

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

FREEDOM'S CHAMPION

SUMMER 2023

Alumni
in Focus:
Basanta
Adhikari

The 2023 Sir Antony Fisher
Achievement Award

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Tom Dyble
Making Connections
for Freedom in
Eastern Europe

Smart Bets:
Investing in the
Future of Liberty

Papa Coriandre at the Anthem Film Festival



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On the Cover: Papa Coriandre, a Burundian entrepreneur and the subject of Atlas Network's film of the same name, stands in front of his new production facility. Thanks to the work of Atlas Network partner Centre for Development and Enterprises Great Lakes, he has entered the legal marketplace, and his business has grown rapidly. *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.



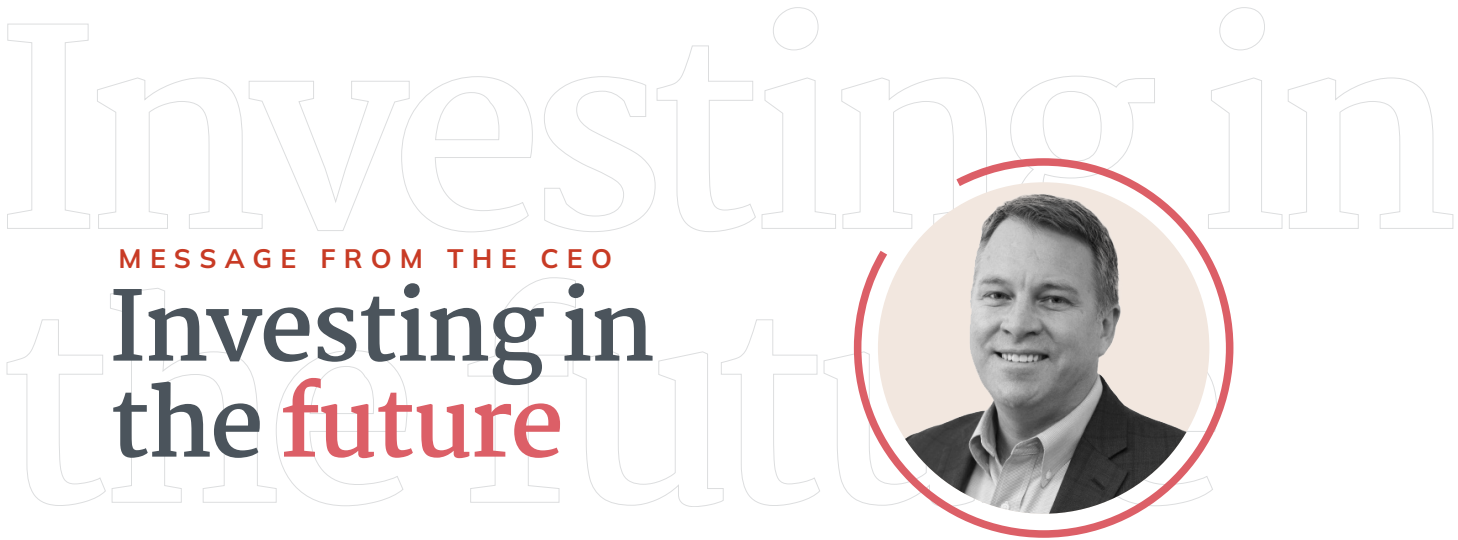
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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Investing in the future



Last November, after the excitement of Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner had settled, I received an email from Dhananath Fernando. He had recently been on our biggest stage to accept the Templeton Freedom Award on behalf of Advocata Institute. He wrote to remind me of our first email exchange—after he took part in an Atlas Network training pro-

gram in Asia in 2014—and he remarked on how far he had come: “from a one-man operation up to a winner of the Templeton Freedom Award!”

This is what Atlas Network is all about. We celebrate excellence in expanding freedom in the world by well-known organizations and by up-and-comers like Advocata, which Dhananath has grown so successfully, despite very challenging circumstances in his native Sri Lanka.

You might be wondering ... who's next? Who will generate big breakthroughs for the freedom movement in the years ahead? Our Smart Bets program aims to answer this question. As you'll see in this issue, our Smart Bets represent bright stars among our partner network, and we work alongside them to help them shine even brighter. From unique grant programs to tailored cohort opportunities, we're helping them to take the next steps in their quest to make the world a better place.

Our program is now paying dividends. Our most recent class of Smart Bets has blazed new trails for liberty—from Spain to Montana, from Nepal to Burundi, and beyond. It's been incredible to watch them dig in and raise their ambitions, spurred on by friendly competition and supported by a global network of those who love freedom.

This is what Atlas Network is all about. We celebrate excellence in expanding freedom in the world by well-known organizations and by up-and-comers.

In this issue, you'll get to know just a few of our 2023 picks and how they are making a difference—and you'll learn how you can get involved in choosing who will present at our global Liberty Forum in New York City this fall. We

expect this class will continue to generate success stories that in future years will make them strong candidates for the Templeton Freedom Award—following a path similar to Dhananath's.

This is how the freedom movement will get stronger over time.

For your invaluable trust and support, thank you.

Brad Lips
Brad Lips
Chief Executive Officer,
Atlas Network

Atlas Network's Smart Bets

Since 2019, Atlas Network's Smart Bets program has identified our network's rising and established stars and equipped them to punch above their weight through special funding, networking, and consulting opportunities.

