

I have two masks for my digital projects. One, a member of Flashbots, a solar punk collective where we research the centralization forces in Ethereum. Two, a member of JáquerEspeis, a hacker collective in Costa Rica where we explore technologies with all our senses. A year ago I decided to remix them and see what paths show up.

I followed Morpheus in [The dream of redistributing the extracted value](#). Infinite paths showed up, some with our ancestors and some with future generations, some north and some south, some in the calm inside and some in the wilderness out there. This is my first report exploring how rebel nodes in the south are rewarded for the value they contribute to the Ethereum network in geographic decentralization and political resilience.

To start we have to get funds to set up and maintain the [node](#). I decided to apply to all the grants that I could find with the intention to get the 32 ether required as stake to join the validator network, plus the cost of the hardware, plus the compensation for the time and energy of all my JáquerEspeis contributors. We called this project the [banqueer](#), weaving a dream of economic abundance that will allow us to escape abusive banking credits and jump into an emergent circular economy of care.

Can the rewards for running a node in a geography that is very different to the others be redistributed in a way that allows my neighbors to rebuild their economies to be better adjusted to their particular situation, just as we are doing in the Ethereum start up world?

After a year of explorations, here are the stats:

- Number of grant applications sent: 7
- Number of grants approved: 2
- Amount received: \$2000
- Amount spent: \$850
- Amount earned in validator rewards: 0
- Number of grants required to reach 32 eth:

The numbers by themselves are depressing, so I'll better tell you the story. This will serve for you to get a better picture of my context, and for me to remember one more time that what's important are the friends I made along the way

of june, 2021

It's been a year of lockdowns. We have this beautiful space in the center of this beautiful country where we used to gather and hack together. The authorities are not allowing us to inhabit it anymore. I'm angry, I feel these crises are not mine to suffer. I call the others, and we gather in [our virtual banqueer](#). We talk about a violent nightmare, when we wake up all the bankers are dead and we are left alone to heal and rebuild. Our work is abundant, we care with each other, and nature here has plenty for everybody. This is what we dreamed together:

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](<https://banqueer.jaquerespeis.org/t/muerte-a-los-banqueros-charla-jueves-3-de-junio/2022>)

A bank of hugs

Who will cook for us?

of august, 2021

Following one of the threads that we left open, we start our [bartering circle](#). We decide to use the cryptocurrency [Seeds](#) because they seem like nice humans, their website looks very green

. We have been using it to learn together with many people about the myths that make a currency, technological, political, economical, memetic. More than 40 people sign up to the catalogue and we start sharing all sorts of knowledge. It's beautiful, I'm learning so much from everybody.

of october, 2021

Seeds crashes, of course

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How do I explain this to the others? We put so much time and energy on our circle. It's hard to keep the relations open when

there's this strong feeling of permanent scam. I was the only one who could exchange Seeds to ether before the crash, while I was writing the guide for the others to learn how to do it. It required [more than 25 steps](#). Am I a scam?

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I cannot deal with this. And yet I still have a naive hope in Ethereum. [The merge](#) is coming. This I can do. I will just put all of my energy on making Flashbots' [mev-boost](#) a thing. There's no way this can also be a scam, right? We have quantified it.

of march, 2022

We went for a hike to the [Devil's Path](#), with Flashbot's researchers and friends. This is a story of legend, had one of us not make it back this would have been an ok movie. Since all of us are still around, what we get is a mention here

I spent half of the trail talking to

about geographic decentralization. After the merge we have a chance to reconfigure the network composition. This is not easy, the stake has to be high and that's exclusionary. As the ether price increases, what seemed reasonable becomes unreachable for most. We already know that the biggest exchange will make a lot of money in this transition and they can capture the network if they feel called to do it. [Lido](#) appears as an ambiguous force. [Rocket Pool](#) doesn't sound enough. Anything we try to enforce at this moment can be easily circumvented.

The [solo stakers](#) are organizing. How can we incentivize them to put their node in their living room instead of Amazon? How can we incentivize other humans from the south to run nodes from their southern living rooms? How can these imaginary southern nodes transform our relations from scarcity to abundance, from bureaucracy to beauty, from violence to care? How can these human relations trust us?

