



Let's Chat Basic Income and Health

Summary Report from a Workshop held June 7, 2019

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1.0 Public Health Association of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island

The Public Health Association of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (PHA NBPEI) is affiliated with our parent organization, the Canadian Public Health Association, a leading independent, non-profit voice for public health in Canada. PHA NBPEI is a volunteer-run organization of professionals working in various fields related to public health and population health. Our organization aims to improve the health of NB and PEI populations through *advocacy, education, and leadership*.

PHA NBPEI Mission:

The PHA-NBPEI members believe in universal and equitable access to the basic conditions that are necessary to achieve health for all. The Branch's mission is to advocate for the improvement and maintenance of personal and community health according to the public health principles of disease prevention, health promotion and protection, and healthy public policy.

To learn more about the association please visit: <http://www.nbpeipublichealth.ca/>

2.0 Let's Chat! Facilitating a Conversation on Basic Income

Understanding the strong correlation between income and health and the importance of the discourse happening across Canada about a basic income guarantee and its potential impact on health, the PHA NBPEI wanted to help facilitate more of this discussion within our respective provinces. Beginning in the Spring of 2018, PHA NBPEI set out to:

1. build understanding around the concept of basic income
2. build understanding around the various models of basic income
3. showcase how basic income models function in other jurisdictions with a focus on outcomes
4. build understanding around what basic income means for population health status
5. advocate for governments, NGOs and our communities to join us in this conversation
6. contribute to the current, national conversation around basic income

3.0 Let's Chat Basic Income and Health Workshop

The *Let's Chat Basic Income and Health Workshop* was held on June 7, 2019 in Moncton New Brunswick. The workshop was an interactive day to learn more about a basic Income Guarantee and its potential impacts on Health. The event was designed to engage and drew on material from the BIG experience; a multimedia storytelling experience designed to help audience members understand and relate to the idea of a basic income¹. This was followed by a workshop that explored potential basic income policies in the context of NBPEI. This workshop called "*Basic income: An idea whose time has come? An interactive workshop to build public health*" was modified from an existing workshop offered at the Canadian Public Health Association 2019

conferenceⁱⁱ. The event was targeted at anyone who wished to participate in a conversation about building an economy that meets the basic needs of everyone.

Workshop partners included PHA NBPEI, Basic Income New Brunswick, and the PEI Working Group for Livable Income. Working group members were:

- Christine deJong - PHA NBPEI Treasurer
- Allison Holland - PHA NBPEI President
- Nathan Taylor – Basic Income Consultant
- Ryan Murray - PHA NBPEI Student Board Member & Member of the PEI Working Group for Livable Income
- Armond Bannister - Basic Income New Brunswick Network

3.1 Workshop Outline

1. Welcome
2. Activity: What's in Your wallet
3. Basic Income Primer
4. Activity 1:2: table
5. Film Screening: The Mincome Story
6. Lunch
7. Meditation: The BIG visioning Meditation
8. Town Hall: 5 Question Series
9. Making it Real: Activity with Real World Vignettes and Facilitated Discussion
10. Closing

3.2 Workshop Attendees

Approximately 70 people attended the workshop and of those, 37 returned an evaluation form. The information below is based on the input from these returned evaluations.

- The majority identified as working in the health sector (55.6%) followed second by NGOs (27.8%).
- All identified as being a resident of New Brunswick
- The most prominent age ranges were 20-24 (22.2%), 30-34 (19.4%) 25-29 (11.1%) and 35-39 (8.3%).
- 91.7% of respondents disagreed with the statement, “the economy works well the way it is”
- 100% agreed that with the statement, “the economy needs to change”
- 64.8% agreed with the statement, “I have the power to change the way things are”
- 72.1% felt the workshop improved their knowledge of basic income,
- 100% feel it is possible to provide a basic income for everyone
- 86.1 % are likely to take recommended actions from the workshop

4.0 Participant Feedback

During all workshop activities, participants were asked to put their responses to the questions posed (either group or individual responses) on post-its which were collected by the facilitators and placed under the corresponding questions on the wall. This information was compiled, and following data transcription and aggregation, responses were coded inductively to uncover themes. Codes and sub codes were generated throughout analysis and iteratively updated during the construction of the report. This process resulted in the descriptions below. For a full list of all feedback, see Appendix A.

