and Indonesia, the strong presence of political leaders including ministers, party heads, and Members of Parliament, was a clear sign that our advocacy is reaching those with power to make decisions. These engagements were substantive, thoughtful, and forward-looking. I want to extend heartfelt thanks to Lee Seng Kiat and Prof. Geoffrey Williams for their stellar facilitation of the Malaysia programme, and to Yanu Endar Prasetyo, who has been central to the coordination and success of the work in Indonesia.

There's tremendous power in this. As Neil Howard, our BIEN EC member and hubs lead writes in his piece in this edition, we are living through a long winter of political hopelessness. Yet, even amidst shrinking civic space and



economic precarity, green shoots of hope are breaking through, from India's expansive trials and new state-level schemes to local demands for basic income in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, South Africa, Guyana, and Brazil. BIEN's regional hubs, he reminds us, are not just structures - they are connective tissue. They allow us to learn from one another, across continents and contexts, and nurture the fragile seeds of a new distributive paradigm economic precarity, green shoots of hope are breaking through, from India's expansive trials and new state-level schemes to local demands for basic income in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, South Africa, Guyana, and Brazil. BIEN's regional hubs, he reminds us, are not just structures - they are connective tissue. They allow us to learn from one another, across continents and contexts, and nurture the fragile seeds of a new distributive paradigm.

That spirit of regional voice and global solidarity is why we're thrilled to announce a new feature in this edition: "Voices from the Global South." The inaugural piece, written by my colleague José dos Santos of BIEN Latin America, challenges us to reflect on the political and historical roots of poverty in our regions. José reminds us that informality, exploitation, and economic exclusion are not just statistics, they are the afterlives of colonialism, still encoded in our institutions. UBI, in this vision, is not merely a policy—it is a tool of reparation, resistance, and imagination.

The same commitment to justice runs through the moving piece by Aparna Rajesh and Yamini Appikarla on our work with the transgender community in Hyderabad. The TG-BIC project, which combined basic income with care workshops, offered not only financial stability but space for self-reflection, dignity, and healing. Participants shared how unconditionality helped them pursue education, rest without guilt, or simply feel seen. As the authors write, care is not a soft add-on to policy, it is an act of rebellion, especially for communities long denied safety and stability.

I want to take a moment to thank Neil, José, Aparna, Yamini, Elise, Kristin and all who contributed to this edition. Their words remind us of what is at stake, and what is possible.

Looking ahead, the BIEN Hubs project is entering a new phase. We are transitioning to Regional Councils, and the Asia-Pacific Council is currently being formed. This is a crucial step forward. BIEN's structure is becoming more decentralized, and more reflective of the real political geography of our world. Through this shift, the Asia-Pacific will not just be a site of implementation, it will be a site of leadership. The work done under the APAC Hub over the past year has laid the foundation for this. And I couldn't be more grateful for the support, appreciation, and collaboration that has helped this work grow.

We also extend our solidarity to the people of Thailand - Myanmar affected by the recent earthquake. Our thoughts are with all those impacted.

Finally, a sincere apology for the delay in this edition's release. The delay is only a testament to how much has been happening across borders, time zones, and movements. To make up for the wait, this special edition is packed with updates, stories, and voices from corners of our region and beyond. We hope it leaves you feeling inspired and better connected to this growing movement.

Let us continue to stand together, to nurture the green shoots, break the icy ground, and build a world where dignity, care, and economic freedom are for everyone.

In solidarity,

John Michael

Asia-Pacific Regional Hub Manager

Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN)

Message from the Hubs Supervisor Basic Income Earth Network Neil Howard



Wherever we look today, it seems like we are living through an extended winter of political hopelessness, with distributive politics off the agenda, regimes committed to maintaining punitive, exclusionary systems of social (in)security, and right-wing reaction consequently on the rise as the have-nots are pitted against the have-less by those bent on divide and rule.

In the face of all this, literally all over the world, we are seeing the green shoots of hope poking through, with movements and experiments of various sorts pointing towards a paradigm shift in distributive politics towards the unconditional provision of social security for all.

In India, one of the world's largest basic income trials has just concluded, with hugely exciting results. States all over the country are adopting unconditional cash transfers as a cornerstone of social policy. And the Congress party is convinced. Next door, in Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, civil society advocates are taking note and placing unconditional security on their own progressive agendas.

