

Atlas Network's semi-annual review of the worldwide freedom movement

FREEDOM'S CHAMPION

SUMMER 2022

Alumni
in Focus:
Fri Asanga

Europe Liberty
Forum 2022

HOPE IN THE
Heart of Africa

The 2022
Sir Antony Fisher
Achievement
Award

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT
RISING TIDE
FOUNDATION

IS THIS THE MOMENT FOR

Educational Choice?

By Brad Lips

Atlas Network announces the Project
on Decentralizing Technologies



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Cover: Jennifer White, a West Virginia mother who previously struggled to find adequate support for her son's learning difficulties, now helps her children thrive in West Virginia's new educational choice environment. Her story featured in Atlas Network's 2021 short documentary *Education Reimagined: The Journey of West Virginia*. Photo / Isaac Joel Torres

MISSION

Atlas Network increases global prosperity by strengthening a network of independent partner organizations that promote individual freedom and are committed to identifying and removing barriers to human flourishing.

VISION

Our vision is of a free, prosperous, and peaceful world where the principles of individual liberty, property rights, limited government, and free markets are secured by the rule of law.

STRATEGY

Atlas Network cultivates a network of partners that share this vision. To accelerate the pace of achievement by our partners in their local communities, Atlas Network's unique Coach, Compete, Celebrate™ strategic model inspires our partners to improve performance and achieve extraordinary outcomes.

Coach

Atlas Network provides world-class seminars, workshops, mentoring, and other learning opportunities that inspire professionalism and build community among our independent partners.

Compete

Atlas Network offers grant and prize competitions that fuel our partners' efforts to develop, innovate, and succeed.

Celebrate

Atlas Network fosters camaraderie and stokes ambitions among our partners by celebrating their greatest accomplishments through events and media outreach.

Atlas Network has been a four-star Charity Navigator member since 2008.

Atlas Network is a GuideStar Exchange Platinum-Level Participant.

Atlas Network's donation payment processor is certified to PCI Service Provider Level 1, the most stringent level of certification available.



Dear friends of freedom, I am happy to report that the freedom movement is in fine form! As we go to press, I am sending my greetings from Mexico City, following an inspiring iteration of Atlas Network's Latin America Liberty Forum—within weeks of the equally exhilarating Europe Liberty Forum in Warsaw.

After two years of too many Zoom calls, there's a palpable excitement in being together in person again. More than that, I sense a real determination among our partners to step up to meet the challenges of this moment in history. We take a lot of inspiration from our brave friends inside and around Ukraine, who have reminded us that freedom is indeed worth fighting for. The magic of our global network comes from how this fight takes place on so many different fronts.

You'll see this as you browse this issue of *Freedom's Champion*. Whether it's U.S. parents seeking better educational options for their kids, or women breaking down barriers to enterprise in Africa, or innovators exploring how freedom may gain from decentralizing technologies—there's a big role to be played by the extended network you've helped us build.

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I take personal inspiration from two women we will honor at November's Atlas Network Liberty Forum in New York City. One is my predecessor as board chair, the late Linda Whetstone, whom I miss dearly every day. Another will be receiving our annual Sir Antony Fisher Achievement Award, as profiled in these pages. She is Elena Leontjeva, who co-founded the Lithuanian Free Market Institute when it gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and who has helped LFMI flourish as one of the most accomplished of Atlas Network's many wonderful partners.

Organizations like LFMI, Burundi's Centre for Development and Enterprises Great Lakes, and our Ukrainian partners render obsolete the excuses we might be tempted to make for ourselves. If they can make a difference under adverse circumstances, we should all channel their courage and lean into our own challenges with more energy and ambition. This, as you know, is what Atlas Network is all about.

Debbi
Debbi Gibbs
Chair of the Board,
Atlas Network

Is this the moment for Educational Choice?



By Brad Lips
Chief Executive Officer
Atlas Network

Dan Peters leans forward in his chair. The philanthropist and veteran of policy battles to increase educational choice remarks: “When my dad founded Pioneer Institute in Boston and made educational choice a priority around 1990, he used to tell people that we needed to have the mindset of a marathon runner. He’d say ‘It took us 50 years to get into this mess. It may take 50 years to get out.’ Well, today we’re getting close to a tipping point moment with Education Savings Accounts, micro schools, and parents all over the country asking for better options for their kids.”

It’s about time.

It’s now been 60 years since Milton Friedman’s *Capitalism and Freedom* popularized the case for school vouchers. Friedman’s insight was that schools should compete for students, just as other businesses must earn their customers. This means parents must have school choice. The idea has met fierce and persistent resistance from teachers’ unions and the broader educational establishment, even as evidence has mounted that U.S. student performance has stagnated, and even suffered, over recent decades.

The tide may be turning. One sign of the times is a May 2022 headline in *The New York Times*: “With Plunging Enrollment, a ‘Seismic Hit’ to Public Schools.” *The Times*’ story, of course, leads with the “hit” to schools without asking whether these schools had effectively served their students.

A different version of the same story might celebrate that children finally are escaping schools that failed them. EdChoice, founded by Milton and Rose Friedman, called 2021 “the year of educational choice” with 29 programs launched or expanded in 21 states. In many cases, partners of Atlas Network deserve credit for these wins for American families.

In Pennsylvania, Jennifer Stefano of the Commonwealth Foundation is hungry for more: “We’re thrilled that our proposal—to award Lifeline Scholarships to students in Pennsylvania’s lowest-performing public schools—was passed by the House and we believe it will get through the Senate. As our recent polling shows, school choice is growing in popularity across party lines, making it harder and harder for progressives, like our current governor Tom Wolf, to veto. Regardless of what Wolf does, he is term limited out in 2023—but we will be back with more legislation to give every child an opportunity and a choice.”

EdChoice, founded by Milton and Rose Friedman, called 2021 ‘the year of educational choice’ with 29 programs launched or expanded in 21 states.