This year-long accelerator combines all three elements of our *Coach, Compete, Celebrate™* strategy to invest in our most promising and ambitious partners, supporting them in achieving more than they thought possible. Every year, strong candidates from among our partner organizations are identified and invited to apply to the program. Of the 6% of partners that are invited, 10 applicants are chosen to participate as Smart Bets selections. Each organization applies with a project or initiative that will be their focus throughout the course of the year. Through a series of virtual roundtables, they workshop this project, seeking input and advice from their fellow Smart Bets. These roundtables serve as opportunities for more established organizations to serve as mentors for younger partners, who in turn introduce new ideas and perspectives to their counterparts.

Smart Bets may also benefit from receiving priority consideration for other Atlas Network Academy programs, such as competitive Atlas Network Academy courses, executive summits, and our in-house consulting services, equipping them with the tools to grow in effectiveness.

Each Smart Bet is immediately eligible for a US\$25,000 general support grant, as well as an additional match-

ing grant for the following year, which is even more beneficial than a project-specific grant. That's only the beginning, however; each organization competes in a pitch competition alongside their fellow participants. This venue introduces them to potential future donors, and it offers a grand prize of US\$50,000 and two runner-up prizes of US\$25,000. In addition, the Smart Bets Impact Award is presented to the partner that achieves the greatest impact during the first full year of their project.

Lebanese Institute for Market Studies won the Smart Bets Impact Award in 2022 for their work bringing truth and balance to Lebanon's media environment. Describing how participation in Smart Bets helped her organization refine this initiative, Director Kristelle Mardini said "All participants seized the chance to exchange ideas, discuss strategies, and offer assistance to one another. Discovering other organizations with shared values fueled my motivation and reassured me that we are not alone in our fight for freedom. The collaborative environment during the program highlighted the significance of healthy competition in driving progress."

This year, Atlas Network invites you to get to know our 2024 Smart Bets—and lend your voice—during a special event. Join us on September 27, 2023, for a virtual summit where each of our 2024 participants will deliver a three-minute pitch to convince the audience that they should advance to compete on-stage in New York City at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner for the US\$50,000 grand prize. Watch your inbox for more details coming soon.

← Kristelle Mardini accepts the 2022 Smart Bets Impact Award on behalf of Lebanese Institute for Market Studies.



2024 SMART BETS VIRTUAL PITCH COMPETITION Mark your calendars!

Our 2024 Smart Bets partners will be announced soon, and the virtual pitch competition on September 27, 2023, is your opportunity to meet them!

Each of our 10 Smart Bets organizations will pitch the initiative they will focus on throughout the Smart Bets program, with only **three minutes** to win the audience to their cause. Your voice will help decide who will compete on stage at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner in New York City.

September
27
WEDNESDAY

10
Smart Bets
Organizations

3
minute
pitch

Watch your inbox for more information coming soon!



2023
**LIBERTY FORUM &
FREEDOM DINNER**
NOVEMBER 15-16

IN TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK

Don't miss the freedom movement's biggest event of the year!

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

Announcement of the 2023 Templeton Freedom Award Dinner • 11th Annual Liggio Lecture
Linda Whetstone Toast to Freedom • John Blundell Elevator Pitch Competition
2024 Smart Bets Pitch Competition • Lights, Camera, Liberty Film Festival

Scan the QR code to find out more, and use code **FC2023** when you register to receive a **25%** discount.



United by Love for Liberty

Family, Love, and Freedom

In Roxana's youth, Romania was a communist dictatorship under the control of Nicolae Ceaușescu. Her family was often targeted by the state because of her late great-grandfather's legacy as a liberty-minded mayor of a small village. After the regime fell, it was her great-grandmother who set a spark in Roxana.

In 1991, they returned together to the land that had been confiscated from her family under communism.

"It happened when I was 15, but it's one of my most vivid memories," Roxana said. "My great-grandmother marched barefoot into the field of sunflowers, knelt down, and kissed the ground."

The words she spoke that day left a powerful impression on Roxana. "She said, 'If you don't have the land to feed yourself and to feed your family, you have no security over anything in your life.'"

It was Roxana's first introduction to the concept of private property and ultimately an inspiration for her to dedicate her life to the cause of freedom.

Upon attending university in Bucharest, she became involved in the National Liberal Party, witnessing the first change in democratic governments in 1997. That year, she also met her husband, Juan Pina, a Canadian-born child of immigrants from Spain.

The pair later relocated to Mexico City to run a magazine for liberal thinkers before returning to Spain, where they launched Fundalib, also known as Fundación para el Avance de la Libertad, in 2015. Roxana serves as president, and Juan as secretary general.

Roxana Nicula's journey to leading Fundalib, a classical liberal foundation in Spain, started nearly 2,000 miles away in her native Romania.



↑ Roxana Nicula and her husband, Juan Pina (middle left) and their colleagues from Fundalib at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2022.

➤ Roxana Nicula and other representatives of 2023 Smart Bets organizations at Investors Summit for Liberty 2022.

Fundalib received a startup grant from Atlas Network in its early years, and the worldwide freedom movement has been a major part of Roxana and Juan's lives since. They even celebrated their 25th anniversary among friends in the movement at Europe Liberty Forum in Warsaw.

"Coming from where I'm from, the principles and ideas of liberty have a very important role in anything I do as an individual, as a mother, as an entrepreneur, as a daughter, and as a wife," Roxana said. "I've been lucky to share with Juan the same vision. We are very united for each other and the love of liberty."