In South Africa, a nationwide movement of the poor and disenfranchised is demanding basic income for all, with the inheritors of that country's anti-Apartheid struggle pushing for economic as well as racial justice. Debates over 'rightful shares' continue in neighbouring Namibia.

In South America, similar developments are stirring in Brazil, while in Guyana, the government has announced a major scheme to grant all citizens with a public dividend from the country's oil wealth. In Peru, a basic income pilot is under way with indigenous communities in the Amazon.

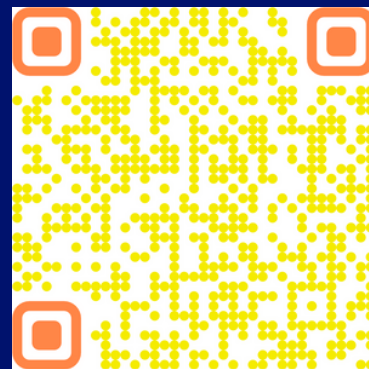
Although these many struggles may be geographically divided, increasingly learning is being shared across countries and regions. BIEN's

role in the world is to build connective tissue between basic income advocates and movements, and to connect thinkers and do-ers across time and space. This is precisely what our Regional Hubs have been striving for over the past three years, and we've seen impressive results, with many of the examples cited here learning directly from each other with and through them.

We do not know how these struggles will pan out, and we do not know whether the green shoots of hope will be permitted to push through the icy ground of our political winter. But we do know that inside them sit the seeds of a new paradigm, a paradigm built on the recognition that all of us deserve economic security and with it we will flourish. Our task is to nurture these green shoots, to clear the icy ground, and to continue to give hope.

Stay Connected with UBI Times Sign Up Now!

UBI Times, the newsletter of the Asia-Pacific Hub of BIEN, brings you the latest updates, insights, and discussions on Universal Basic Income (UBI) across the region. Currently shared through a mailing list, BIEN's website and our social media platforms, we would like to offer readers the option to receive it directly in their inbox.



Scan the QR to Sign Up



If you'd like to stay informed about UBI research, events, and advocacy efforts, sign up by filling out [our Google form](#). Subscribers will receive the newsletter as a PDF via email. Don't miss out—be part of the conversation on the future of UBI in the Asia-Pacific!

what is happening in the hub?

Policy Consultation on Transgender Basic Income and Care



A consultation session on the Transgender Basic Income and Care (TGBIC) project was held at Anveshi Research Centre, Hyderabad, on March 16th, 2025. The session brought together a diverse group of participants including transgender rights activists, project participants, academics, civil society representatives, and members from Anveshi, the India Network for Basic Income (INBI), and BIEN Asia-Pacific.

The consultation focused on reviewing and refining a set of policy recommendations developed from the project's findings. These covered urgent systemic issues faced by transgender persons—ranging from inclusive enumeration and legal protections to reforms in education, healthcare, social security, and CSR frameworks. Participants emphasised the need for unconditional basic income and care-based interventions as central to ensuring dignity, security, and full participation in society.

The discussion proved immensely valuable, with detailed inputs helping sharpen recommendations intended for submission to the Telangana government. It also deepened cross-sectoral understanding and solidarity among groups working at the intersection of gender justice, economic rights, and social protection.

Exploring UBI in Thailand: Dialogue with TDRI



Dr. Somchai Jitsuchon

Research Director,
Inclusive Development, TDRI



Dr. Boonwara Sumano

Senior Research Fellow, Thailand
Development Research Institute

In March 2025, BIEN Asia-Pacific's John Michael met with Dr. Somchai and Dr. Boonwara of the Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) for an in-depth discussion on the feasibility of Universal Basic Income (UBI) in Thailand. The meeting explored implementation challenges, political dynamics, and the need for regionally grounded conversations on UBI in Southeast Asia.

Dr. Somchai and Dr. Boonwara shared insights from their policy work on social protection, labor rights, and gender equality in Thailand. They noted that while Thailand has piloted partial income supports for the elderly, scaling up to universal approaches faces hurdles due to fiscal constraints and limited political backing. They emphasized the importance of political will, enabling legal environments, and public communication to counter myths around UBI, such as those linking it to laziness or misuse.

John Michael presented BIEN's recent work in India and the Asia-Pacific, sharing insights from grassroots pilots and policy advocacy focused on caste, gender, and informal labor. He also discussed the potential of leveraging existing cash transfer systems and linking UBI to emerging regional issues like AI disruption and care work.