Turning school choice into an election campaign issue feels like a political winner in 2022. During COVID, government-run schools stayed closed when private schools found ways to reopen. Through virtual schooling, many parents got a glimpse of problems that were previously hidden, including a politicized curriculum and unprofessionalism among some teachers. Teachers’ unions were discovered to have exerted influence on the Center for Disease Control’s masking policies, disregard-

Jennifer White and her son, who encountered firsthand the need for greater school choice in West Virginia before the passing of the Hope Scholarship Act. They were the subjects of Atlas Network’s short documentary *Education Reimagined: The Journey of West Virginia*.



ing the science that showed negative consequences of masks for kids who faced negligible COVID risks. These factors have driven revolts among parents, notably in Virginia, which elected a new governor in 2021 after the presumed favorite in the contest remarked, “I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.”

In 2021, Atlas Network created an Educational Choice Victory Fund to achieve policy breakthroughs that will offer more opportunity to families who have grown frustrated with the performance of their local government-run schools. Chad Goote, vice president of development, explains: “While our donors obviously love the international impact of Atlas Network, they also care deeply about America’s future. When we publicized Cardinal Institute’s school choice work as a finalist for last year’s Templeton Freedom Award, several donors reached out to learn about this organization we helped at its founding in 2015. In less than a decade, Cardinal transformed West Virginia from the worst state to the best state for school choice. So we put together the Victory Fund to replicate what worked in West Virginia. We have expertise in identifying grantees that can deliver results and helping those grantees through our suite of programs that lead to idea-sharing and strategy-refinement. So our Victory Fund is getting resources into strong initiatives to grow school choice where the Overton Window is moving in a positive direction.”



Garrett Ballengee, executive director of Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy, speaks at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2021 on his organization’s success in supporting the brand-new Hope Scholarship Program.

Georgia Center for Opportunity, a beneficiary of the Victory Fund, is working toward a broad-based Educational Savings Account (ESA) program in Georgia. GCO has launched a targeted digital media campaign and an in-person advocacy campaign, conducted statewide polling, and met with legislators to garner support for model legislation to introduce ESAs. GCO President Randy Hicks explains, “Advocating for ESAs like Cardinal did in West Virginia makes the most sense. They offer true flexibility for parents so, in addition to tuition, they can be used for individual tutoring, online courses, or buying a computer. Ultimately, this will open more doors so that an even greater number of kids can succeed, regardless of their family’s income, background, or zip code.”

In addition to GCO and Commonwealth Foundation, Atlas Network has also invested in the work of Pelican Institute in Louisiana, which reformed processes to

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Robert Enlow speaks at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2021 on the educational choice movement’s progress over the past decades and how it has gained momentum in recent years.

make it easier for parents to get children transferred out of failing government-run schools. In Wisconsin, we are now supporting our partner Badger Institute in their comprehensive push to greatly expand educational choice in their state by next year.

While the School Choice Victory Fund is focused on creating change in the U.S., good ideas know no borders. For example, in Brazil, Atlas Network’s partner, Instituto Livre para Escolher (ILE), is working to legalize home-schooling as a step toward ending government control of education and giving parents options. Through the mentorship program of our Atlas Network Academy, we’ve paired up Anamaria Camargo, executive director of ILE, with Jessi Troyan from the Cardinal Institute that achieved the school choice movement’s biggest breakthrough of 2021.

Of course, it’s a two-way street. Education reformers in the U.S. have taken inspiration from models of education choice from abroad, from advanced countries like Sweden, which enjoys robust public school choice, to the flourishing markets for low-cost private schools that James Tooley found in India, China, Nigeria, and beyond, as documented in his book, *The Beautiful Tree* (Cato Institute, 2009).

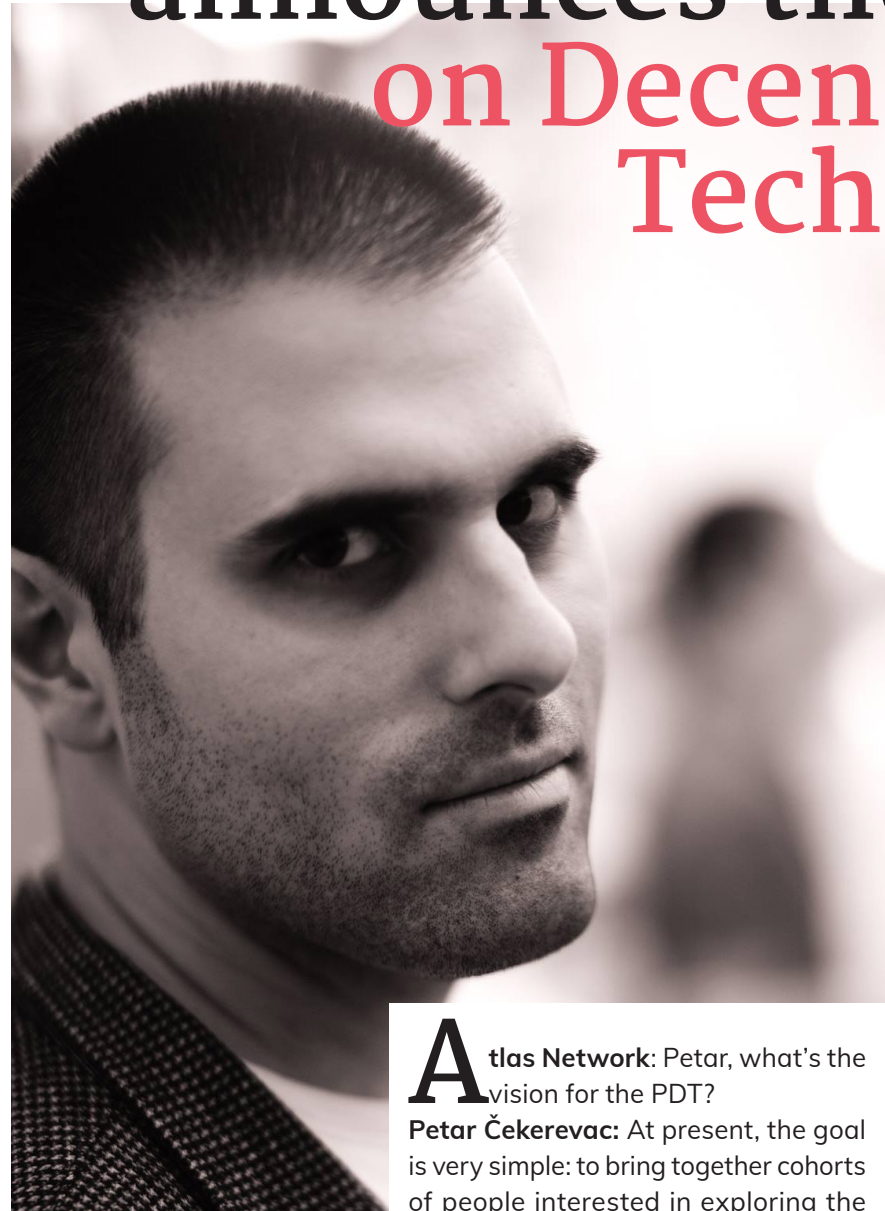
What James Tooley discovered in the global south was that, almost universally, parents will make sac-

