

Guarantee Living Income Toronto Newsbreeze February 5th.

Well, the consults are over. Here is an article from the "Put Food in the Budget" newsletter about that, which I think is worth passing on in its entirety. It even contains a reprint within a reprint. I don't think this Sharon person will mind.

PFITB web site is here <http://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca/>

As well, here is an interesting article about the consultation in "The Soo". https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/minister-visits-sault-to-discuss-anti-poverty-measures-activist-says-tax-the-rich-give-to-the-poor-514472?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=571d7ad323-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-571d7ad323-140445945

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Groundhog Day – and when it comes to Liberal promises to reduce poverty its “Deja-vu all over again”.

Minister Jaczek's consultations on Basic Income finished yesterday. Another poverty reduction consultation merry-go-round concludes – with a fresh coat of paint – this time called Basic Income."

As the consultation carousel neared its conclusion in Windsor an overwhelming majority of people **AGAIN** endorse the emergency resolution to raise the rates now for everyone.

Minister for Poverty Reduction Chris Ballard stated they have heard the message in each city to Raise the Rates!

In Windsor, Richard Dalkeith and Lorena Garvey-Shepley, member of Voices Against Poverty both social assistance recipients, read the resolution calling on the government to Raise the Rates.

Participants at the consultation expressed their concern about the implications that poverty is a choice! Participants also said it's hard to see how in the short time the consult took place our voices could be effectively heard.

The letter that follows was sent to Put Food in the Budget and we are happy to share it with Sharon's permission

Hello,

This obtuse selectivism is unacceptable. All citizens who are hurting from poverty, not a few in targeted towns, is the only way to go. No wonder the health resources are stretched and lacking. High stress, lack of nutrition, living cold in winter, criminality for food and to pay rent, jails (at \$6,000/person/mo.???) full because of people trying to make more income, filthy neighborhoods, fear of violence,

It's so wrong in a nation that puts corporate profits and environmental destruction for cash leaving our economy ahead of those living in poverty.

Choosing to help only some over many who are in need is grossly unfair and cruel. What sick and hateful times we live in.

This is ridiculous that so many of us are excluded. Why weren't we all given a chance at better health and somewhat less anxiety with corporate gain from our out of control bills?

The government needs to stop 'gifting' corporations already sucking billions from our resources while leaving water toxic, food barely edible and extinct our species. We should not have to live as though we are merely tolerated and kept at bare subsistence and such anxiety. We need to take the government to court to help all who are in poverty. I am disgusted. Time to speak to lawyers.

Thank you for all you do to try to help those of us on minimal existence.

Sincerely,

Sharon M

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HSAG is getting better organized. They have started putting out minutes. Here are some excerpts from the January 26th minutes which are of relevance to Basic income activists.

As well, discussion about city government and the effect the "Tory cuts" were having on low income people

The rich won't give 'us' (lower income) any credibility to be smart/powerful and want to keep it for themselves

Stigma attached lower income people and basic income (ie. Give lower income people money and they will spend it on drugs and alcohol)

The rich spreads this misinterpretation of lower income people through media and policies (ie. Why do social workers ask where you are spending all your money)

Basic income for all (\$21,000/year)

Movements need to be heard by politicians as this will create pressure where they are forced to create change (ie. Winnipeg General Strike in early 1900s)

...Why basic income is getting nowhere

The question hasn't been framed, we need to be consistent
Money comes from people actually doing things
People will not trust the poor

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A Basic Income for Canadians: What would change?

Here is an excellent study of the BI concept by one of the smarter people studying the poverty problem in Toronto. It is not perfect, but very much worth reading.

http://metcalffoundation.com/stories/publications/a-basic-income-for-canadians/?utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=571d7ad323-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-571d7ad323-140445945

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Here is an "action Alert" from an organization which a BI/GLI group should be seeking to ally with. http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b32b33961fd1e65272919d8a6&id=dadc085e68&e=51059eb750&utm_source=ISAC+Media+%26+Policy+News&utm_campaign=571d7ad323-Media+and+Policy+News+emails&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_342c280cba-571d7ad323-140445945

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Lessons in starting New Organizations

I have recently attended a couple of events around ways of organizing new groups for political action. One was put on by the TTC riders at the Toronto Transit Summit they

recently organized. It was facilitated by Jess Bell, who has a good reputation and lots of experience building up new groups.

The other was put on by the “Tools for Change” group, <http://www.opirgtoronto.org/uncategorized/tools-for-change-fall-training-series/> which works to develop skills for political groups. It will be a great source of help in setting up the structure of a local Basic Income group once one gets going. The teacher was Kristiana Clemens from Kingston.

The Transit Summit was January 21. The first thing Jess had to say to us was that starting a new groups requires commitment. The founder or founding group should expect to spend 20 hours a week getting it going.

It is easier if you have collaborators. However, sometimes the group you are working with is unworkable and it is better to go it alone.

It is important to decide early on how decisions get made. Also, you can not have everybody doing everything. Some strategizing is required. Here is a good way of thinking about that; “if” means strategy, “then” means goal, and “because” is assumptions.