The meeting concluded with plans to deepen collaboration through shared mailing lists, and potential co-authored outputs exploring UBI's relevance in Southeast Asia.

what is happening in the hub?

New Forum Formed in Hyderabad to Tackle Economic and Environmental Injustice

A new alliance is taking shape in Hyderabad. In a recent meeting, young activists from Climate Front Hyderabad, Babasaheb Ambedkar Reading Circle (BARC), and the BIEN Asia-Pacific Hub came together to discuss the intersecting economic and environmental marginalisation faced by oppressed communities. From this dialogue emerged the Forum Against Economic and Environmental Injustice Towards Marginalised Communities.

**FORUM AGAINST
ECONOMIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
INJUSTICE TOWARDS
MARGINALISED
COMMUNITIES**

Rooted in the belief that dignity and security must be guaranteed for all, the forum aims to strengthen struggles for Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a means to counter systemic deprivation. It builds on existing efforts like the WorkFREE pilot, which advocates for basic income for waste pickers in the city.

The forum situates UBI within broader struggles for justice, particularly for Dalit, Adivasi, Bahujan, gender and sexual minority communities viewing it as a tool to resist extractive development, secure care, and reclaim economic agency. The collective envisions sustained public engagement and grassroots advocacy to take this fight forward.

Letters on Basic Income Submitted to Telangana Chief Minister

John Michael, Asia-Pacific Manager of BIEN met with Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and submitted a letter advocating for Universal Basic Income. Letters were also submitted to Chief Secretary Shanthi Kumari and Praveen Chakravarty, Chairman of the All India Professionals' Congress (AIPC) and Data Analytics Department, Indian National Congress (INC), the principal opposition party in the Indian Parliament. These letters have resulted in a discussion between Navika Harshe, Economist and national head of Research, AIPC, with Sarath Davala, BIEN Chair. INC which is in power at the Telangana state government has promised to launch a basic income scheme for women in its election manifesto.

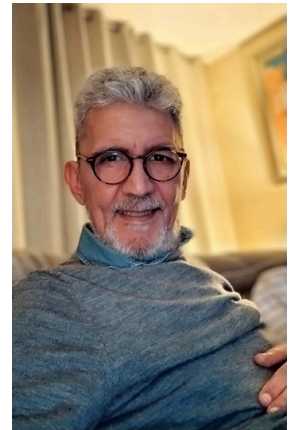
UBI4ALL Update & Correction



In our last edition, we featured Yi Yin from Taiwan, the first global winner of the UBI4ALL raffle. We had noted that the next raffle would be held on March 30, 2025, and open to Europe and select partner regions.

UBI4ALL has since clarified that registrations are open year-round, and anyone worldwide aged 16+ can register to win 1–5 years of Basic Income. We're happy to correct and update our readers on this ongoing opportunity to experience UBI firsthand.

Meanwhile, Luca, the 8th winner of the UBI4ALL raffle, brings us to the rolling hills of Abruzzo, Italy—home to the famous Montepulciano wine. Once a salesman for caterpillars, Luca lost his job just before retirement and took on odd jobs to stay afloat. Now retired and moving into a new apartment, the Basic Income will ease this transition and offer some well-deserved rest. Here's to Luca, a glass of red, and the freedom that UBI brings.



Luca

Register for BIEN Congress 2025

BIEN Congress 2025

BASIC INCOME & SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

New Horizons for Social Protection

Universidade Federal Fluminense
Maricá and Niterói (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
27-29 August 2025

PRE-CONGRESS EVENTS:
Latin America Day: 25 August
Early Career Day: 26 August

Realização: **cede** **uff** Universidade Federal Fluminense **RDS** **PATROCÍNIO:** **MARICÁ** **NITERÓI** **Síntese Eventos**

Register to Attend the BIEN World Congress remotely or in-person.

The organisers are offering reduced registration fees for participants from Low- and Middle-Income Countries, as defined by the OECD. This means a significant discount for many in our region.

[Click here to explore the Programme Overview:](#)



[Click here to register & know more](#)



BIEN Asia-Pacific Contributes Global Motto Design for International Basic Income Week



We are happy to share that the BIEN Asia-Pacific Hub has contributed the official motto design for the upcoming 18th International Basic Income Week (IBIW), to be held from September 15–21, 2025. This year’s motto—“Basic Income: Equality and Opportunity for All!”—was brought to life through visual formats designed in multiple languages by our team: Aparna Rajesh, Santhi Sunayana, and John Michael, based in Hyderabad, India.