A Smart Bet

Under Roxana's leadership, Fundalib quickly rose to prominence in Atlas Network. Her team used municipal data from throughout Spain to publish an annual index of economic freedom, ranking cities in areas including taxes and government waste. The project encouraged officials to prioritize economic competitiveness and look to Fundalib for how to improve their city's ranking. The successful campaign earned Fundalib Atlas Network's 2020 Europe Liberty Award.

In the same year, Roxana won the Think Tank Shark Tank pitch competition, by proposing a campaign to combat Spain's self-employment tax, which is the highest in the European Union. Three years later, the project has yielded some results. Spain has reduced the tax amount and delayed the timeline for payment to accommodate newer businesses.

"It was a particularly complicated year because we were in lockdown, so we felt the need to use a project that would instill some optimism for an online audience of Atlas Network partners," Roxana said.

Fundalib has also played a crucial role in Spain's immigration debate by producing a documentary on immigrant entrepreneurs and successfully proposing

If you don't have the land to feed yourself and to feed your family, you have no security over anything in your life.

numerous policy changes that welcomed more non-EU nationals to work in the country.

These accomplishments earned Fundalib a place in Atlas Network's 2023 Smart Bets program, a class of high-achieving grantees who receive additional invest-

ments, consulting, and networking opportunities to accelerate their ambitious plans. Each year at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner in New York City, one Smart Bets organization is recognized with the \$25,000 Smart Bets Impact Award.

Roxana's Smart Bets peers include both veteran think tanks like the Lithuanian Free Market Institute, founded in 1990, and up-and-coming organizations such as Montana's Frontier Institute, established in 2020.

"Being a finalist of the Smart Bets program means reaching the next level of maturity of our organization," Roxana said. "All the hard work that we have put forward for the past eight years has been recognized at a higher level."

Don't Give Up, Don't Look Back

As a Madrid-based team with many leaders who were born abroad, Fundalib has a global vision that includes partners from many regions in its work. As part of the Smart Bets program, Roxana is currently working with Atlas Network partners to expand the use of city economic competitiveness rankings in Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, and Costa Rica.

As Europe enters an era marked by war, and both Latin America and Europe contend with rising authoritarianism, Fundalib aims to be a voice of reason that reminds people of the amazing achievements individuals have made under liberal democratic institutions, as imperfect as they may be.

"That makes our relationship with our partners in Latin America very important," Roxana said. "This is our commitment at Fundalib: to defend the framework of liberal values that brought prosperity and respect for individual rights and for human liberty all around the world and brought humanity from hunger to prosperity in less than 200 years."



Building a New Place to Call Home

Following the explosion of remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, Californians, New Yorkers, and thousands of others from across the U.S. have moved to Montana to take advantage of its beautiful landscape, economic opportunities, and generous elbowroom.

This influx of people has placed immense pressure on the housing market as demand far outpaces supply, causing home prices to skyrocket.

Montana now ranks as the least affordable state in the U.S. for housing. Families and local leaders in fast-growing cities like Bozeman are concerned that their community is changing for the worse as people are priced out of the opportunity for homeownership.

“When you drive past some streets in Bozeman, you’ll see lines of camping vehicles—people who are out there in the wintertime when it’s negative 20 degrees,” said Kendall Cotton, president and CEO of Frontier Institute, an Atlas Network partner based in Montana.

“And many of these folks are not jobless, they just can’t afford a home in Bozeman where they work.”

Frontier Institute is helping to solve the state’s housing shortage with a bipartisan effort to free up homebuilding and restore property rights in Montana.

Though this young organization was only founded in 2020, Frontier Institute has already taken a key role in the state’s policy process. Frontier Institute’s Montana Zoning Atlas project has successfully delivered an unprecedented package of pro-housing reforms to address the state’s housing crisis that has garnered national attention.

Framing the Issue

Published in 2022, the Montana Zoning Atlas report demonstrates how strict local zoning regulations in Montana cities often penalize or even outright prohibit building the most affordable types of homes.

This powerful data provoked responses and calls to action from major newspaper editorial boards, legislators, local officials, and other leaders from all sides of the political spectrum.

Kendall was invited to join the governor’s Housing Task Force to provide recommendations to lawmakers for improving housing affordability. The task force adopted

several of Frontier Institute’s proposals to reform strict local zoning regulations and give Montana landowners more freedom to build affordable homes.

Their campaign to remove the restrictive zoning policies was aided by viral talking points that used examples from another state many Montanans love to hate.

“No Montanan wants to see us become like California. What that means in our minds is miles of urban sprawl taking over all the open space and ranch land that Montanans enjoy,” Kendall said.

California was once a hot destination known for many of the same qualities that Montana is known for, but Los Angeles and other cities in California were some of the first U.S. municipalities to pioneer strict zoning, only allowing for expensive large-lot single-family homes to be built in city centers.

“Throughout the years, this strict zoning pushed development outward and caused home prices to rise. We said, if Montana cities are zoned like L.A., then it should be no surprise that they will grow like L.A.,” Kendall said. Frontier’s project to end “California-style zoning” in Montana and increase the number of affordable starter homes attracted support from small local housing developers and grassroots groups representing renters and homebuyers, creating a diverse coalition that ranged from free-market advocates to socialist city council members.

Blueprint for Success

The diverse coalition supporting their reforms enabled Frontier Institute to overcome common lawmaker objections to regulatory reform.

“We were able to message about zoning issues to folks who are right-of-center who cared about protecting property rights, and folks on the left who were more focused on social justice and climate issues,” Kendall said.