4.1 What do we know?

The majority of responses to this prompt highlighted the positive outcomes of previous Basic Income (BI) experiments and the cost-effectiveness of BI as a policy option. Notably, three barriers were commonly referenced throughout the data generated from the workshop.

- Political buy-in
- Myth busting is still required
- Complex – not only one mechanism

4.2 What do we want to know?

According to these responses, participants were concerned with the potential knowable and unknowable outcomes of the policy, how the policy will be implemented/sustained, and how citizens can collectively move this policy from research to action.

Focusing on all of the responses, four questions stood out:

- How would this impact First Nation populations?
- What are the immediate and long-term outcomes of the policy?
- How will this policy be implemented? What changes are necessary to existing policies?
- How can citizens convince policymakers to consider BI?

4.3 What is irrelevant/distracting?

Interestingly, a common concern when it comes to BI was repeatedly referenced as a distraction:

Assumption about decrease in labor force participation

“People would take advantage”

“People won’t contribute”

Beyond issues of labour, political issues were the second-most cited distractions.

“Four-year government change”

Government brave enough to implement federally

Finally, both the cost of the policy and the need for private sector support were deemed irrelevant by some participants or very relevant by others.

4.4 Why do we or don't we?

Participants saw issues regarding public and political perceptions of a BI, and concerns regarding policy design and implementation (Table 1).

Table 1. Results from NB/PEI PHA Basic Income Workshop, June 7, 2019. Section 1, Prompt 4.

| | Perceptions | Policy Design/Information Concerns |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Why? | <p><i>Its administratively complex but if we did it with OAS and Child Tax Benefit we can figure it out</i></p> <p><i>We don't need more studies – just public education</i></p> <p><i>Easier to sell as a “gain” not a “loss”</i></p> | <p><i>Use CCB, OAS as model to implement BI</i></p> <p><i>OAS & Child Benefit are not sufficient to make a large enough \$ impact</i></p> <p><i>Re-envision services provided by community agencies</i></p> |
| Why not? | <p><i>Need rebuttals to all the political pushback</i></p> <p><i>Long term, above the political agenda</i></p> <p><i>Party politics</i></p> | <p><i>Need more info on “needs” in order to establish the basic income amount</i></p> <p><i>We need more info on impacts to other policies, jobs, well-being stats in order to inform/educate the public</i></p> |

4.5 Prompts 1-3: Health Indicators, Community Members and Associated Values

Of the indicators reported, housing, chronic health issues, youth, service access and employment were the most often repeated.

Government forms a barrier to accessing services (more people falling through the cracks because of process)

Inequity of services between urban and rural environments (services more to cities and transportation is an issue)

The rural-urban divide was highlighted throughout several responses, at times alongside New Brunswick-specific issues of youth retention. A number of responses put this rather concisely:

Exodus of Youth

Youth population leaving NB for jobs

Furthermore, issues of education, food security and an aging population were all reported.

Several priority populations were identified in response to the community member prompt: students, people living without homes, rural communities and people living with a chronic disease or disability. Interestingly, several respondents suggested that the effects of this policy could be widespread throughout all community members.

The values provided by the participants were diverse yet two major themes emerged. First, a large number of participants identified, directly or indirectly, the potential for a BI to empower individuals to make their own choices.

- Self-determination*
- Self-actualization*
- Empowerment/self-esteem*

Second, participants repeatedly suggested that everyone has inherent value and that a BI would not only empower individuals but would empower communities.

- Increased community capacity*
- Build community capacity*
- Redistribution of skills*

4.6 Why would or wouldn't influential decision makers support BI?

While Table 2 provides an overview of the responses, one response seemed to capture the essence of the question particularly well.

What is the win for anyone in politics?

These results do not, in and of themselves provide an answer but they do provide a roadmap of barriers and opportunities to create a meaningful dialogue with decisionmakers.