International Basic Income Week, launched in 2008, is a globally coordinated, self-organized action week to raise awareness about Universal Basic Income. We invite readers, allies, and activists to organize or participate in events—whether it's a discussion, film screening, creative action, or photo campaign.

👉 You can:

- Submit events at basicincomeweek.org/event-form
- Make the official page a co-host on Facebook: facebook.com/BasicIncomeWeek
- Sign up for updates: basicincomeweek.org/newsletter

 Mark your calendars:

- **#CountOnBasicIncome** Photo Action: Wednesday, Sept 17
- **#BasicIncomeBeer** Gatherings: Friday, Sept 19

We look forward to seeing powerful participation from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond!

what is happening in the hub?

Malaysia UBI Workshop – Deep Dives and Design Thinking

From Ideas to Action: Malaysia's UBI Workshop a Major Step Forward

On April 18, 2025, BIEN Asia-Pacific co-hosted a full-day UBI training workshop at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), bringing together an exciting mix of students, policy professionals, civil society actors, and academic thinkers. The workshop was led by global and regional UBI leaders including Dr. Sarath Davala, Prof. Geoffrey Williams, Lee Seng Kiat, and John Michael.



Dr. Sarath Davala opened the day by anchoring the discussion in the policy and philosophical foundations of UBI, drawing from global debates and BIEN's long-standing advocacy. John Michael shared findings and reflections from UBI pilot projects and ongoing experiences across the Asia-Pacific re-

gion, connecting local curiosity with regional momentum.

Prof. Geoffrey Williams presented a compelling framework on how UBI could be financed in Malaysia, while Lee Seng Kiat contextualized UBI within Malaysia's public policy and social landscape.

The workshop also featured a screening of the documentary *Unconditional*, followed by interactive breakout groups on design, financing, delivery, and accountability.

The participation and engagement were deeply meaningful, critically informed, and visionary—setting the tone for what could be a transformative shift in Malaysia's approach to social protection.

Malaysia UBI Conference – A Landmark in National Dialogue

UBI in Malaysia: Public Conference Brings Vision, Voices, and Urgency: On April 19, 2025, the Malaysia UBI Conference was held at Universiti Malaya, bringing together former ministers, Members of Parliament, party leaders, students, researchers, economists, and journalists for a day of powerful, high-level dialogue on the future of social protection.



Organised by the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), Williams Business Consultancy, the Social Wellbeing Research Centre (Universiti Malaya), and the Centre for Islamic Economics (IIUM), with support from Perdana Fellows Alumni Association, Higher Education Youth Association (HEYA), Association of Malaysian Economics Undergraduates (AMEU), and Free Malaysia Today (FMT)—this event was a milestone in the UBI movement in Malaysia.

The day began with opening remarks by Dr. Sarath Davala and Prof. Datuk Norma Mansor, followed by a keynote address by Prof. Guy Standing, who placed UBI within the broader global struggle against insecurity and inequality. His address powerfully situated UBI within the context of financial globalization, environmental breakdown, and the future of work.



what is happening in the hub?

A fireside chat hosted by Dashran Yohan (BFM89.9) featured Sarath Davala, Norma Mansor, and Dr. Geoffrey Williams, setting the stage for deeper discussions.

The conference included four engaging panel sessions:

- John Michael, and Dr. Amjad Rabi critically analysed Malaysia's welfare architecture within the context of global south's bureaucratic systems.
- Lee Seng Kiat, Dr. Michael Jeyakumar, and Malcolm Wong explored UBI's relevance to gig workers and informal sectors.
- Dr. Geoffrey Williams, Ridhwan Rosli, and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Nizam Barom tackled questions of affordability, macroeconomics, and UBI's place in national and international fiscal policy.
- Moderators Wong Kar Ling, Hazween Hassan, and Mohamad Shafiq bin Sahrudin guided each session into dynamic, inclusive dialogue.



With critical, informed, and visionary participation, the conference has sparked a serious national conversation placing Universal Basic Income at the heart of Malaysia's social and economic future.