“By highlighting and promoting diverse viewpoints all uniting around a common goal of providing more freedom for property owners, we’ve been able to reach broader audiences on the left and the right than we ever could before with our message.”

The sweeping pro-housing reforms championed



↑ Kendall with Montana Governor Greg Gianforte and other housing reform advocates.

by Frontier Institute roll back strict local zoning regulations to give landowners more freedom to build affordable starter homes while also dramatically streamlining the permit process to speed up construction and drive housing costs down for everyone.

In Montana’s 2023 legislative session, a package of four of these proposals was enacted into state law. These solutions included allowing duplex home construction where only single-family homes can currently be built today, permitting multi-unit housing in commercially zoned areas in more populated cities, and allowing smaller homes called Accessory Dwelling Units, which are often built on the same lot or within the structure of an existing house or garage.

As a 2023 Atlas Network Smart Bets participant, Frontier Institute is part of an exclusive team of think tanks that has received additional investments, consulting, and networking opportunities to accelerate their ambitious plans. Each year at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner in New York City, one Smart Bets organization is recognized with the \$25,000 Smart Bets Impact Award.

Kendall says support from Atlas Network was an important part of the successful campaign.

“Thanks to Atlas Network’s support for our campaign, we’ve been able to explore new modes of communicating with people, and we’ve really generated enthusiasm where now people are saying, ‘Wow, we want to support you guys and do more of this work.’”



← Kendall pitches Frontier Institute at Investors Summit for Liberty 2022, part of Atlas Network’s Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner.

↓ Scan the QR code to watch Frontier Institute’s video on how to solve the housing crisis.



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Tom Dyble

Interview by Atlas Network's **Adam Weinberg**
at Europe Liberty Forum 2023 in Prague, Czech Republic



When Tom's daughter joined the team at Atlas Network, he was inspired to follow in her footsteps. As an Atlas Club member, this proud veteran and family man has taken a personal role in supporting the freedom movement throughout Eastern Europe

Adam Weinberg: How did you first get connected with Atlas Network?

Tom Dyble: My claim to fame is that my daughter, Colleen, worked for Atlas Network for eight years in the 2000s. She was an international political economist. I didn't know what that was until I saw what she did working with Atlas Network. One of the first things that I personally got involved with was an Atlas Network meeting in Colorado Springs. I met some people there who just blew my mind. There was one fellow from Belarus. I barely knew where Belarus was, but here was somebody who called it the last dictatorship of Europe. I talked to him about what he did and what he had to do when he got home. His laptop would be gone over by the authorities. I met him several times since then, when he was running for president of Belarus. He was one of the 10 candidates opposing Lukashenko, the president for life. When I think of Belarus, I think of what he was doing in their economy with his think tank.

Adam: Is that connection to Belarus what brought you here to Prague to join us at Europe Liberty Forum 2023?

Tom: I've typically attended Atlas Network events in Eastern Europe. Part of that is the fact that I'm a product of the Cold War. In fact, I was in the U.S. Air Force for a career, and I often heard about what the people were going through in Eastern Europe. This event provides me an opportunity to talk to people who lived through it. And of course today there's a lot still happening. Last night I heard a story of one young woman and how she had to shelter during the rocket attacks on Kyiv. So you get the opportunity to hear about the experience there and what they're doing today, particularly in Ukraine. The people don't just wait for someone to tell them what to do. They get together and take the initiative and do things. The civil society is very strong in Ukraine. I've seen it, and I really appreciate it. The stories of the leadership in that country have been very impressive.

Adam: Would it be fair to say that you have an interest in the region because it affects people you care about?

Tom: My initial introduction to a lot of Eastern Europe was on a Free Market Road Show visiting a lot of capital cities in Eastern Europe. It was mainly talking about economics in those countries. It was a great opportunity

to see these places and to meet people. When I contribute to organizations, I look for ones that I can interact with and can actually become personally involved with. That's what these Atlas Network events do for me. When I travel, I'll sometimes just go and look up Atlas Network people in other countries. These events and the connections I make there enable me to learn about what's currently going on, to learn about the history, and to learn what these young people are doing. It's a different generation coming up, and it's interesting watching how they're maturing and where they're ending up in their governments and in the roles they're playing in their societies.

Adam: How has being personally involved in Atlas Network as a donor and a member of the Atlas Club been valuable to you?

Tom: I look at the Atlas Club as an opportunity. At the end of this Liberty Forum, there will be an additional program touring Prague, and we will probably get into places that aren't normal for tourists coming here. Another factor is that the people who attend these meetings and are brought in to talk are really exceptional. On a previous occasion here in Prague, I got to hear from Václav Havel, head of the Velvet Revolution and the first president of the Czech Republic after it came out from under communism. He gave a talk about how he developed his leadership. He did not start by trying to become a dissident, he said. He found himself in a situation, and he did what he needed to do.

Adam: Why do you think Atlas Network has been effective in helping bring about a better world?

Tom: Well, I think it's because they have sought out a number of people who are like-minded in these other countries through the network. They make contact and help them in their own development. They network so they can share with people who have similar issues that they're working on. And through training such as what they're doing here at this Liberty Forum, they are learning how to be effective in making changes in their government. That then creates a freer society.

Tom Dyble speaks with fellow attendees at Atlas Network's Europe Liberty Forum 2023 in Prague, Czech Republic.





Make Global Freedom Part of Your Legacy



Since 1981, Atlas Network has been helping foundations around the world unshackle the power of individual liberty, free enterprise, and voluntary cooperation. This is a multi-generational project, and we need your help to carry it forward.