Table 2. Results from NB/PEI PHA Basic Income Workshop, June 7, 2019. Section 2, Prompt 4.

| | Information | Political | Framing |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Why would they support ? | <i>Link cost of programs with reduction of costs of other programs</i> | <i>Ethical leaders that stand by their principles [IF] Municipal/provincial/Federal government all on board</i> | <i>Investment in your people Could be more cost efficient Believes in basic human rights Strong Business case</i> |
| Why would they not support ? | <i>Limits career growth Might put them out of a job Too much work Too complicated Can't afford People are lazy</i> | <i>Lack of public support Fear of failure Seen as impossible without federal leadership Re-election overrides common sense Four-year term politics</i> | <i>They must see a direct impact on their lives and/or livelihoods Different values Complex issue</i> |

5.0 Get Involved

There are a number of ways to get involved and stay up-to-date on Basic Income work including:

- Public Health Association of NB PEI <http://www.nbpeipublichealth.ca/>
- Basic Income Canada Network <https://www.basicincomecanada.org/>
- Basic Income Nova Scotia (BIG NS) Facebook: @basicincomeNS
- Basic Income New Brunswick Network <http://www.basicincomenb.ca/>
- PEI Working Group for Liveable Income <https://www.cooperinstitute.ca/Basic-Income-Guarantee>

ⁱ The BIG Experience. 2019. *Building a Movement for Universal Basic Income*
<https://www.bigexperience.org/>

ⁱⁱ Canadian Public Health Association 2019 Conference. *Basic income: An idea whose time has come? An interactive workshop to build public health.* <http://ph2019.isilive.ca/calendar/1>

Appendix A: Full List of Participant Feedback

What do we know?

- Cost-effective
- It is doable
- Its complex
- We know that it works
- We already spend so much on programs that don't work as well
- Pays for itself in the long run
- Investment in people
- Prevention
- Allows creativity, passion and happy at their jobs
- Less fear of losing income
- Basic income to provide security
- Political buy-in?
- Narrow the gap
- Minimal impact on workforce participation
- Decrease in hospitalization
- Decrease in domestic violence
- Improve food security
- Increased high school grad.
- Cost effective
- It's been tested with a pilot and has been proven to work
- Allows people to have peace of mind
- Allows people to make their own choices
- It is a high leverage activity (multiple outcomes)
- Put faith in individuals
- Gov. control / delivery of \$
- Prevention/ upstream
- Dignity/ judgement stigma
- Allows people agency to make decisions for themselves
- May be less expensive to administer than provincial assistance
- Will be necessary to offset the increasing precarious nature of work
- Universal federally issued benefits less benefits less cumbersome to administer than provincial programs
- Would ultimately take pressure off gov. to police, manage and deliver financial programs.
- Put forth business to gov.
- We need advocacy
- Reduced spousal abuse by 30%
- Current system doesn't work
- Don't do a good job for getting a wider network of people involved
- Proven – it worked!
- Different models exist
- Education on “benefits” to those beyond our normal contact
- Universal
- Political challenges
- Myth busting is still required
- Its not being talked about in social service circles
- Its non-partisan
- Complex – not only one mechanism
- Its effective
- It has resulted in reduced crime and better health
- Need public education
- Its not more costly in the long-term
- Its un-conditional

What do we want to know?