UBI Dialogue at PKB Party Headquarters, Jakarta, Indonesia

On April 24, 2025, the National Awakening Party (PKB) hosted a high-level public lecture on Universal Basic Income at its Jakarta headquarters with Dr. Sarath Davala, Chairperson of BIEN. The session was moderated by Ais Shafiyah Asfar, the youngest spokesperson of the AMIN

campaign and rising youth leader in PKB, and Hanif Dhakiri, former Minister of Manpower and senior PKB politician. The discussion was facilitated by Yanu Endar Prasetyo.

The event saw the participation of the Deputy Speaker of the DPR, several Members of Parliament, key party officials, and an enthusiastic group of young PKB members.



The event focused on the urgency of UBI as a pathway to long-term economic security and a more just social protection system in Indonesia. With such high-level participation and critical engagement, the discussion marked an important step in bringing UBI into mainstream political discourse.



The discussion can be watched at:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/d7TXMLbpykU?si=C6OmyryA3cNTgXP2>

what is happening in the hub?

Indonesia's Basic Income Training 2025: Grounding UBI in Local Realities

From April 25–27, the Basic Income Training 2025 was held at Perbanas Institute, Jakarta, bringing together students, researchers, policymakers, and activists from across Indonesia. Co-organized by IndoBIG Network, Future Movement, and BIEN Asia-Pacific, the three-day event focused on both the big ideas behind UBI and the nuts and bolts of making it work in the Indonesian context.



The opening day featured a keynote by Minister Muhaimin Iskandar, and Prof. Guy Standing, Dr. Sarath Davala, followed by sessions with international speakers from Australia, and the Asia-Pacific region. Participants heard case studies from pilots

like Jamesta Istimewa, Bojonegoro Klunting, and Circles UBI, which sparked conversations about how these models could evolve.

Over the next two days, groups rolled up their sleeves to co-design new UBI pilot ideas thinking through everything from funding strategies to delivery systems. Special sessions explored advocacy, media, and public campaigns. The training was guided by experienced facilitators including Yanu Endar Prasetyo, Sena Luphdika, Anwar Sastro Ma'ruf, and Petra Schneider.



[Click to watch BIT 2025](#) **WATCH NOW**

The energy throughout was hopeful and serious. BIT 2025 felt like more than a workshop it was a step toward shaping a UBI future built from the ground up. More details and the event manual could be found here: <https://futuremovement.id/basic-income-training-2025/>

The fleeting moment of hope from the COVID pandemic we have to revive



Elise Klien

Co-director,

Australia Basic Income Lab (ABIL)



Kristin O'Connell

Co-coordinator,

Antipoverty Centre

Five years ago, the government showed it could end poverty in Australia – why didn't it?

In 2020, the Federal government showed it was possible to end poverty in Australia.

Overnight, simple policy changes lowered household poverty rates from 67% to 7% for people receiving Jobseeker payments. It was a remarkable achievement never before seen in Australia.

It wasn't hard either – no Nobel prize in economics needed. All it took was the government doing what anti-poverty advocates have said for years: raise payments to a livable amount and get rid of “mutual” obligations.

And how much did this life-saving policy cost? Less than the subsidies that Australia pays to fossil fuel producers and major users.

When the Covid supplement saved lives

In March 2020 as COVID-19 was sweeping the country, the government announced a \$275 a week supplement for people receiving welfare payments such as Jobseeker, Youth Allowance, Austudy or parenting payments. It effectively doubled the payment for those on Jobseeker, which was then \$282.85 per week, and brought it to the Henderson poverty line.

The government also widened eligibility for welfare and suspended “mutual” obligations – the punitive and pointless activities people on some payments have to do, or else have their income suspended or cut ([even though evidence says “mutual” obligations don’t help people find work](#)).

They should have gone further – many were left out including people receiving disability support pensions, people on visas including refugees and international students stranded because of travel restrictions.

Nonetheless, it was a major policy shift that made a real difference for people relying on Centrelink payments to live.

Overnight, the federal government implemented wide-ranging measures that made everyday life more bearable. This swiftness and ease exposed how poverty in Australia is a choice governments make – and a brutal one.

We know this sudden experiment in poverty alleviation spurred by COVID-19 was effective and impactful.

The Australian Unemployed Workers’ Union received thousands of stories of how the policy changes transformed people’s lives, running a campaign to a [#KeepTheRate](#) and a “mutual” obligations [strike](#) to demand the government to never go back.