rifices to improve the prospects of success for their children. What we are discovering in the U.S. today is that parents—disappointed and alarmed by their local public schools—are willing to shake up the status quo in education policy. The growth of private “micro schools” in the U.S. is a market response to increased demand for school choice. Think tanks can help on the supply side by removing zoning and regulatory obstacles that complicate the start-up of new schools.

Families stand to benefit from competition in the marketplace. Matthew Ladner, executive director of RedefinED, points out that Arizona’s families have had more school choice than any other state for about two decades. Now, research by Stanford University’s Opportunity Project shows that Arizona also ranks first in the nation in academic progress for all students and for low-income students.

“We know choice works, and it’s awesome to see more Americans demanding change in this direction,” said Robert Enlow, CEO of EdChoice. “When we were founded in 1996, we counted only six school choice programs implemented across the U.S. Now there’s 76 programs benefiting 28 million American children. More is on the way. We’re feeling the momentum and excited to be working alongside Atlas Network and a lot of other great organizations that work for a better future for America’s families.”

Atlas Network announces the **Project on Decentralizing Technologies**



AN: How did you get involved in this project?

Petar: After setting up a new organizational structure at Libek, the Serbia-based partner of Atlas Network that I've helped build since it was founded in 2008, I took a sabbatical to explore these topics at a personal level. I discovered that blockchain innovators today are hungry to learn from economists and political theorists to design governance rules and protocols, and I had already known that many share the ideas of the liberty movement. When I learned that my friends at Atlas Network were considering how to use their hub position in the freedom movement toward this same goal, I was excited to raise my hand to participate.

Atlas Network: Petar, what's the vision for the PDT?

Petar Čekerevac: At present, the goal is very simple: to bring together cohorts of people interested in exploring the innovations that are emerging. My hypothesis is that we will discover 1) new applications of decentralized tech relevant to the promotion of liberty and liberation of human potential around the world; 2) ways Atlas Network partners can improve the regulatory environment around tech adoption; and 3) ways tech innovators can benefit from learning more broadly about the freedom philosophy.

AN: How can readers get involved?

Petar: Readers can simply email me at Petar.Cekerevac@AtlasNetwork.org. I would love to meet as many interested people as possible. We need skeptics too! I see great potential for freedom in Bitcoin and other decentralized tech, but there are serious risks to navigate and we need sober thinking to make progress. I'm confident this is what you will see from Atlas Network's Project on Decentralizing Technologies.

Atlas Network is excited to announce its new Project on Decentralizing Technologies (PDT), led by Senior Fellow Petar Čekerevac. Our goal is to foster dialogue and collaboration among Atlas Network partners and innovators to discover how the decentralized ethos of Bitcoin and similar innovations can increase human freedom.

Join us at
Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner
in New York City to celebrate and
ACCELERATE global freedom!

Liberty Forum

*Sheraton New York
Times Square Hotel*

New York City, NY
November 16-17, 2022

Freedom Dinner

*Cipriani South Street at the
Battery Maritime Building*

New York City, NY
November 17, 2022

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Announcement of Templeton Freedom Award winner
- 9th Annual Liggio Lecture given by Gabriel Calzada Álvarez, Rector of the Universidad Francisco Marroquín
- US\$25,000 Think Tank Shark Tank pitch competition
- Toast to Freedom by Rachel Whetstone
- Lights, Camera, Liberty Film Festival
- John Blundell Elevator Pitch Competition
- A special celebration of the life of Linda Whetstone

Elena Leontjeva

Co-Founder of the Lithuanian Free Market Institute

At Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner in New York City, Atlas Network will honor Elena Leontjeva with the Sir Antony Fisher Achievement Award for her service to the people of Lithuania, founding and leading the Lithuanian Free Market Institute, which helped guide the country through its post-Soviet transition.

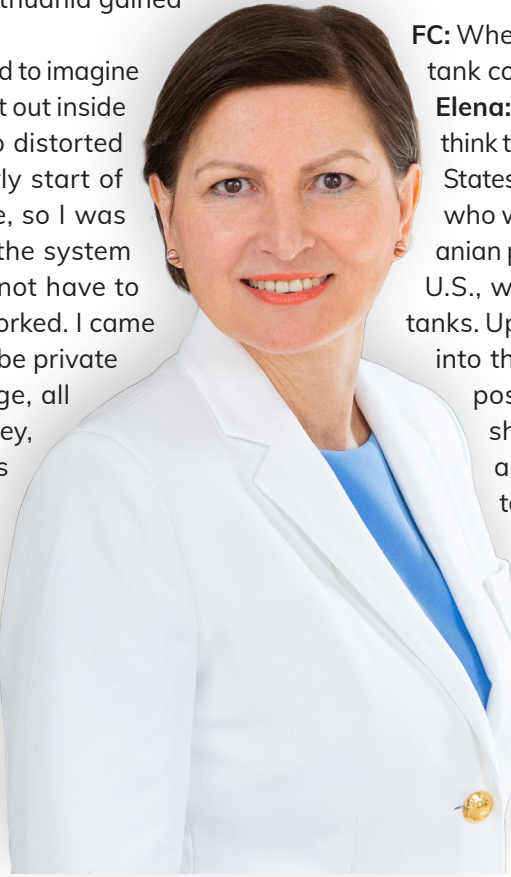
Freedom's Champion: Growing up in the Soviet Union, you said you had to imagine the characteristics of a market economy, just as you'd once imagined the taste of bubblegum from a wrapper you found as a girl. Please tell us about this, and what insights about free enterprise you discovered after Lithuania gained independence.