Contact our team at legacy@atlasnetwork.org to learn more about including Atlas Network in your charitable plans for the future. Already made this commitment? Let us know so that we can welcome you to the **Fisher Legacy Society**.



ATLAS NETWORK EVENTS ARE
RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER!

Join us for our 2023 Regional Liberty Forums in Africa and Asia!

Scan the QR code to find out more, and use code **FC2023** when you register to receive a **25%** discount.



JULY 20-21
AFRICA
Liberty Forum
2023

Cape Town, South Africa



IRR FMTF



SEPTEMBER 7-8
ASIA
Liberty Forum
2023

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



IDEAS

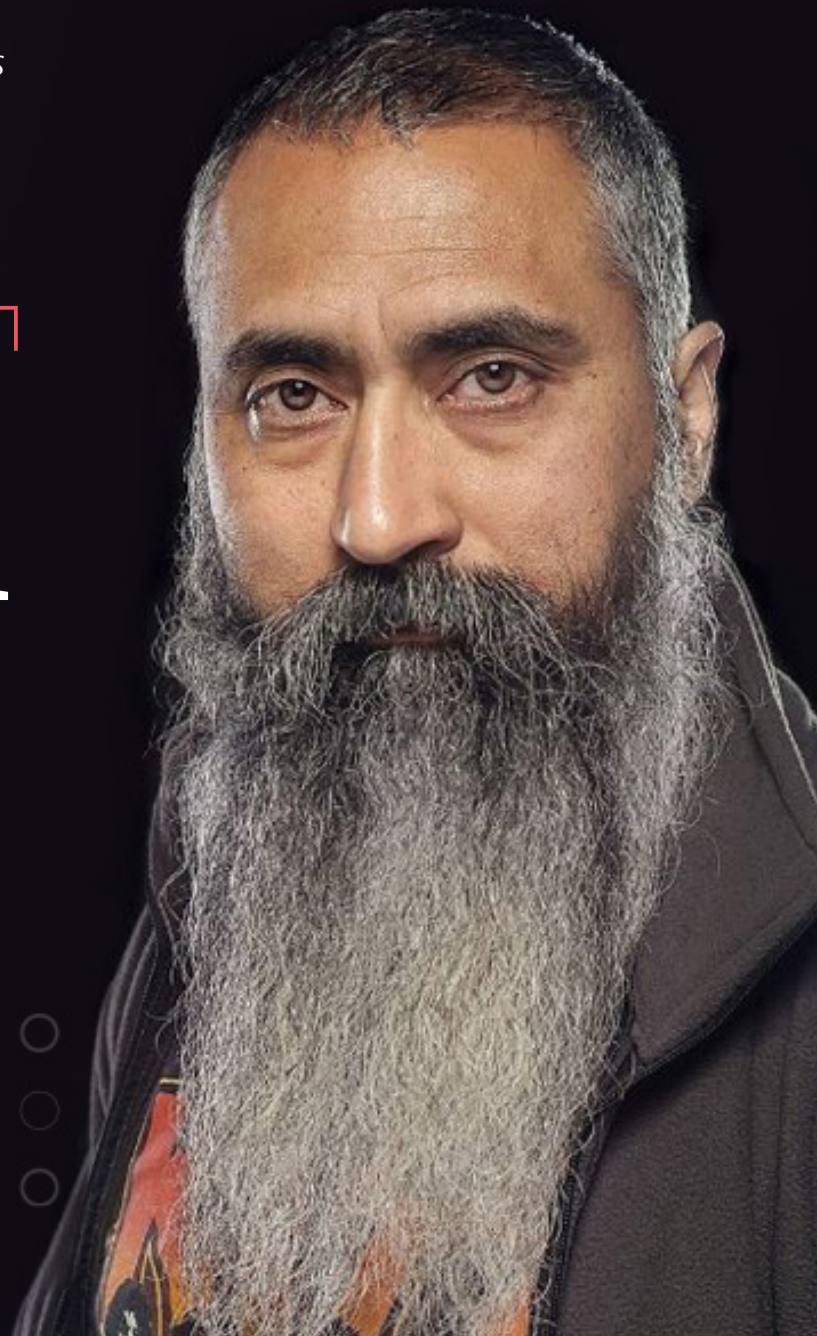
More information: [AtlasNetwork.org/Events](https://atlasnetwork.org/events)

ALUMNI IN FOCUS

Atlas Network Partners in Their Own Words

Basanta Adhikari

Bikalpa—An Alternative, Nepal



After finishing my master's degree in South Korea in 2011, I returned to Nepal with the desire to do meaningful work to make my country a better place. At that time, my thinking was influenced by populist and left-wing political views. However, my mind started to change after I took part in a research program organized by Center for Public Policy Research (India). The same year, I participated in Atlas Network's Asia Liberty Forum in Delhi, where I learned about the worldwide liberty movement and the values of freedom, which I realized were crucial for individual survival and the economic flourishing of my country.

In July 2013, I left my home in Biratnagar to take part in an internship at Samriddhi Foundation in Kathmandu. While there, I decided to start Bikalpa—an Alternative to promote the values of freedom and entrepreneurship. There were many organizations already at work in Biratnagar, but hardly any of them were seeking to reduce poverty through entrepreneurship.

After returning home in February 2014, I started my organization in a one-room office with minimal resources. Now, we have nine full-time staff.