I don't know. I just trust that by making [MEV](#) a thing we can use a portion of that extracted value to research these hard problems.

of march, 2023

The merge was flawless, now everybody can clearly see that MEV is a thing, mev-boost is the present dominant narrative, Flashbots is outgrowing the cute little dysfunctional collective I joined, and we are researching the next step towards decentralization. Ok, let's dance with it.

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I want to go in-different direction, funded by MEV. While dreaming a solar punk future, situated in a fairy tale present in my [infinite garden](#), I will join others to remember and embody the past that brought us to this [disappointing capitalist modernity](#), to explore ways to repair.

This is a very [wide exploration into the unknown](#). To ground it a little, one of the quests is to check how real is our ecosystemic call for geographic diversity. I'm starting to get suspicious. If we collectively cared about decentralization, I think it would be easy to not overuse Lido, AWS, and Geth.

I put all our JáquerEspeis experiences in one proposal. It is the queer bank. It starts with one low budget low consumption Ethereum node, and over the years it grows into multiple circles of trust, with Universal Basic Income, and liquidity to jump between economies. In return it provides to the network the services of testing, censorship resistance, and the inclusion of other ways of being.

[Bunqueer Virtual – 20 Mar 23](#)

[Banqueer: geographic diversity, censorship resistance, and UBI in Ethereum](#)

JáquerEspeis

proyecto

banqueer

Traducción en español abajo. This is the first grant that we proposed to form the queer bank. Team summary The hackerspace from Costa Rica is a laboratory for experimenting with free technologies. We have a virtual bunqueer in...

Tiempo de lectura: 7 mins

Me gusta: 4 ♥

I put on my JáquerEspeis mask and applied with it to the Ethereum Foundation grants, asking for \$2000 to get started. To buy an arm machine, to pay for the electricity and bandwidth required to run this node in testnet, and to distribute a little money to the JáquerEspeis collaborators who will put time on this project.

of april, 2023

tells us to send it instead to [EthKipu](#), an organization that Ethereum Foundation funded to support the work in Latin America. This makes sense, I guess, it's just annoying to have to translate the whole proposal to Spanish, and rewrite portions because the forms to send the application are slightly different. May be I should have asked more things before writing the proposal in English

. I think this is a good start anyway, I'm starting to learn how to navigate the grants space.

Aquí está el proyecto en español, cómo no

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[Bunqueer Virtual – 17 Apr 23](#)

[Banqueer: geographic diversity, censorship resistance, and UBI in Ethereum](#)

JáquerEspeis

proyecto

banqueer

Este es el primer grant que propusimos para formar el banco queer. Sobre el equipo El hackerspace de Costa Rica es un laboratorio para experimentar con tecnologías libres. Tenemos dos espacios de trabajo: un bunqueer virtual en...

of may, 2023

I meet with

from EthKipu, they have questions about our project. At the end of the meeting they say it's approved!

Later,

tells me about the [ether.fi](#) project to finance solo validators. I adjust the English version of our proposal to explain to their form about the next phase of the banqueer, 32 eth would allow us to move the arm validator to mainnet.

They reject it.

of june, 2023

We meet with

from EthKipu. They have more questions about our project, or maybe they just want to get to know us and our intentions. At the end of the meeting they say it's approved approved! We make the Optimism multisig and receive the money. This feels amazing, leaving a trace of this maybe will allow other friends to get grants to support their projects

takes care of ordering the hardware, assembling it and installing it.

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](<https://bunqueer.jaquerespeis.org/t/primera-buteada-del-nodo-de-ethereum-con-arm/2553>)

Here we find a big little set back that we didn't thought through. He paid around \$700 of his dollars, and what we have to give him is USDC. There is no easy, legal, safe, cheap way in Costa Rica to convert or spend cryptocurrencies. Ok, we have

to think about this before we can really use the money we received. I just make a note for my future self, he'll figure this out.