Elena Leontjeva: I wouldn't say that I had to imagine the free-market economy. I had to find it out inside myself, inside the system that was so distorted by the socialist rule. I had a very early start of my job experience and independence, so I was really looking for a solution to make the system work properly so that people would not have to steal from the factories where they worked. I came to the understanding that there must be private property, there must be free exchange, all by contemplation. It was really a journey, because when I read the same things in the books by Hayek and Mises I thought, "Yes! They're right! That's exactly how it is."

FC: How did the ideas contained in those books match your experience?

Elena: I think it's more complicated than just supply and demand. When you come to understand the market economy and private property from the perspective of a human being and

his needs and his interactions with others—it's not just about supply and demand, it's about our inner need to earn responsibility, which cannot be other than through private property (if it's a real responsibility) and exchange, which is only free when there are at least two people who are free. Under Soviet rule, there were attempts to set up "free" or better prices, but it didn't work. With state-owned enterprises, you can be very powerful, but you don't know what the true price should be. You really need autonomy of people, their free will, their free action. Only then does the market start working and producing. The market is only a reflection of how we are made, and the most natural way for us to produce the welfare which we need every day is to exchange with other people. This is very natural and therefore it's very simple, and I think every person could find out the same truth.



FC: When did the idea of forming a think tank come together?

Elena: The idea to form a free-market think tank was brought from the United States by professor Kęstutis Glaveckas who was on the first journey of Lithuanian politicians and economists to the U.S., where they visited several think tanks. Upon his return, the professor ran into the library where we worked as post-graduate students, and he shouted, "We have to establish a think tank! A free-market think tank!" There was no doubt that we had to do it [and] what we should name the institution. After just a few months, we had official permission to open as one of the first independent institutes. To that point there was no culture of independent institutions. I never regretted that I joined the institute. We were really

lucky to have our dreams and ideas in the proper time in history in a place which needed reform, that needed to find out what the taxes should be like, what the currency should be like, what institutions human beings need in order to freely exchange. It was a very speedy journey, and we had to find out many things by ourselves.

What helped us a lot was understanding that if we stand for liberty, speaking from an independent institution is the most coherent way to do it—not going to the government or parliament, but to have one independent voice and speak about ideas so that people would believe you and trust you and would wish to follow you. I think this is the only coherent way to promote liberty. All the tactics and strategies we found out step by step as we had to stand for our ideas.

FC: Why did you focus first on stabilizing the currency of Lithuania?

Elena: Money is most important for people to be able to produce, trade, and save. After we gained independence, there was a lot of talk about an independent currency, but politicians were mostly interested in the exchange rate—how the old currency should

be exchanged into the new one. No one really spoke about the rule, about the constitution of currency. At that time, I was lucky to meet George Selgin and others who promoted the idea of the currency board. I read the publications, then we met in person, and we started to promote the idea of the currency board. This not only stabilizes the money but takes away the monetary policy from the central bank to make money independent of politicians and makes it simple and transparent.

We were criticized by the central bank that this was a very simple system, and we said, "Yes, that's the very essence of the idea." So Lithuania had transparent and independent, really independent, currency for over twenty years. At the beginning the anchor currency was the dollar, then we switched to the Euro as an anchor currency, and eventually upon joining the European Union we switched to the Euro itself. There were a lot of situations where, without this system in place, there would have been a lot of manipulations brought through the monetary system.

FC: What other priorities did the Lithuanian Free Market Institute have over the next ten or twenty years? Do you have any favorites?

Elena: Our priority is always that which will have the greatest results for the whole economy, for all the people. That's why sometimes it was the monetary system, other times it was creating the legal infrastructure for capital markets and stock exchange, because all people became shareholders through an early and massive privatization. But there were no rules on how to trade shares or disclose information to shareholders—there was nothing! That's why, very early in 1992, we had already presented to the government proposals for regulation on the capital market and stock exchange. In 1994, it was tax reform, so we came up with the idea of abolishing corporate profit tax and shifting taxation to only distributed profits. The idea was heard by the prime minister, and it was partially implemented in 1997 as a zero tax on reinvested profits, and it lasted for several years. Lithuania was about to go for a full abolishment of corporate profit tax, but then politicians were scared by the necessity of joining the European Union. Thankfully, ideas do cross borders, so also thanks

You never know if your idea will have a long life or not, so you just have to spread it generously.

to Atlas Network sharing our ideas, the idea was implemented in Estonia in the year 2000. Later on, the system was introduced in Latvia, partially in Poland, and now we hear that other post-Soviet countries are interested in this reform. You never know if your idea will have a long life or not, so you just have to spread it generously.

FC: Tell us about the novel that you wrote after leaving the CEO position of LFMI.

Elena: It's called *The Market Square*, or the *Story of Two Joannes*. It's a real novel, a long Russian novel. Of course, I could not hide my passion, so it speaks a lot about the human being and how economic institutions are evolving from our nature. For me it was important to share with people that it was not brought to us by the United States or capital markets of other countries, that it is all stemming from human nature. It's a book which, through the life of characters, shows the nature of economic institutions, our dependency on the market, and the beauty of spontaneous order.

FC: What impact has Atlas Network had on you and your work?

Elena: Atlas Network is a bridge to all of us in the freedom movement. It is a "battery charger" for our shared passion and a motivator to spread our ideas generously, just like you do at Atlas Network.



THE IMPACT OF OUR UKRAINE FREEDOM FUND

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we've raised nearly US\$2.5 million, with over US\$1.5 million already dispersed. These funds are not only saving lives by getting hard-to-source supplies to parts of Ukraine other organizations struggle to reach, but they're also enabling our partners' ongoing efforts to encourage a freedom-centered response to defending and rebuilding the country.

Ukraine Freedom Fund grants have been used for:

- Ballistic vests and other protective equipment for aid workers,
- Armored ambulances for civilian rescue efforts,
- Desperately needed medical supplies,
- Moving partner staff to safety,
- Empowering our partners to continue their critical policy work,
- Funding our partners' efforts to break through Russian propaganda,
- And much more.