Bikalpa conducts policy research, advocacy, and educational programs to further its mission and bring

change at the grassroots. We focus on engaging the local and provincial governments in eastern Nepal with our policy reform agenda, and every year we educate more than 1,000 youths on the values of freedom and entrepreneurship. We also reach a large Nepalese audience with our regular visual media content. This has helped to enhance our organization's visibility and reputation inside and outside the region.

We are proud that our work won Atlas Network's Asia Liberty Award in 2019 and earned us a spot as a finalist for Think Tank Shark Tank in 2021. Now, we are part of the 2023 Smart Bets program, which will help us scale up our work even further.

Without Atlas Network's continuous support and guidance, things would have been much more difficult for us. Atlas Network programs and events have helped me to grow personally and professionally. They have helped me gain knowledge, learn new skills, network and build connections, and receive exposure that has had an immense impact on me, my team, and the growth of my organization.

In 2019, I took part in Atlas Network Academy's Executive Accelerator. The 10-day summit helped me identify my personal strengths and weaknesses and encouraged me to develop a plan for personal and organizational growth. The program also taught me how to improve my team's effectiveness, my core leadership skills, and my strategy in running a think tank. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to meet like-minded friends from all around the world.

I named my daughter Liberty and my son Freedom, in the hope that future generations will continue to work for the idea of human flourishing and betterment of society.



↑ Bikalpa runs a variety of events to keep students and young people engaged and build a community. Here, Basanta is pictured with participants at a recent hiking excursion in 2022.



Since 2016, the Lights, Camera, Liberty program has helped Bikalpa start and scale up our filmmaking activities. We have a strong visual media team, but without the support of Lights, Camera, Liberty, this would not have been possible. We're proud to have been named a finalist for the Lights, Camera, Liberty Film Festival Award in 2017 and in 2020.

Bikalpa continues to work to create discourse for a free and prosperous Nepal, and we are hopeful that our efforts will not be in vain, despite the challenges we face. My team and I are deeply committed to the cause of freedom and prosperity. I named my daughter Liberty and my son Freedom, in the hope that future generations will continue to work for the idea of human flourishing and betterment of society.

↓ Basanta with students at Bikalpa's "Entrepreneurship and the Beauty of Markets" workshop.



Temba Nolutshungu

Director of South Africa's Free Market Foundation

At Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2023 in New York City, Atlas Network will honor Temba Nolutshungu with the Sir Antony Fisher Achievement Award in recognition of his service to the people of South Africa.

Temba Nolutshungu is a director of Free Market Foundation (South Africa), a council member of South Africa Institute of Race Relations, and chair of the board of Centre for Development and Enterprises, Great Lakes (Burundi).

Temba spent much of his early life working to bring an end to the Apartheid regime, and he was one of the key figures in the anti-Apartheid Black Consciousness Movement. He was imprisoned twice for this work, and he spent time in solitary confinement. Temba has been tireless in his efforts to build a thriving South Africa through free-market policies and equality under the law for every individual.

Freedom's Champion: What was your path to encountering, and later accepting and advancing, the ideas of classical liberalism?

Temba Nolutshungu: When I was young, I embraced the socialist, communist, and anarchist paradigm. We had an Apartheid system in this country that controlled black life—all aspects of it. Because the government was so repressive, and it condemned socialism, therefore socialism must be good. That was the thinking at that time.

However, I observed around that time that there was a migration of people from communist countries to democratic capitalist countries, not the other way around. These were people from all walks of life, all making a desperate attempt to escape, and some died in the process. It made me very inquisitive. I just wanted to know what it was about the capitalist democratic Western countries that was so attractive to all those people.



I read a book by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*. That book was such an eye opener. From that point onwards, I never looked back. I started to delve into books by Milton Friedman and others. *Free to Choose* is written in such an axiomatic manner that it leaves no room for debate that the capitalist system reflects human nature, and it accounted for the fact that the capitalist countries were very productive in economic terms.

With that view in mind, I looked at both North Korea and South Korea and made comparisons: same people, same culture, relatives on both sides, yet South Korea had an amazing economy that developed within a few decades. Likewise, there was the economic disparity between East Germany and West Germany. I came to terms with the fact that I had been so fundamentally wrong, and that's how I got to be where I am today.

FC: Could you tell us how your work against Apartheid changed after you began working at Free Market Foundation?

Temba: Free Market Foundation provided a rational ideological context—I hate to use the term ideology because the free market is not an ideology—but broadly the libertarian or classical liberal paradigm. It gave a context to my efforts to dismantle the Apartheid system. So here was something I believed in, a cause I believed in, that I knew if implemented, things would be all right for everybody else and that this country would thrive, really thrive, if it adopted free-market-oriented policies.

FC: Since the end of Apartheid, you have frequently spoken out against affirmative action and similar programs. What motivated you to take this stand?

Temba: Something happened during the first of my two political detentions. I was subjected to torture and solitary confinement, and I was in this cell thinking, *Gosh, they're going to kill me. They're going to say I slipped while taking a shower*, even though there wasn't a shower in that cell. After about four days in the cell, a white Afrikaner policeman opened my cell. He was in uniform. Now, I was a detainee of the Special Branch security forces, so the general police were not allowed access to me. But this man, he opened the door and gave his lunchbox to me and said in Afrikaans mixed with English: "Please eat. Otherwise, you're going to die. Make it quick or I'm going to lose my job. Quickly, quickly, quickly." There was a bar of soap that he gave me and a washing cloth. "Wash yourself quickly," he said. He opened the tap in the yard, and I quickly washed myself. Then he let me back into my cell.