The online campaign, [550 Reasons to Smile](#), invited people to

share messages about the impact on their lives. [One mother wrote](#) that the supplement “has given myself and my two young children the opportunity to escape severe domestic violence, not only having enough to fill up the car to get away, but also enough to purchase fresh food and needed medical items. I didn’t have to choose between our safety or food. This has been a life changer and also may of been a life saver”.

Choosing poverty over people

Despite such important and life-changing gains, the Federal government took it all away.

In September 2020, the supplement dropped to \$125 a week, and in December 2020 to \$75 a week. All additional support was ripped away by April the following year. “Mutual” obligations came back, and harsher.

Defending this, the then Prime Minister Morrison said he needed to cut welfare payments again to [compel people into the labour market](#). This cruel ideology sees poverty as fundamental to the design of the system.

Yet this ideology is not based in reality. [Research](#) shows that raising some Centrelink payments to a liveable level did not stop people looking for paid work, but instead helped them find and keep sustainable jobs. When people were given more money, time and autonomy through the Covid-19 supplement and suspended “mutual” obligations, they had freedom to do the things that suited their circumstances and capacity, whether in paid or unpaid work.

[Research](#) also found people were able to make strategic decisions about their futures such as engaging in study, exploring career options and making purchases to improve their prospects. A review of OECD policies also found that higher payments correlate to lower unemployment.

Unpaid care work such as looking after kids, the elderly and volunteering was also easier when people weren't worried about how they would pay rent, where they would get their next meal from, or the threat of punishment through "mutual" obligation requirements.

Failure since getting policy almost right

After trending up for years, in 2020 the suicide rate fell for people on unemployment payments. It has since climbed again, and Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [data](#) shows that one in five suicide deaths for working age adults are people on JobSeeker. Fourteen per cent are on the Disability Support Pension.

Despite the success of pandemic welfare policies, the current Labor government has followed Morrison in choosing poverty.

In opposition, Labor supported a [senate motion](#) calling for JobSeeker to be increased to the poverty line permanently. But now, Labor claims it cannot afford to. Meanwhile, there is plenty of money for employment services that punish the poor and deepen poverty. Now, we face the reality that the administration of "mutual" obligations – which costs [\\$4 billion a year](#) – is [potentially unlawful](#), and many welfare recipients say Centrelink payments are more inadequate than ever.

There is nothing responsible about a government that keeps people in poverty.

Lifting JobSeeker to the poverty line and stopping "mutual" obligations showed there is another way. These changes enabled welfare recipients to move from day-to-day survival towards envisioning and realising a more financially and emotionally secure future for themselves, their families and communities.

It can be done again today.

A version of this was printed in the [Canberra times](#).

What is the price of freedom?

José dos Santos

Latin America Hub Manager
Basic Income Earth Network



One of the worst consequences left by colonization in the global south was poverty.

This (still) contemporary social phenomenon carries in its genetics the historical mark of slavery, racism, sexism and overexploitation. Although there are more than forty indigenous languages in the Amazon region, although there are still eight official languages in South Africa, such as IsiZulu, despite India having more than twenty official languages, such as Telugu, despite all this biodiversity expressed in just three brief examples, we carry this same mark with us.

It is impossible to reduce this diversity of epistemologies and cosmologies to the concept of the Global South, to reduce these different ways of dealing with time, work, nature and the world. However, it is a concept that helps us deal with common problems, such as poverty.

We could say that the price of our freedom is \$2.15, enough for a person to be able to consume the minimum daily calories, if we endorsed the United Nations vision of poverty eradication. Starting from this "minimum" or "basic" of dignity, we are able to account for the costs of eradicating poverty in India or Brazil, but this is not just a

matter of financing and public administration.

It is also about the concept of humanity of our institutions.

India today has more than 80% of its working population in the informal sector. South Africa has 20% and Brazil almost 40% of informal workers. That means more than 100 million people. Informality generally represents precarious positions, with low wages and longer daily and weekly working hours, particularly, women.

When we associate these traditional statistics on the Global South with others related to unemployment and poverty, we give even more prominence to the problem.

Poverty was a political tool of colonial processes, it is the result of a continuous expropriation of the means of life of these people, of slave labor, of the imposition of an unequal logic of the "labor market". It was and continues to be a hierarchy that defines who is more or less human, often practiced on the same bodies.

