

POVERTY & FREEDOM



ATLAS
NETWORK

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AtlasNetwork.org



GLOBAL POLICY IMPACT

SINCE 2016



125
GRANTS
AWARDED

Atlas Network's **Poverty & Freedom** campaign is helping our global partners develop and implement **locally grown** solutions to poverty with policy reforms that advance established measurements of **economic freedom**.



52
POLICY
VICTORIES



\$2,614,058

IN POVERTY &
FREEDOM GRANTS
TO PARTNERS

10,000,000

VIEWS OF
POVERTY & FREEDOM
VIDEOS



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Restricting people and goods makes society poorer. This is the premise of our Poverty & Freedom project, a concentrated effort to demonstrate the relationship between economic freedom and poverty reduction. When we launched this program, we knew we had trusted local partners who, with increased support, could successfully remove government barriers for low-income populations. Thanks to our donors, we've been able to declare victory over dozens of institutional reforms around the world.

In every country there are barriers—unfair laws, corrupt practices, unworkable bureaucracies—that disproportionately harm low-income people. Outsiders have a lot of ideas about how to fix those problems, but the more effective approach is to support local visionaries who better understand what needs to change, how to change it, and how to communicate the benefits of those changes to local stakeholders.

The story of Papa Coriandre, as he is known in Burundi, illustrates this approach. Papa Coriandre has run a small business for decades, successfully selling products made of coriander. He's never been able to grow it beyond two employees because, without a business license, his goods and modest capital can be seized by the police at any time.

Historically in Burundi, low-income entrepreneurs like street vendors can't become legal businesses because the fees and bribes were too expensive and the process too byzantine. When you're poor you can't take time off to spend days in government offices. You need to make money every day to eat.

That all changed when one of our grantees, Centre for Development Great Lakes in Burundi, finally succeeded in dramatically lowering the business license fees and eliminating many of the unnecessary permissions (and bribe checkpoints) within the government bureaucracy. Today, Papa Coriandre has a thriving business ... and 100 employees!

From Burundi to Ukraine to India to the United States, local think tanks represent a key resource in achieving freedom. Their work illustrates with common-sense clarity why those in poverty don't need government to take care of them. They need government to protect their freedom—and they'll do the rest.



Matt Warner is President of Atlas Network and the editor of *Poverty & Freedom*, Case Studies on Global Economic Development



CHANGING THE DEBATE

Atlas Network is uniquely positioned to help our local partners be successful drivers of change, forging lasting improvements for free enterprise and lasting reductions in poverty. We believe:

- Development strategies should respect the dignity and autonomy of people living in poverty.
- Removing barriers to free enterprise is more effective than providing aid that might entrench dysfunctional aspects of the political economy.
- Local civil society groups should lead the way in identifying policy reform priorities and strategies.
- Peer networks strengthen the effectiveness of civil society organizations and help them sharpen their strategies for effecting change.

IN FAVOR OF FREEDOM



Poverty & Freedom, edited by Matt Warner, shares case studies that show how think tanks are leading local strategies for change and ending poverty for good.

Warner has been featured in numerous publications and podcasts for his passion for poverty reduction. Including Cato Journal, Dev X, EconTalk, *Forbes*, Harvard University's *Education Next*, The Hill, *National Review's* The Editors podcast, and RealClearMarkets.

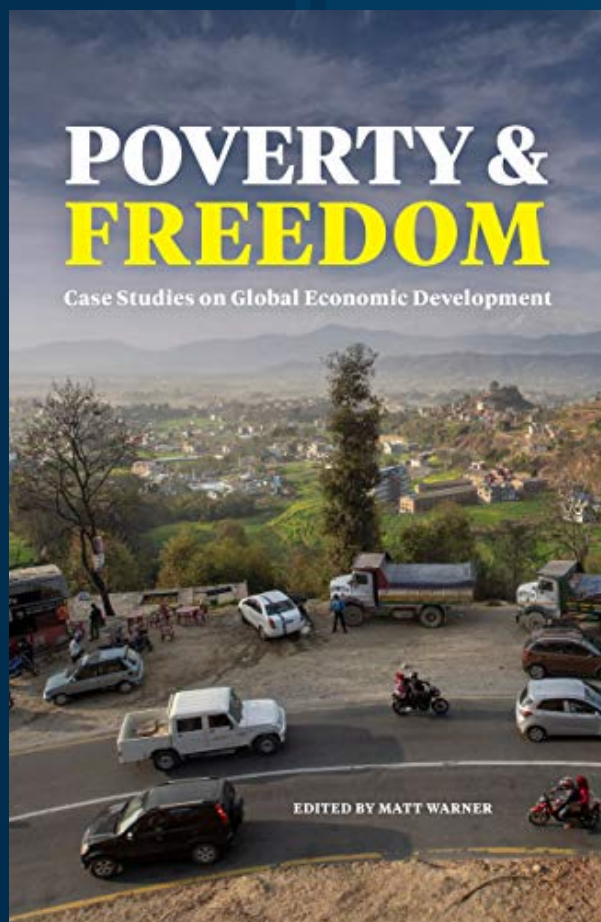
Atlas Network commissioned two research papers by leading scholars. Our first paper, by Simeon Djankov, the founding author of the World Bank's *Doing Business* report, was published in *Economic Letters*. A second paper, by Thomas Stratmann and Colin Doran, will be published in *The Journal of Theoretical and Economic Institutions*.