That left an indelible impression on my mind. Here was a white person, an Afrikaner, and he felt for me. He could empathize with me, and he did all that for me. From that moment on especially, I decided color



Temba speaks at Atlas Network's 35th anniversary celebration in 2016 in Hillsborough, California.

was not the issue. And so, for me, the struggle against Apartheid was a struggle against the system itself and not against white people.

FC: What advice would you give to those whom George Ayittey named the "Cheetah Generation"?

Temba: Now, what I would say to them is they must not [exclude] any mature people on the basis of their age. It's important to always be aware of the fact that these people have institutional knowledge, and when you have them still being involved in an organization, there is a flow of ideas based on experience, based on intellectual capital that's been accumulated over the years that continues to enrich a think tank. And this is something that's very important, because when I attend these conferences, sometimes I look around and think to myself, *Gosh, it seems as if there are very few mature people in terms of their age*. With some long-established think tanks, why are there not these kinds of people? The [think tanks] are missing out on something big without realizing it. And that is something that I think they should understand, that they need all that intellectual capital. They need all that wisdom. They need institutional knowledge. It doesn't matter what position some of these people might occupy, but they should be accessible. They should be involved.

FC: How have you seen Atlas Network contribute to the global freedom movement?

Temba: Atlas Network is the best in terms of bringing all these diverse brains and various think tanks together. This is the greatest achievement. I see what Atlas Network has been doing as an intellectual investment, because these think tanks spread the message when they go to their respective countries. They disseminate the ideas. When they interact with policymakers, they will talk about how in South Africa, for example, the Free Market Foundation is delivering on projects and how in Burundi, Rwanda, and other countries, they are really delivering on specific policies that they have been advocating and are now being implemented—the results are starting to come to the fore.

2023 Latin America Liberty Award



Marcelo Faria with the 2023 Latin America Liberty Award trophy

When Marcelo Faria, founder of Instituto Liberal de São Paulo (ILISP), accepted Atlas Network's 2023 Latin America Liberty Award in Punta del Este, Uruguay, the prize represented the culmination of years of effort and inspiration.

He and his organization had set out with one not-so-simple goal in mind: giving Brazilians across the country's 5,500 cities and 26 states the right to work, free of stifling bureaucracy.

Entrepreneurship in Brazil is not only born from opportunity, but from necessity. Many low-income Brazilians must create their own job to feed themselves or their

families. But in Latin America's most populous nation, local bureaucracy—including outright corruption—can often stand in the way of honest work. Local officials can deny licenses for workers and entrepreneurs, sometimes demanding bribes for a license to be approved.

Marcelo's campaign for the freedom to work, known in Portuguese as *Liberdade para Trabalhar*, was inspired by the story of a cheesemaker from the country's central region. The man was unable to renew his expired license, prompting state officials to confiscate all of his products. "Everything he had—thousands of U.S. dollars in cheese—was confiscated by the state," said Marcelo. "He had nothing else to sell. Poor people don't have years to wait for their money. They need to pay their bills now."

Believing he would never be able to overcome the corrupt system that stole his business away from him, the cheesemaker tragically took his own life.

After partnering with Marcelo's team, the State of Rio Grande do Sul expanded their Economic Freedom Law, growing the list of "low-risk" occupations from 24 to 770 and benefiting 11.5 million workers.

Although Brazil had recently passed a federal Economic Freedom Law that encouraged licensing reform, ILISP discovered it required action at the state and local level to truly expand economic opportunities for Brazilians.

"The federal law without states and cities on board is nothing; it doesn't work," Marcelo said.

"States and cities needed to approve the law, too, so it could be effective."



"Ronald Reagan once said that the best social program is a job," said Marcelo. "But actually, I believe that the best social program is freedom to work, because you can create your own job, too."

Marcelo Faria and his team at ILISP worked for two years to develop relationships and encourage local governments to apply the provisions of the federal Economic Freedom Law and designate certain professions as "low risk," relieving workers in these fields of the need to apply for a license.

As *Liberdade para Trabalhar* gained traction, municipalities became eager to work hand-in-hand with the ILISP team, who often understood the Economic Freedom Law better than the officials. So far, 118 cities have implemented the law, 58 of them thanks to ILISP's efforts. In late March 2023, after partnering with Marcelo's team, the State of Rio Grande do Sul expanded their Economic Freedom Law, growing the list of "low-risk" occupations from 24 to 770 and benefiting 11.5 million workers. That's nearly 14 million workers who now have directly benefited from ILISP's work.

With many cities and states left to reach, Marcelo and the ILISP team will continue to advance the freedom to work across Brazil. They also aim to improve countless more lives in Latin America and around the world by sharing strategies for adopting their successful model in other countries.

"Ronald Reagan once said that the best social program is a job," said Marcelo. "But actually, I believe that the best social program is freedom to work, because you can create your own job, too."

2023 Europe Liberty Award

Inflation and the cost of living across Europe began to soar in the wake of the pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But by working together, Atlas Network partners are beating back these harmful trends and removing barriers that make it harder for people in the region to prosper.



Adam Bartha is director of the European Policy Information Center (EPICENTER). Founded in 2014, the organization aims to connect classical liberal and free-market think tanks across the continent and help maximize their impact.

"All these fantastic think tanks do amazing work locally, but how do we elevate that to the European level?" Adam asked.