"We are eternally thankful; you are the stakeholders of this fight for freedom that's going on in my country. We are taking a stand, and we're feeling the support and the belief in us and what we're doing. It's fueling us. With the support we're receiving our faith is burning brighter, and we do believe that Ukraine will rise from the ashes of war. It will be not just because of our efforts in Ukraine, but it will be because of every single penny you put into this fund." —Nataliya Melnyk (Bendukidze Free Market Center, Ukraine)

US\$2.5 million raised
and US\$1.5 dispersed



"I'm so proud of what our volunteers have accomplished. Our network is, in fact, a network of networks, and it showed how valuable it could be at identifying particular needs on the ground in Ukraine and then mobilizing a vast network of specific knowledge and general goodwill to meet them. A friend had a friend whose spouse worked at a company that could provide a life-saving medicine at cost, and another friend had a cousin who could take two weeks off work to volunteer as a driver. And on and on. It was inspiring. Moreover, our friends around the world know—they really know—that they are not alone. Their fight for life and liberty is our fight, too." —Dr. Tom Palmer



Africa Liberty Forum and Asia Liberty Forum are just around the corner!

Register at AtlasNetwork.org/events!



Africa Liberty Forum

CO-HOSTED WITH
AUDACE INSTITUT
AFRIQUE
August 25-26, 2022
Online



Asia Liberty Forum

CO-HOSTED WITH
ECONOMIC FREEDOM
FOUNDATION
September 28-29, 2022
Manila, Philippines
Makati Shangri-La Hotel

ACCELERATE

Accelerate is the theme of our 2022 events because this moment in history requires the worldwide freedom movement to shift into top gear. Be part of the excitement by joining us at one or more of our events!

ALUMNI IN FOCUS

Fri Asanga



It has always been my dream to live in a free and just world where everyone can be whomever they want to be. My thirst for the development of women in general, and rural women in particular, became unquenchable after seeing how unfair life is in my country, Cameroon.

My journey in the liberty movement began in April 2019 when I joined the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation as the chief operating officer. After spending more than 15 years of my career in the development sector with a focus on financial inclusion, I realized that development efforts would never see the light of day without political, social, and economic freedom. There can be no actual development without freedom, and freedom can only be achieved when the right policies are in place for all. This realization motivated me to join the think tank movement with the hope of advancing development through adequate policies that guarantee the freedom of all. Venturing into this new career path can be likened to the birth of a new baby, who relies on its parents to begin the journey of life.

This could not have been possible without the skills I developed from Atlas Network Academy.

Thanks to Atlas Network, I continued this journey by participating in the Intermediate Project Management Training program and the Africa Liberty Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2019. This was the perfect opportunity to meet with other think tank executives and leaders who are impacting the policy space in Africa. Within a week, I had made friends from across the continent, shared experiences, and most of all, realized that the problems faced by each African country are unique and yet similar to those of other countries. In my opinion, our challenges are the building blocks of our unity. The more united we are in facing these challenges, the quicker we can achieve political, social, religious, and economic freedom in Africa.

Returning to Cameroon, I was equipped with the necessary skills to push forward our organization's mission to catalyze Africa's economic transformation through social entrepreneurship, science and technology, innovation, public health, and progressive policies that create economic opportunities.

A few months later, in November 2019, I participated in the Global Influencer Summit (GIS) in Philadelphia where I interacted with peers from around the world.



↑ Fri with other participants at the Intermediate Project Management Training in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2019

↓ Fri at Africa Liberty Forum 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya



Sharing and learning from one another impressed me the most. I found it easier to develop a pathway for our organization by tapping into the experiences of peers and adapting to the specificities of Cameroon. The knowledge gained from the GIS was cemented during the Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner. In 2021, I was appointed CEO of the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation. This could not have been possible without the skills I developed from Atlas Network Academy.

I look forward to participating in Executive Accelerator later this year and the opportunity to develop more strategic planning skills and share experiences with peers from around the globe, especially in this time of COVID, during which we are re-engineering our systems and processes to adapt to the new normal.



↑ Fri at Africa Liberty Forum 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya

↓ Participants at Atlas Network's Global Influencer Summit 2019 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



The journey is just beginning, but I have hope for a free and fair Africa where there is genuine freedom of speech, political freedom, and the emergence of free markets.

I have learned a lot from Atlas Network Academy, but my most outstanding achievement is the network of professionals I have built thanks to this unique platform. The journey is just beginning, but I have hope for a free and fair Africa where there is genuine freedom of speech, political freedom, and the emergence of free markets, which will guarantee economic freedom for all.

Europe Liberty Forum 2022

On May 12–13, 2022, some 230 individuals hailing from 39 different countries gathered in Warsaw, Poland, for Atlas Network’s annual Europe Liberty Forum, co-hosted by Civil Development Forum and Economic Freedom Foundation.

No one in attendance could forget the reason for the event’s last-minute relocation from Kyiv, and the defense of Ukraine and of human freedom against authoritarian strongmen such as Putin were central themes of the two-day event. Audiences heard from speakers and panelists on the opportunities and challenges ahead in areas as far-reaching as our partners’ response to the invasion of Ukraine, authoritarianism in Europe more broadly, government responses to the pandemic, rising housing costs, and much more.

The gathering opened with Cornerstone Speakers whose addresses set the tone and themes for the event. These included Nataliya Melnyk (Bendukidze Free Market Institute, Ukraine), who spoke on the ways in which Atlas Network partners are continuing to work for freedom and the protection of human life; Dr. Tom Palmer (Atlas Network, United States), who explained the central role of ideas in the Kremlin’s own attempts at justifying its invasion of Ukraine and why the right ideas must inform

our own response; and Zoltán Kész (Civitas Institute, Hungary), who addressed the rise of authoritarianism in Hungary and why the Orbán government is not the shining example some American pundits make him out to be.

Breakout sessions throughout the first day of the forum featured panelists from across Europe addressing topics such as “Emergency Powers and What We’ve Learned So Far,” “Living in Large Cities: Zoning and the High Cost of Living,” and “European Energy Independence in Europe: What Is the Solution?” During lunch, Ivan Mikloš (former minister of finance, Slovakia) and Leszek Balcerowicz (former deputy prime minister, Poland) joined Dr. Lyall Swim onstage to discuss how they identified and capitalized on openings for reform during their tenures in government office. The “Keeping Ukraine Free and Independent” panel presented attendees with the opportunity to hear from a number of Atlas Network partners in Ukraine on how they’re continuing to work for a better country and world despite the invasion of their home.