In the mean time, I adjust the English proposal one more time to see if we can move to the next phase with [Ethereum Foundation's Run a Node Grants](#).

Also I got a message from [Ether.fi](#). They ask if we are still interested because they are opening a second cohort. I explain to them our project again, yes, we are interested.

of july, 2023

Our proposal to Run a Node Grants is rejected, but they invite us to keep applying for future funding opportunities. I think they were looking to run only nodes, not validators.

We got approved by [ether.fi](#)! And there will be a celebration during EthCC to give me the [Avado](#) machine... Sounds amazing, except that I didn't want an Avado, I just wanted the 32 ether to run a validator in low budget non-corporate hardware. They sent me a contract that says I will have to pay 30\$ per month for 3 years, and that they will keep 95% of the validator rewards of the machine that will be running in my living room. With the remaining 5% I can pay them the 30\$, and not much more is left.

I'm not having fun with this anymore.

I took a very long walk to the party, I breathed, I remembered that this is also part of the research, and that their project is also a valid exploration of possible ways for decentralization. I arrived and had fun conversations with

from [Sensei Node](#), gave my gracious acceptance speech from the scenario, and headed back to figure out how to fit this machine in my suit case.

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of august, 2023

Coinbase closed my account. It was a long and painful process. The robots processing the picture of my id couldn't read it. The robots processing my support question couldn't understand it either. Costa Rica doesn't get human support.

tried to help using his United States nationality to get a human to see me, but after following the new instructions I just got in the same loop with the robots. If only we had a solar, local, and queer bank so I didn't have to depend on them to get my salary...

It's ok. I breathe, and remember that Coinbase is doing a valid exploration of decentralization from their situated perspective. This just makes very visible for me the question that my past self left open, how do we integrate the crypto economy with the national economy.

I wrote a new grant proposal, this one to pay a JáquerEspeis contributor to research and document all the legal and illegal ways of converting cryptocurrencies to local money. During our last conversation with EthKipu I understood that we could count on them to support our project, so I wrote it in Spanish and sent it to them asking for \$5000 to pay the 5 months of work I estimated that would take to clear the space and write guidance and recommendations.

of october, 2023

They rejected it. They said they don't have enough funds to support us. By now I'm getting used to this, I translated it and sent it back to where they invented the money, surely they will have plenty. Now I have a better intuition of how to keep the proposals more general to fit multiple forms, and translating things actually makes me happy.

of november, 2023

Ethereum Foundation rejected the proposal too.

said that supporting a circular credit network is beyond their scope. That was hard to parse, I understood that the technical part was good, and the other part was too financial. But if I get rid of the part about how we redistribute the abundance and make the collective sustainable, then it reads as if I just want to accumulate the profit of the validator for myself. Which is not

much, it would be a hard way to get rich.

So much to think, so much to do... Or maybe not, because the universe is weirder than what I can grasp and it keeps finding wonderful ways to demonstrate this. A few weeks ago during, a dinner,

told us about the [Celestia](#) airdrop, and we played to see who would get the most tokens. These tokens rained on me, not literally, and by now their value is just enough to pay for the stake of the first validator and to pay the researcher that will navigate the economic and legal system.

Huh, look at that. What was required was to pray for money to rain from the sky. I couldn't have know this while I was very angry and pandemic. Now it all makes so much sense.

of february, 2024

Where are we now?

The solarpunky-1-rock5 is ready to be relocated to the JáquerEspeis data center to start validating in mainnet.

The solarpunky-2-avado has been waiting for a while to get the mainnet keys from [ether.fi](#), to join their DVT cluster. They have just announced that they will stop charging us the 30\$ per month.

The solarpunky-3-theelder is a grandma server. She still needs more care, I will tell you her story another day.

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What am I doing tomorrow?

This journal closes my exploration with grants. The money we can make with one single validator is not enough to bootstrap the banquer, so we are pausing it until more drops of 32 ether rain on us.

What I will explore next are nodes whose role is to escape capture and recentralization, their existence is not moved by profit. They are not solo, they are multitudes. I am calling them fugitive nodes.