With the rising cost of living impacting people throughout the region, Adam saw an opportunity to coordinate with other Atlas Network partners to explain the cause of rapid inflation across Europe, as well as country-specific proposals to curb government policies that increase the cost of living.

"We wanted to pinpoint in eight European countries—including France, Italy, Greece, and Romania—the exact liberalizing reforms that governments could implement tomorrow that would actually help with the cost-of-living crisis," Adam said. The resulting publication crossed the desks of a number of government officials, and EPICENTER-affiliated experts were invited to discuss their recommendations with lawmakers in the European Union parliament in Brussels, and in Germany, France, Italy, and Romania.

EPICENTER also reached out to European voters with information detailing what their lawmakers could do

to improve the situation and how voters could encourage officials to take action. Their strategy caught the attention of media outlets across the continent, reaching 60 million people through over 600 mentions in European media. EPICENTER's infographics, explainer videos, and other posts went viral on social networks, educating roughly 50 million additional European voters.

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Governments across Europe have already responded to EPICENTER's work by rolling back policies contributing to out-of-control inflation. Italy reformed how it provides local public services, especially public transportation, allowing competition in the marketplace. In France, members of parliament worked across party lines to amend regulations that raise costs for consumers. Romania's Ministry of Finance

also halted its plan to raise taxes on small and medium businesses in response to an EPICENTER-affiliated media campaign. With these successes under his belt, Adam is determined to keep up the pressure on European policymakers.

↓ Adam Bartha celebrates EPICENTER's win of the 2023 Europe Liberty Award with Atlas Network CEO Brad Lips and Chair of the Atlas Network Board of Directors Debbi Gibbs.



Tackling Europe's cost-of-living crisis is no easy challenge, but EPICENTER's impactful campaign has earned additional support by receiving a grant prize as the winner of the 2023 Atlas Network Europe Liberty Award. After Adam held aloft the trophy before a crowd of his peers at Atlas Network's Europe Liberty Forum in Prague, Czech Republic, he was quick to remind the crowd that the recognition was not his alone.

"It shouldn't be me on the stage; it should be the thirty people—all the fantastic researchers and communications people—who were working on this project," Adam said.

"I think this is a fantastic acknowledgement by Atlas Network that there is a need for collaboration. We need to do more together, and essentially the last 10 years has been building up to this moment where we have many pan-European projects each year that actually achieve impact, where a lot of the Atlas Network partners are working together to combat bad policy ideas and build a more classical liberal Europe."



2023 NETWORK SUMMITS

Leveraging the Power of *Together*

Atlas Network President **Matt Warner** and Associate Director of Training **Alex Cordell** co-facilitate a Network Summit session at Europe Liberty Forum 2023.

In keeping with our 2023 events theme *Together*, this year's Regional Liberty Forums are amplifying how our attendees benefit from meeting face-to-face with their fellow freedom champions.

In addition to the thrilling competitions, thought-provoking panels, and inspiring speakers, our 2023 forums ask each of our attendees to bring their unique voice and experiences to help generate new ideas together during our interactive Network Summit sessions, where they lead the conversation for change. Through this program, we are innovating and leveraging the power of in-person interaction and connections to address the big questions and challenges our network faces.

Each Network Summit is built from the bottom up, based on input solicited from our partners in the relevant region. By listening to what matters most to them, our facilitation team is able to craft an experience that is impactful both during the event and long after. At this year's Liberty Forums in Latin America and Europe, participants have discussed questions as varied as "How has your

messaging evolved to better communicate the moral and efficacious foundations for your ideas?" "How has your organization navigated changes in office versus remote work cultures?" and "How are you pushing back on threats to democratic norms in your country?"

At Europe Liberty Forum, Alex Cordell, associate director of training and a Network Summit co-facilitator, explained the value of Network Summits: "These sessions are so important because we know at Atlas Network that we don't hold all of the ideas. So we want to be very intentional about creating spaces for our partners to come together, identify challenges that they're facing, and come up with solutions that they can bring back to their organizations and their communities."

Partners have responded to the new programming with enthusiasm. "What I'm seeing in the room as a result of these sessions is an increased energy and excitement to get back to work," said Cordell. "Our partners are facing some really serious challenges in their communities, and there's some magic that happens in the room when they get in huddles and can co-create and build off of each other and start to come up with some solutions that they can bring back to their organizations. We're doing more of these facilitated sessions at our Regional Liberty Forums in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, and we've just seen such a tremendous response. Our partners are loving it, and so we're really excited to bring it to our Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner later this year in New York to create an even bigger space for the sharing of ideas."

ATLAS NETWORK

↓ Participants work together to answer discussion questions at a Network Summit session at Latin America Liberty Forum 2023.



Papa Coriandre's fight for freedom is our fight for freedom.

Papa Coriandre

Official Selection
Anthem
FILM FESTIVAL
2023

ATLAS NETWORK PRESENTS PAPA CORIANDRE DIRECTED BY CHARLES FRITSCHNER
PRODUCED BY CONRADO ETCHEBARNE AND FRANK "CLINT" PAGURKO

Atlas Network is proud to announce that *Papa Coriandre* is an official selection at the 2023 Anthem Film Festival! This documentary demonstrates the transformative potential of entrepreneurship in the world's poorest countries—and shows why local think tanks like our partners are an indispensable part of making that entrepreneurship possible.

Scan the QR code to watch *Papa Coriandre* and the entire film series now.

WATCH HERE

These events enable me to learn
about what's currently going on, to
learn about the history, and to learn
what these young people are doing.

”

TOM DYBLE