- When to expect results
- Correlation vs causation
- How to sustain through gov. changes
- Cost of admirative piece
- Define a “Basic Income”
- The positive impact for all
- How do we get people who don’t support that it is good for everyone?
- How to bring message wider?
- Why are people hesitating or resisting the implementation of B.I. across the country?
- What has stopped us from doing it already?
- What would change?
- How does this impact First Nation Population?
- How can it build community capacity?
- Proven long term benefits/ costs of BI
- Delivery
- Can we mobilize voters to force the issue in elections?
- Can it be done provincially, or does it need to be fed movement?
- How can we influence/ help people & decision makers learn and embrace the concept?
- How do we convince the decision makers?
- Wrong about paying more taxes
- Will it increase the cost of living?
- Job impact – remove programs
- Service deliveries will be impacted for multiple departments.
- Increased taxation based on employment opportunities
- Where are we right now? Establishing a base line!
- What areas do we hope to impact?
- ESIC has “Explore basic income” as a priority action
- Why have we not moved forward with this already?
- How to convince others? Corporate Canada, and Political parties.
- To answer the questions on how to make it work right
- People that need it may not be aware of it
- How to make the change happen
- Which benefits / programs/ services current link to social services?
- It is not a free ride! Its opportunity
- Resistance to policy implementation
- Need evidence on health and well-being (change over time)
- What do job changes look like with program (people working in gov)
- Its not new money, we already have it
- What infrastructure is needed to provide the program?
- Most effective economics
- Need baseline data on health and well-being (we already have this)
- It’s a distribution problem

What is irrelevant? Distracting?

- Assumption about decrease in labor force participated
- Assumption that people won't spend money on appropriate things
- The stigma of acceptance a basic income
- Existing services for most living in poverty
- Self interest
- Education
- The distractions are the distractors
- Government brave enough to implement federally
- Tighten tax laws
- "It would cost too much"
- "People would take advantage"
- "People won't contribute"
- "It's a socialist idealist idea"
- What people spend it on?
- Focus on the picture – not anomalies
- Universality – don't focus on individuals
- Distraction – "No one will work"
- Distraction – "Four-year government change"
- Needs to be treated same as OAS, child benefits, supplement
- As to the federal program without political interferences
- To have the private sector on board
- Public opinion
- Fear/ concern that people will leave their employment and not contribute to society
- Leadership – important that all departments/sectors own it
- Trivial details of someone's life
- It will be abused
- Lack of trust in people
- It will cost too much
- Who owns it – we all do
- The symptoms of poverty
- Obstacles- the stigmas of poverty
- Heavy "Safe Guards"/ watch dog forms, etc.
- Government works will lose their jobs
- Ideology – Puritan work ethic, humans are lazy
- Money is our only value system
- Stuff makes us happy
- Myth – Corporations create jobs
- People will take advantage
- People won't want to work
- Opinions on how others are spending their income

Why do we or don't we?

- Comparable to OAS to child benefit to reduce food insecurity
- Abusing the system
- How to ensure we have the strong community capacity to support change
- Need more info for service providers in order to best re-assess and redirect our services once such a program is implemented!
- Re-envision services provided by community agencies
- Restoring ourselves to heal, restore the planet
- Business plan?
- We have enough information to implement a federal policy, but decision on which system needs to be made
- Its administratively complex but if we did it with OAS and Child Tax Benefit we can figure it out
- CRA is long established and has system in place
- Need rebuttals to all the political push back
- Need more info on "needs" in order to establish the basic income amount
- We need info on impacts to other policies, jobs, well-being stats in order to informed educate public
- We don't need more studies – just public education
- Remember easier to sell as a "gain" not a "loss"
- Need to know which model is best for NB/ Canada
- No need for more "pilots", we already have proof of concept
- Use CTB, OAS as model to implement B.I.
- Implications with other programs – E.I., OAS
- Long term, above the political agenda
- How will we get corporate buy in?
- How will we de-stigmatize and reduce perceptions?
- What were the challenges with similar programs and how do we address them?
- How will we educate the gen. population and get people on board?
- Need culture change to proactive rather than reactive?
- Just do it
- Make universal vs population group focus
- Politician might need more info.
- Party politics
- The public might need more information to buy-in
- We don't require more information- just need to do it
- OSA & Child Benefit are not sufficient to make a large enough \$ impact – just help a bit, don't provide
- We need a convincing but simple econ. Breakdown for NB specifically. Then we just need to implement it.