In this sense, the debate on Universal Basic Income (UBI) interacts with the reality that we define as the Global South in two ways: taking poverty as one of the main phenomena that legitimize its demand, especially when we consider the relevance of cash transfer programs in our welfare states; deepening and qualifying the political alternatives put on the scene from an organic interaction between scientific knowledge, governments and social movements, taking as a starting point our historical and contemporary problems.

UBI is a powerful political tool because it provides the agglutination of knowledge and political forces around some of the main sensitive points in world geopolitics.

Starting from a Latin American quilombola cosmologie, freedom has no price.

Integrating Care into Social Protection: What TG-BIC tells us



Aparna Rajesh

India Network for Basic Income &
Research Team, TG-BIC



Yamini Appikarla

India Network for Basic Income &
Research Team, TG-BIC

The marginalized communities across the world face an intersection of multiple discrimination and are forced to fight for dignity and survival. In the India, the transgender community continues to grapple with the enduring impacts of colonialism, facing financial exclusion, heteronormative stigma from family and society, and deeply ingrained misconceptions about their bodies, shaped by both Brahmanical and colonial morality. This marginalisation severely limits the different life choices of transgender persons, depriving them of decent work and financial means to more than just survival. Consequently, they are forced into relentless hustle just to make ends meet, leaving no space to rest. This absence of care or community spaces further deepens their vulnerability, taking away any sense of stability in life.

In this context, the Basic Income and Care for Transgender Persons (TG-BIC) project, carried out with ten participants from Hyderabad, India

tries to explore how an unconditional basic income and care can address some of these issues. Care workshops in this project were more than just planned sessions. These were co-created spaces that attempted to envision what a basic and non-judgemental society looks like, a space designed to create a sense of individual and collective agency.

While discussing their experiences with basic income, participants shared that it provided them with a sense of financial security, reducing stress and expanding their choices. For some, it meant fulfilling familial responsibilities, while for others, it covered daily household expenses. One participant was able to prioritize higher education

over immediate employment, while another used the opportunity to take a break from work and focus on preparing for government examinations. In one of our conversations, a participant highlighted the power of unconditionality – how it instills a sense of courage, ensuring that no one is excluded from support simply because of their gender identity. Unlike targeted policies that often come with restrictive eligibility criteria, an unconditional basic income offers privacy without forcing individuals to disclose their gender identity. This is particularly crucial for those who have not come out due to the risk of discrimination they might face, allowing them to access financial stability without fear of exclusion or scrutiny.



Artwork by a participant depicting their acceptance only within the transgender community while other parts of the society reject them

While basic income offered a sense of financial security, the care workshops provided a space to reflect on rest, resilience, and community in a world that often prioritizes survival over well-being. Through care workshops, we intended to situate ‘self-care’ and ‘caring as a community’ in a world of hustle created by consumerism.

For a community with a long-term history of trauma, self-care, as Audre Lorde has said, becomes an act of rebellion. These workshops reinforced the role of community as a vital safety net that offers emotional support. This was evident in one of our participant’s reflections on how the workshops have fostered a space that honoured the collective memory of transgender community that the heteronormative society is trying to erase. Different participants have shared how the workshops became humane spaces for self-exploration and for connecting with the community.

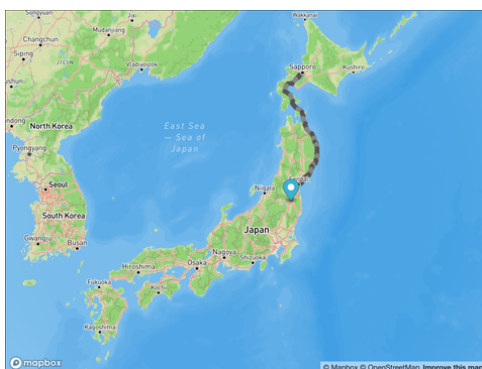


The insights from this project highlight how social protection can be reimagined to be inclusive of all gender identities by incorporating the principles of UBI and care. It also emphasises the vitality of acknowledging historical oppression and recognising trauma when framing policies, ensuring that social protection measures do not just address immediate needs but also contribute to long-term justice and healing. Therefore, such policies are crucial – those that go beyond mere survival, ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to live a life of dignity and freedom.

news from the region.