During the Europe Liberty Awards Dinner, Maryan Zablotsky, member of the Ukrainian Parliament and founder of Atlas Network partner Institute for Economic Leadership, gave brief remarks on why freedom is central to the fight for Ukrainian independence. Author and historian Johan Norberg followed, delivering an address on why it’s more important than ever to continue carrying the torch of individualism against the tide of collectivism and authoritarianism. “I don’t think the Ukrainians are putting up such a brave fight

As the first in-person Regional Liberty Forum to take place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe Liberty Forum 2022 was a welcome return to normalcy.

despite them being individualists,” said Norberg, “I think they do it because they are individualists.” After dinner, Fundacja Liberté!, an Atlas Network partner based in Poland, was announced as the winner of the 2022 Europe Liberty Award.

Day two included “Breakfast with the Authors” featuring Dr. Rainer Zitelmann (Germany) and Dr. Eamonn Butler (Adam Smith Institute, U.K.) and breakout discussions on “Free Trade in Europe and Beyond,” “Feminism and Classical Liberalism,” and “Rising Inflation and the Change of Economic Cycles.” The Think Tank Shark Tank Lunch featured Guillem València Caballero (Institut Ostrom Catalunya, Spain), Glen Hodgson (Free Trade Europa, Sweden), and İsrail Özkan (Freedom Research Association, Turkey) pitching their projects to a panel of judges. After much deliberation, judges awarded the US\$10,000 grant to Özkan for his plan to secure the right of Turkish people to consume alcohol while mindful of the obligation to do so responsibly.

As the first in-person Regional Liberty Forum to take place since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Europe Liberty Forum 2022 was a welcome return to normalcy. We look forward to seeing you later this year at an event near you or at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner in New York City!



↑ İsrail Özkan, winner of the 2022 Europe Think Tank Shark Tank, alongside Atlas Network’s Dr. Patty Hohlbein and Jack Shannon.



↑ Błażej Lenkowski, managing director of Fundacja Liberté!, accepts the 2022 Europe Liberty Award from Atlas Network CEO Brad Lips and Chair of the Board Debbi Gibbs

↓ Johan Norberg, Swedish author and historian, delivers an address at the Europe Liberty Awards Dinner





RISING TIDE®

Foundation

Vale Sloane, Strategic Partnerships Advisor of Atlas Network, interviews Wendelin Zellmayer, Foundations Director and CEO of Rising Tide; Isabelle Hirs-Schaller, Senior Program Manager (Freedom in Practice) of Rising Tide; and Patrick Oetting, Program Manager of Rising Tide.

Vale Sloane: Can you please share a bit about the mission and work of Rising Tide Foundation?

Rising Tide Foundation: Rising Tide is a philanthropic foundation, based in Switzerland, committed to advancing freedom and prosperity globally. We believe that the market economy, in concert with limited government and Rule of Law, holds the greatest promise for freedom and prosperity for all.

We also believe that freedom is the most important explanatory factor driving and shaping human wellbeing around the world and that prosperity occurs when society respects the dignity of each person and his or her right to act as a moral agent. We seek to unleash this potential by supporting projects that open networks of productivity and exchange to the previously excluded. Individuals in poverty must see themselves as active agents, not passive victims. They must seek and be given empowerment, not paternalistic protection as the key to prosperity. We see a substantial contribution being made through projects we have funded that show tangible impacts in at least one of the following areas:

- Private Sector Solutions
- System Change
- Empowerment of Individuals
- Teaching Freedom

While we work with many in the liberty movement, we also reach beyond it—partnering with organizations that solve societal problems through the practical application of classical liberal principles.

Vale: Why do you and your colleagues at RTF choose to support Atlas Network?

RTF: The relationship with Atlas Network is long standing, and we have always recognized Atlas Network as an important player in the global liberty movement—supporting local, grassroots organizations and building a strong movement from the bottom up.

Nearly a decade ago, we first collaborated with Atlas Network on the Think Tank Shark Tank competition at the Atlas Network Liberty Forum. We are currently collaborating with Atlas Network on a project to eradicate barriers to economic freedom for women in countries where these freedoms have been disproportionately and unreasonably curtailed. Through this, Atlas Network is distributing small grants to members of its global network. Additionally, we have contributed to the Ukraine Freedom Fund. What all of these have in common is that Atlas Network has been a catalyst for us to reach small, grassroots organizations with our funding, for which we generally don't have the capacity at the foundation. We highly appreciate Atlas Network's knowledge, network, and feet on the ground in countries where it is challenging for us to deploy our funding.

Vale: How does the work of Atlas Network align with the beliefs and values of RTF?

RTF: As mentioned, we believe that prosperity occurs when society respects the dignity of each person and his or her right to act as a moral agent. We seek to unleash this potential by supporting projects that open networks of productivity and exchange to the previously excluded. As one can tell, this focus of our work at Rising Tide rests close to the heart of Atlas Network, which seeks to increase prosperity, promote individual freedom, and remove barriers to human flourishing around the globe.

Vale: What excites you most about your involvement with Atlas Network and the role we play in the worldwide liberty movement?

RTF: What excites us most about our work with Atlas Network is that it has served as the catalyst to reach grassroots organizations around the world, through your strong network of partners, that are removing barriers to human flourishing—placing the classical liberal principles into action. Further, we appreciate the Atlas Network Coach, Compete, Celebrate!™ strategy as we strongly believe that competition breeds excellence.

Vale: Soon after we launched the Ukraine Freedom Fund, RTF made a major grant that provided great momentum for a fund that's now grown five-fold. What led you to step in to help us in this area?

RTF: As mentioned on the Atlas Network Ukraine Freedom Fund webpage, Rising Tide believes that freedom is precious and worth fighting for. Given the affront to human freedom and the geographic proximity to our foundation headquarters in Switzerland, as a foundation we felt strongly about providing support for Ukrainians suffering from the brazen attack by Putin's military.