Fact/Health

- More people needing health services
- Mental health +/- or addictions
- High child poverty
- Education – drop out rate
- Family violence
- Youth – safe home environment, more activities
- Homelessness
- More at food banks/ soup kitchens
- Elder Care – Increase volunteer / home care
- Exodus of youth
- Food security
- Increased rates of poor dental hygiene
- Increase in ‘working poor’, people can’t afford to stay home but costs of work are high (car, fuel, etc.)
- Ability to invest in themselves
- Government forms a barrier to accessing services (more people falling through the cracks because of process)
- Inequity of services between urban and rural environments (services more to cities and transportation is an issue)
- Oromocto Food Bank has seen a 38% increase in food bank usage in recent time
- Working conditions
- COPD rates
- Increase in stress
- Transportation
- Lack of transportation in rural areas
- Homelessness – visible – urban and invisible but existing in rural
- Lack of low-income housing
- Affordable housing
- Aging population with no pension
- Mental wellness
- Cost of medication
- Cancer rates
- Employment rates
- Education – basic life skills and OTJ training
- Unemployment
- Economic growth brings associated challenges
- Incarceration rates
- Smoking rates
- Need for a food bank
- Chronic health conditions (Diabetic and COPD)
- Mental health service access and suicide rates
- Divorce and separation
- Domestic violence
- 1 in 3 NB’s has multiple chronic diseases
- Tent city
- Obesity
- Food bank usage
- Opening a new 130 bed shelter
- Food insecurity
- Access to appropriate and safe and affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Lack of appropriate services (mental health)
- Youth / population leaving NB for jobs
- Urbanization
- Increase in youth homelessness
- 15% food insecurity Moncton
- Isolation (large geographic area)
- Employment stability
- Leisure access
- Family dynamic
- Mental health
- Education level
- Attraction of newcomers
- Literacy rates
- Working poor
- Unemployment and under employment
- Shortage of affordable housing, especially rural regions

Community Member

- People without vehicles
- Working poor
- Rural communities (enabling growth of rural NB by allowing transportation costs)
- Migration back to rural community
- Students
- Elderly people
- A senior in a homeless shelter
- Unemployed/ people who have gone out west for work out of necessity
- Single parents
- People with disability without basic needs
- Social workers
- Everybody
- Poor person with cancer living with her abusive, addicted son because she has to
- Homeless
- People who are not paying into pension plans
- Homeless with mental illness and addictions
- Rural – stable income source
- Single parents
- A mother and kids at a soup kitchen
- Young pregnant woman and team mom services
- Business increase consumer base at local level
- Privileged because less crime
- Universal benefit for the community
- Some below a certain income level will benefit more but all do benefit
- Single parent families
- Food bank client
- Person on welfare and want a higher education
- Homeless guy with guitar
- Recent widow who has lost husbands income
- Soup kitchen clients
- Post secondary students
- Long term illness patients and family members
- Addiction and mental health clientele
- Immigrants and refugees
- Students
- Health care workers
- Service providers
- Kids
- Woman and other minorities
- We have seen it already benefit seniors
- Me, and my family and friends
- Newcomers
- Entrepreneurs
- Those not capable of working (for whatever reason)
- Everyone
- Children
- Physical/ mental disabilities
- New Canadians
- My son who has a disability
- All clients / see in my job as employment counsellor
- Friend with schizophrenia
- Intellectual challenged individual
- All children
- Lady in wheelchair
- Those needing dental care
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities and family
- Homeless man looking for work, but unable to find a job and living on the street
- Seasonal employees

Value

- The belief of the connective good
- Compassion
- Human rights
- Young people fleeing violence
- Dignity
- Respect for the different choices of others
- Meaningful growth
- Louis Robichaud "Equal Opportunity for ALL"
- Trust that individuals / families know how to best spend \$
- Motivating
- Equality
- Self-determination
- Integrity
- Wellness
- Security
- Control
- Opportunity
- Choice/ agency
- Empowerment self-esteem
- Education
- Justice
- Self-actualization
- Education possibilities
- Allow everyone to develop their gifts/ purpose
- Everyone has something to contribute/ has a place
- Inclusion
- Respect
- Caring
- Compassion
- Equality
- Understanding
- Purpose
- Health
- Education
- Safety
- Self value and self esteem
- Increased community capacity
- Recovery
- Hope
- Anti-discrimination
- Everyone has something to contribute
- Self-worth
- Change in perspectives
- We are independent
- Stability
- Fairness
- Get my life back in order
- Sense of belonging
- Wellness
- Available and applies to everyone
- Build community capacity
- Creativity
- Entrepreneurship
- Right to live a life that is safe, secure, optimized and happy
- Re-distribution of skills