It is important to have regular meetings. The time and place must be set. Offering food and transit tokens can help. Again, it is important to decide the decision making process. There also needs to be a process for removal. You will soon need sub committees because you do not want four hour meetings. However, only set up a formal board when you absolutely have to.

Any organization will have a hierarchy of roles. Jess used the acronym DARCI to illustrate this.

D= Decision making

A= Accountable

R= Responsible (for getting it done)

C= consulted

I= informed

A decision is made, someone is accountable for keeping records and insuring the thing gets done, someone is responsible for getting it done, and there are people who need to be consulted and others who should be informed.

Money; nothing happens without it! If any group gets beyond the very simple, you need paid staff to hold it together. Usually you will need an office. The trouble with this is that

you are dependant on a funder. But if you want to do your own fundraising, you need a track record.

Now, to the **Tools for Change** seminar of February 4th. There are four kinds of structures; Egalitarian, Centralized, Decentralized, and Distributed. Egalitarian means a flat, horizontal, or anarchistic structure. Centralized is usually one person or a small group calling the shots. Decentralized means a kind of federation with many local groups reporting to a Central group. Distributed means a network of groups with no central node.

You have to choose the right structure for your group. Ask;

Q. What is the best part of your group’s work or service?

Q. What is your groups mission and/or vision?

Q. What resources are available to you? Resources equal power; volunteers, staff, money, etc.

Q. What is your group’s size? There is no need to incorporate if you are small. However, if you get to the point of renting space and hiring staff, lack of incorporation will be a big problem.

There are numerous decision making styles, with their own pros and cons

	pro	con
Consensus;	Momentum/ buy in	time consuming
Majority	Fast	Mistakes happen
Delegating	Expedient	Risk of bad decision, scapegoating
Unilateral	Expedient	Exclusionary
Bilateral	needs resources for all/ could also be a “con”	Conflicts of interest
Petitions	Engages more stakeholders	Takes time to gather
Mixed majority	Versatile, breaks deadlock, safeguard to infiltration	Delays, discouragement
Consultation	Objectivity, expertise	Delay, expensive
delay/postpone	Reflection, research	Stagnation
coin toss	Unemotional, fast	Uninformed
Proportional	Diverse input	Tokenism

Choosing the process that works for your group.

What are your groups values or principles of solidarity?

What decision making methods best reflect those values?

How does your group embody those values in all its decisions?

Identifying Roadblocks

This became a big topic of this class. Evidently lots of us had experience at roadblocks. We were asked to think about the best meeting we ever had, and then the worst. What happened?

“When our work grinds to a halt due to a difficult decision, disruption, conflict or power struggle, we face a roadblock”

The answer is to stop, or detour around the roadblock, or dismantle it.

Dismantling roadblocks;

Nonviolent communication. Observations, feelings, needs, requests.

Critical Reflection. What happened? So what? Now what?

Appreciative Inquiry. What is the ideal state? How to get there?

It may be necessary to establish some rules. ie- do not be a wild card, do not spring surprises...

It is especially important to learn to deal with idiots with an “anti-hierarchy” thing. At the top of the list of resources we got at the end of the class was “The Tyranny of Structurelessness” by Jo Freeman. It is found at <http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/structurelessness.htm> It is highly recommended reading.

At the end of class, we exchanged stories about our bad experiences working with organizations. Bad groups can create trauma. Thus, think out structure, do not let it just flow out organically. This will give security and protect against takeover.

To conclude, it was interesting that almost everyone in the room had some bad memories of dysfunctional groups. Mostly it involved jerks who did not want any kind of structure. Usually they wanted no structure so they could most easily take over the group or shut it down.

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Some conclusions about BI related organizations in Toronto and elsewhere .

The HSAG group and the Yonge street mission people are only partly focussed on BI/GLI. The BITO group has a severe problem with a core group who resist establishing any structure, evidently so they can keep it under tight control. Both the national group, BICN, <http://www.basicincomecanada.org/> and the world group BIEN, <http://basicincome.org/> seem to have a similar problem.

There is a newly founded European group, UBIE. <http://basicincome-europe.org/ubie/> The BIEN organization tried hard to suppress it but it has been in existence since 2014. It was formed partly out of the concern that BIEN was moving too far away from its original stated goals. They seem very proud of their "constitution". BIEN only recently became incorporated. I am not sure, but I do not think BICN ever has really adopted any formal structure.

As for our hometown BITO organization, we know the difficulties with that. Any initiatives started by its members have not been progressing well. We are hearing nothing about the efforts to lobby city council for an endorsement. An idea for a speaker's bureau is on hold due to the health problems of those involved with that.

Something which might help move the BI/GLI concept forward in Toronto is some sort of informal discussion session, such that people can actually hear about it, predict when and where it is held, and come and meet other people who are interested in BI. Out of that may come a more coherent group. More about this idea in the next GLI Breeze on the 12th.

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The next HSAG meeting is Thursday the 9th at the usual time and place; Riverdale Community Health Center, 955 Queen street east, 1:30 to 3:30. For info, contact [susyg@ralphthornton.org](mailto:susy@ralphthornton.org)