In particular, we are thrilled to provide a major grant to the Atlas Network Ukraine Freedom Fund as Atlas Network possesses the local knowledge and relationships built over decades to appropriately execute the distribution of funds and materials. In addition to the humanitarian aid, we think it is important to provide support for maintenance of the liberty movement in Ukraine, ensuring organizational survival until the end of the war, in order to use this “moment to accelerate progress by unleashing the power of free enterprise, by defeating cronyism, and through trade and integration with the global economy.”

We are very happy that many others have followed our path in contributing to the Ukraine Freedom Fund, allowing Atlas Network to exceed their original goal.

Vale: You recently convened part of your grantee community for the first time in RTF's 10-year history. What inspired that and how did it go?

RTF: In the philanthropic sector the focus is primarily on how to most efficiently disburse funding, while it is often forgotten that foundations can contribute more broadly to society and, more specifically, to grantees outside of simply providing financial resources. Historically, our work has been spent identifying the best organizations in the world for collaboration that are advancing our core principles and strategic vision as stated above.

Over the past few years, we have realized the tremendous amount of knowledge and experience that we have gathered through our grantee network and that the potential for learning, synergies, and collaboration among our network needed to be further leveraged. To that end, this past May we hosted our first-ever grantee summit, where we gathered a large portion of our grantee network for two days of exchange, learning, and co-creation. Besides the stimulating co-creation process around putting classical liberal principles into practice around the globe, as well as increasing organizational effectiveness, we simply had a fantastic time being back in-person as a community. We are extremely excited to see the many ideas for collaboration among our grantees grow fruit and prosper.

Vale: Many of our partners are operating in challenging countries and face many dangers. What would you say to encourage them?

RTF: We live in Switzerland, one of the freest countries in the world, where citizens can request a change of the constitution by collecting 100,000 signatures. We are well aware of the incredible value of our system and that this is unfortunately exceptional in our world today. The threats to individual freedom and human prosperity are acutely felt in many parts of the world. This is even more true in countries where Atlas Network partners literally place their lives on the line each day to bring about a world where individuals are able to “live life on their own terms.” The mark of any authoritarian regime is a total dedication to living a lie, and the encouragement to confront this lie daily was well articulated by Václav Havel:

As long as living a lie is not confronted with living the truth, the perspective needed to expose its mendacity is lacking. As soon as the alternative appears, however, it threatens the very existence of appearance and living a lie in terms of what they are, both their essence and their all-inclusiveness. And at the same time, it is utterly unimportant how large a space this alternative occupies: its power does not consist in its physical attributes but in the light it casts on those pillars of the system and on its unstable foundations.

When the lie is confronted with truth, the pillars and foundation of the system begin to crumble; keep fighting for the truth.

Latin America Liberty Forum 2022

On June 7–8, a record-breaking 323 individuals from 24 countries gathered in Mexico City for Atlas Network's Latin America Liberty Forum 2022, co-hosted by Centro Ricardo B. Salinas Pliego.

As illiberal forces on the political left and right gain traction across the region, the event focused on how Atlas Network partners can effectively push back against the statist tide. That means both winning in the market of ideas and creating real progress toward ending poverty. From big-picture perspectives on Latin America as a whole to focused discussions on the challenges facing individual countries, experts gave their thoughts on how organizations can accelerate the region toward a better, freer future.

Welcome remarks from Atlas Network CEO Brad Lips and Ana Lillia Moreno (México Evalúa, Mexico), were followed by a conversation between Dr. Francis Fukuyama (Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies) and Dr. José Antonio Aguilar Rivera (professor of political theory at Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas) on "Liberalism and Its Global Challenges." "Getting to a

democracy is quite easy," said Dr. Fukuyama. "Getting to a state that can institute laws on an impartial basis without corruption is extremely difficult."

Several of the region's thought leaders, including Antonella Marty (senior fellow at Atlas Network's Center for Latin America), Berta Valle (human rights activist and journalist, Nicaragua), and José Benegas (lawyer and journalist, Argentina), gave Cornerstone Talks to anchor the forum's themes. From the legacy of Nicaragua's peaceful revolution in 2018 to ending poverty through opening avenues for wealth creation, these speakers lent their expertise on the challenges facing Latin America and a path forward.

Throughout much of the day, concurrent breakout sessions offered participants the opportunity to take deep dives into the most pressing topics and get their questions answered by Atlas Network partners and experts from across Latin America and beyond. Addressing topics such as "Human Progress, Around the World and in Latin America," "Blockchain, Bitcoin, and the Infrastructure of Trust," and "Challenges of Liberty in the Age of Misinformation," the speakers focused on specific aspects of the past, present, and future of liberty in the region. During lunch, Sergio Sarmiento (Caminos de la Libertad, Mexico) and Martín Aguirre (editor-in-chief, *El País*; editor, *Mirada Sur*) joined Rómulo López (Atlas Network, United States) to discuss the challenges the ideas of liberty face in Latin America today and how those challenges can be overcome.



↑ Edwin Zarco Nieva, winner of Latin America Think Tank Shark Tank, with Dr. Roberto Salinas-León and Gonzalo Schwarz of Atlas Network's Center for Latin America.

↓ Ricardo Salinas Pliego, president of Grupo Salinas, gives the keynote address at Latin America Liberty Awards Dinner.



The forum's first day closed with the Latin America Liberty Awards Dinner, the biggest night of the year for the region's freedom movement. Ricardo Salinas Pliego (president, Grupo Salinas) delivered the keynote speech, addressing topics such as wealth distribution in Latin America, the importance of innovation, and why entrepreneurs are essential for a better world. After dinner, Antonella Marty and Brad Lips announced Brazil-based partner Livres as the winner of the 2022 Latin America Liberty Award. The organization's monumental work to open the government's near-monopoly on the water and sanitation market to competition from the private sector is an exciting development in the effort to provide more Brazilians with clean water and essential sanitation services.

The forum's second day opened with a breakfast discussion between Dr. Tom Palmer (Atlas Network, United States) and Dr. Carlos Newland (dean of the faculty of business and economics, Universidad Católica Argentina)



↑ Magno Karl and Sarah Melo of Livres celebrate their organization's win of the 2022 Latin America Liberty Award.

↓ Dr. Francis Fukuyama speaks with Dr. José Antonio Aguilar Rivera on "Liberalism and its Global Challenges."



on how to measure appreciation of market principles and to use such knowledge to guide reform efforts.