Influential Voice

- Sen. Nancy Hartling (Moncton)
- Retailers
- Seniors
- Director of local NGOs
- Musicians/Artists
- Dr. Sarah Gander
- Educators
- Parks and recreation
- MLA
- Faith groups
- Don Darling (Mayor of SJ)
- MP/Senator
- City/ Town/ Village Councillor
- Base Commander (CFB Gagetown)
- Indigenous – Value system already exists
- Mental health with Health Authority
- Cathy Rogers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Physicians
- Community Leaders
- Non-Profits
- Public Health
- Youth
- Retired groups
- Ministerial team (church)
- Mayor
- Community Health Centre
- Strong volunteer community members
- Unions
- Bloggers Opinionates
- City councillor
- Krysta Cowling
- Professor
- Public Health
- Economists
- DSD
- University
- Greater Fredericton Social Innovation
- Business District Associations
- Neil E.
- Common front for social justice
- ESIC
- Nurses Union
- NB Business Council
- Large Business'
- Big Corporation Irving/ McCain)
- We don't have one in our community
- Influential business... but need to educate to see the benefits
- Regular people
- Youth
- Blaine Higgs
- Food banks
- Senator
- People with lived experience
- David Coone (MLA)
- Bernard Lord
- Frank McKenna
- People living iit
- Seniors
- Jean Dabe
- Robert Irving
- John & Leslie Manship (Spielo)

Support?

- Link cost of programs with reduction of/other in programs
- Where to start? Lack of understanding
- Silent majority
- May not be fully educated on BI
- Different values
- Overwhelm
- Cost of transition
- Four-year term politics – cost to institute would show initial deficit
- Fear of change/ unknown
- Support of voters
- Ethical leaders who stand by their principles
- Ignorance
- Competing interests
- Misconception
- Idea that people should help themselves and not get a handout
- Could alternate the burden of systems
- Makes good economic sense
- Politician has an understanding because of lived experience with poverty
- Seen as impossible without federal leadership
- Frame the issue as a gain vs a loss
- Invest in your people
- Lack of altruism
- Could be more efficient/cost effective way to distribute funds
- Fed/ prov. Jurisdictional complexities
- Wouldn't – limits career growth, might out them out of a job, corporate influence, too much work, too complicated, myth busting, can't afford, people are lazy
- Would – lived experience, community growth, buy local multiplier effects (move \$ in community)
- Would support people who are less fortunate to live in a better society
- May not understand the impact
- Lack of public support
- Votes
- Fear of failure
- Fear of not being supported by minority
- Believes in basic human rights
- Influential voice of persuasion/ not enough public push
- Fear of change
- Not their mandate
- What will it cost us – not in budget
- Not well informed
- Educated on topic
- Shouting/ convincing/ clarifying BI and benefits
- Re-election over rides common sense
- What is the win for anyone in politics?
- Requires broad public support
- Might support a redistribution of power
- They don't see the benefit
- Too many women would leave their husbands
- They must see a direct impact on their lives and/ or livelihoods
- Voter opposition
- How to define the criteria
- Cost
- Competing demands
- No lived experience
- Other priorities
- Complex issue
- Political affiliations
- Time constraints
- Strong business case
- Faith and willing to take a change
- Municipal/ provincial/ federal gov. all on board
- People over pipelines
- Would – long term vision

Words used to Describe

- Stability
- Dignity
- Creativity
- Survival
- Self- Sufficiency
- Health Security
- Empowerment
- Inclusion
- Unconditionality
- Freedom
- Purpose
- Investment
- Fairness
- Well-being
- Universal
- Redistribution of wealth
- Necessity
- Peace of mind
- Agency
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Authenticity
- Changing perspective
- Equality
- Anti-discrimination
- Control of Choices