Walking for a Liveable Basic Income

Daniel Hart, founder of You B I, is on a mission walking across Japan to advocate for a Liveable Universal Basic Income for all. This follows his incredible 4,500 km walk across Australia that ended early this year. Now, over 30 days into his Japan journey, he's currently crossing Fukushima.

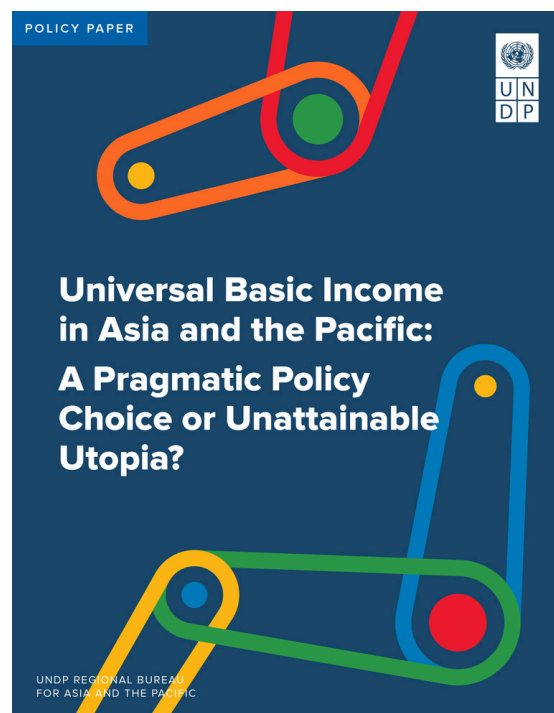


Daniel's walk highlights the urgency of UBI: to fight poverty, prepare for AI-driven job loss, and enable fair global wealth redistribution.

Follow and support the journey: youbi.io

UNDP Explores UBI in Asia and the Pacific

A policy paper by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) examines the potential of UBI as a sustainable approach to addressing poverty and advancing human development in the Asia-Pacific region. The paper advocates for targeted UBI programs integrated into existing social security frameworks, emphasizing the need for scalable, shock-responsive interventions that align with human development goals.



Click on the image to read

UBI on The Breakfast Grille (Malaysia)



Professor Guy Standing, Honorary Co-President of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), appeared on BFM 89.9's flagship podcast The Breakfast Grille on May 15, 2025, for a wide-ranging conversation on Universal Basic Income. Speaking with host Keith Kam, Professor Standing explored whether Malaysia is ready for such a shift, especially as conversations on social protection deepen across the region.



BFM 89.9

publications from the hub

Click on the image to read the article



UBI, a hot potato
April 26, 2025
The Star
Malaysia
By Fintan NG

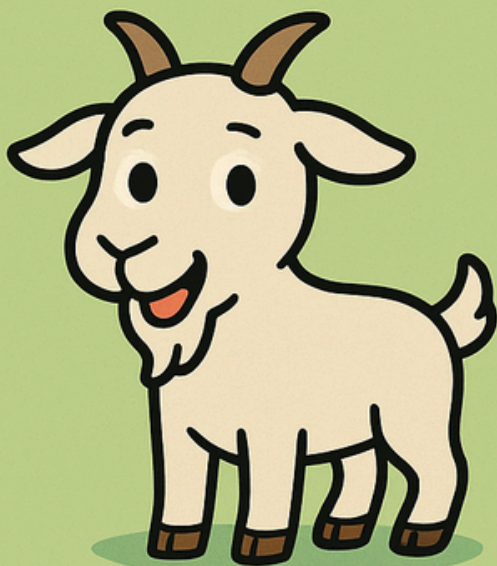
UBI Doodles



**I demand UBI...
and tuna.
In that order.**



**Give every human
a UBI. And maybe...
a belly rub too.**



**UBI for all?
That's the
GOAT idea.**



**UBI makes my
heart flutter.**

This artwork is produced with AI assistance, guided by human creativity and direction.

BIEN Hubs Team

John Michael

Asia Pacific Hub Manager

johnmichaelk2018@gmail.com

johnmichael@basicincome.org

Wolfgang Wopperer-Beholz

BIEN Coordinator

wolfgang@basicincome.org

Neil Howard

Hubs Supervisor &

BIEN EC Member

nph28@bath.ac.uk

Chris Nwafor

Africa Hub Manager

nwaforcu@gmail.com

José Brito

Latin America Hub Manager

josewhellison@gmail.com



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