The climate of opinion in the halls of academia is a challenge for advocates of free enterprise. Atlas Network and our partners around the world collaborate with local institutions and educators to build support for economic freedom. Together we are challenging traditional foreign aid models and facilitating discussions that make the case for locally-led interventions that end barriers to prosperity.

Universities are key allies in this effort. We co-hosted "Poverty, Institutions, and Economic Development" with the Institute for Humane Studies. Scholars at this full-day seminar discussed how local think tanks can play a role in institution building and increased prosperity.



Speakers included Dr. Peter Boettke, George Mason University; Dr. Gabriel Calzada, Universidad Francisco Marroquin; Dr. Tom G. Palmer, Atlas Network; Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Columbia University; and Dr. Michael Woolcock, Harvard University.





KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON IN LEBANON

Rolling blackouts and billions spent on subsidies to a failing state-owned electricity company have been facts of life in Lebanon for many years. The Lebanese Institute of Market Studies' "Turn the Lights On in Lebanon" campaign recommended deep cuts to subsidies and new legislation that would allow private sector power producers to develop an infrastructure that can support electricity generation 24 hours a day.

LIMS raised public awareness through traditional and social media, drafted specific policy recommendations for change, and engaged legislators with their ideas. The new reforms, which passed in 2019, are a major step forward in eliminating the country's massive public debt, estimated at nearly 150 percent of gross domestic product.

PROPERTY RIGHTS FOR WOMEN IN SOUTH SUDAN

Land is one of South Sudan's most precious—and most disputed—resources, but for most women, cultural norms have pushed landownership out of reach. Although the country has adopted legal protections that explicitly recognize the rights of women, the laws are often ignored in more isolated areas of the country, and a lack of knowledge fuels this deeply entrenched discrimination.

Students' Organization for Liberty and Entrepreneurship (SOLE), is laying the foundations for change to a system that pushes women out of home ownership and onto the streets. More than 1,500 women have attended workshops that help them understand their rights as well as the benefits of property ownership for their families and their communities.

REDUCING TARIFFS, IMPROVING EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA

For years, high laptop tariffs kept electronics out of reach for many in Argentina. The work of Libertad y Progreso culminated in the Macri administration eliminating a 35 percent tariff on computer imports that inflated local prices significantly. Before the tariff was removed, parents, school teachers, and small business entrepreneurs were forced to pay double what their neighbors in Chile paid for the same computer products.

"Many people believe that a public policy which reduces tariffs on computers is somewhat abstract," says Agustín Etchebarne, the director general of Libertad y Progreso. "But there is nothing abstract about the possibility of using technology to get out of poverty." For children in Argentina's schools, computer access opens up the world of digital education and helps them discover new opportunities to learn, grow, and excel.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN GEORGIA

Poverty disproportionately impacts minority and poor communities, as people fight system-wide barriers that often trap families in poverty for generations. Supporting opportunities for families through better education and fulfilling employment is a big part of the mission of the Georgia Center for Opportunity. GCO developed a handbook for state legislators, illustrating how public policy impacts people living in poverty and offering recommendations for reform. "GCO's policy handbook was a great resource throughout the legislative session and provided helpful information on issues that impact human flourishing," said Georgia state representative Josh Bonner.

With their research in hand, GCO has embarked on a more ambitious project to introduce school choice and welfare reform legislation, use digital platforms to help the chronically unemployed find work, and expand apprenticeships in Georgia.

DOCUMENTARIES AND PODCASTS THAT WIN HEARTS AND MINDS FOR FREEDOM

In Nepal, a rideshare company is helping women launch their own small businesses. In Costa Rica, access to credit is giving entrepreneurs new opportunities to thrive. In Argentina, children are discovering the world through digital technology. In India, street vendors are standing up for their right to earn a living.

Atlas Network's Poverty & Freedom documentary videos, directed by award-winning filmmaker Charlie Fritschner, tell the stories of people whose lives are transformed when they have the freedom to innovate and prosper. The series has attracted 10 million views since launching in 2019.



POVERTY & FREEDOM



AtlasNexus

During 2020, Atlas Network launched a new podcast, Atlas Nexus, to showcase how freedom champions in its network are creating economic opportunity and an inclusive prosperity. This interview series shares global perspectives from extraordinary people who are changing lives by strengthening their communities, empowering individuals, and championing the cause of liberty.



INSPIRING SUCCESS

Atlas Network's regional centers share a common goal of promoting the role that free markets, property rights, and the rule of law have in creating the conditions for people to thrive. Each center is led by a regional leadership team committed to helping our partners in the pursuit of achievable policy reform, and is dedicated to building an inclusive prosperity that will usher in peace and justice for all.

EVENTS

Bringing Atlas Network partners together to learn from one another and engage their peers on common strategies for change is an important aspect of our global networking. Since 2016, our Regional Liberty Forums have given thousands of participants the chance to build new relationships, maintain important connections, and create local impact

- 2016** United Kingdom, Malaysia, Guatemala, Ghana
- 2017** Hungary, India, Argentina, South Africa
- 2018** Denmark, Indonesia, Chile, Nigeria
- 2019** Greece, Sri Lanka, Dominican Republic, Kenya



ATLAS NETWORK CONNECTS 500+ PARTNERS IN THE WORLDWIDE FREEDOM MOVEMENT



Creating a **better**, more **prosperous** future is possible when people are **empowered** to tackle common problems with **solutions** that address their unique **needs**.