The rest of the day featured breakout sessions on such topics as "Resurrecting the Ideas of Freedom in Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba," "Bureaucracy and the Economics of Extortion," and "Paths to Police Reform in Latin America." At "A Free Life: Portrait of an Artist," attendees were treated to the live debut of Free the People's new film of the same name which tells the story of Cuban artist Carlos Luna and his search for freedom. At the Think Tank Shark Tank Luncheon, a tight competition between Cristofer Correia (Ciudadanía Sin Límites), Valeria Peralta Albanes (Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social, El Salvador), Edwin Zarco Nieva (Centro de Investigación Looking, Peru) saw Nieva emerge the winner. He took home the US\$10,000 in grant funding to support his project to train entrepreneurs to capitalize on the growing environmental market.

HOPE IN THE HEART OF AFRICA



BY CLINT PAGURKO

In a landlocked country in East Africa lies a story of hope. Given the decades the country has spent as one of the poorest in the world, and its years of internal strife, it might not strike you as a place with a bright future. But once I talked to the people of Burundi, it became clear that things really are changing for the better.

In May of this year, a small team traveled to Burundi to produce several short documentaries showcasing the real-life impact of policy reforms achieved by Atlas Network partner Centre for Development and Enterprises Great Lakes (CDE). The organization has been operating here since 2019 and has already made impressive strides in areas such as trade, entrepreneurship, and women's rights. CEO Aimable Manirakiza, media director Monia Wakana, and video specialist Junior François, worked with us throughout the nine days we spent in Burundi, translating, driving, and answering our many questions.

Burundi is the perfect example of why the world needs Atlas Network's vision of international development. The evidence of previous—and ongoing—failed traditional aid efforts is plain to see. Many of the roads feature signs proclaiming that they had been built with the help of agencies in the U.S., the European Union, or Japan. Everyone wants to help, but all that money pouring in hasn't worked. The United Nations has been working for 60 years to end poverty here, Aimable told me. When I asked Monia if the UN was helpful, she gave me a matter-of-fact “No,” and her dismissive tone told me all I needed to know.

For example, traditional foreign aid agencies continue to ship millions of dollars worth of food into Burundi each year without solving the problems that make that necessary. Agricultural output remains limited despite the fact that Burundi experiences over nine months of rain per year. It is so limited, Aimable informed us, that

rice is too expensive for many people to eat regularly. Farmers in Burundi work hard, but they work their fields with hand tools, limiting the potential output of the arable land. Conrado Etchebarne, a producer on our crew who operates a farm in his native Argentina, commented excitedly to me just how productive Burundian agriculture could be with just a few pieces of modern farming equipment. Institutional realities make the prospect of acquiring such machinery a tricky calculation. If a local farmer saved up enough cash to purchase a tractor, for instance, it's likely that government officials would demand partial ownership.



↑ The team prepares to record an interview with Nasra at her home.

In contrast, the CDE team is steadily removing the obstacles to prosperity that traditional aid seems to ignore. They know which reforms their country needs. Just as important, they know how to make that reform happen. Thanks to improving rapport with policymakers and a growing track record for effective ideas, CDE is well positioned to help shape a future for Burundi that is far brighter than its past.

There is good reason for hope. Entrepreneurship, the core of a healthy and growing economy, is alive and well and now much easier, thanks to CDE. In many parts of the developing world, those with creative and enterprising minds are forced to keep their burgeoning businesses in the informal sector due to overbearing regulations. This locks them out of financial institutions, exposes them to abuse by police and other officials, and otherwise severely hampers the growth of their businesses. Until recently, that was the story in Burundi, and it was the story of one Papa Coriandre.

Papa Coriandre makes a variety of products out of—what else?—coriander, also known as cilantro. He is so passionate about his work that he didn't give up, even after spending time in jail for operating an unregistered business. By implementing reforms CDE had encouraged, the government slashed the time, paperwork, and fees required to register a business. No longer locked out of the system by an overly complicated regulatory structure, Papa Coriandre formalized his business and finally achieved the growth he'd been working toward for so long. Now his enterprise is thriving, and he is bringing his neighborhood along with it. You can read more about his story in Matt Warner and Dr. Tom Palmer's *Development with Dignity* and hear it in Papa Coriandre's own words when the documentary we filmed with him is released in the coming months.

Another entrepreneurial individual, Nasra, supports her family by trading goods across the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Until recently, she had to choose between two harrowing routes to get across the border. Nasra could either cross Lake Tanganyika and hope to avoid the dangerous wildlife, or she could navigate 19 separate checkpoints—just the Burundian side of the border—and face the risk of the often-predatory guards. CDE met with traders such as Nasra and identified the difficulty of crossing the border as a major hurdle preventing many Burundians from achieving a more prosperous life. Through their Fungua Njia (“Open Road”) project, they convinced government officials to adopt a sweeping set of trade reforms. Now Nasra has to navigate only one streamlined border

station in order to sell her goods in the Congo, and she's not even required to obtain a passport. Because she can ply her trade simply and in peace, Nasra is giving her children a better future, providing a higher level of both education and nutrition.

Burundi is not without its problems. Fixing decades of misrule and poverty takes time. Armed security forces still roam the streets, and photos of the president still hang like icons in many businesses, but change is in the air. It won't happen overnight, but the work of Centre for Development and Enterprises Great Lakes is moving the needle in a real and tangible way. As you'll see in the documentaries we filmed, Burundians are living happier, healthier lives. That is real change, and it's happening now. See it in action when the next Doing Development Differently films are released later this year.



↑ Left to right: Charles Fritschner (videographer, director; Thatch Films), Innocent Kezakimana (administration and finance manager, CDE), Monia Wakana (communications director, CDE), Aimable Manirakiza (CEO, CDE), Conrado Etchebarne (producer), Clint Pagurko (producer, content specialist; Atlas Network), Isaac Torres (photographer).

↓ Charlie and Isaac capture footage as Papa Coriandre processes one of his signature juice products.



I have hope for a free and fair Africa where there is genuine freedom of speech, political freedom, and the emergence of free markets, which will guarantee economic freedom for all.

FRI ASANGA, CEO
DENIS & LENORA FORETIA FOUNDATION
CAMEROON

