

BUILDING AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

ATLANTIC DIALOGUES EMERGING LEADERS VISION 2025



















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#### Introduction

The concept of a "Wider Atlantic" has been finding its way into mainstream discourse, as it is progressively molding into an alternative to the present-day understanding of transatlantic relations. The attention is being refocused to a wider geographic area around the Atlantic basin, which includes Southern Atlantic states in the policy and opinion-shaping conversation (s). With 23 states now comprising the Western Atlantic Coast of Africa, this continent has an ever-growing role to play in the new geopolitical discussions pertaining to a "Wider Atlantic" region. Enlarging the exchange to include states that were previously perceived as the strategic backwater is therefore a reality aimed at engaging a wider range of Atlantic partners, who could potentially contribute to reshape and redefine the existing standards. Hence, the wider Atlantic encourages new forms of multilateralism, as well as a discursive and practical reconfiguration, that account for the change in underlying power dynamics and consequent modern global challenges.

The notion of a Wider Atlantic space in itself comes with its share of challenges, as there is an attempt to construct a geographic - and geopolitical - space that brings together a heterogeneous grouping of countries, concerns, and interests. The identification of common challenges on the one hand, and common opportunities on the other, represents the driving force behind initiatives aimed at redefining Atlantic consciousness.

Given the economic and political challenges that several countries bordering the Atlantic are currently facing, and in a context of a redistribution of power, there is great potential in having a vibrant transatlantic community that includes the realities of South Atlantic countries. The relative absence of the European Union and of the United States in transatlantic dynamics, whose concerns are refocused on internal matters and respectively on Mediterranean and Pacific issues, gives the transatlantic space greater room to define itself and find its own responses to the problems it is to confront.

Discussions around the Wider Atlantic must serve the purpose of reinforcing the feeling of belonging to the Atlantic space and community, triggering a new pragmatic state of mind that is geared towards socio-economic development and the geopolitical influence of this space. In this regard, the two priorities are strengthening the transatlantic community as such, and adopting a common discourse to perhaps reach, or at least get closer to, the goals set by the UN 2030 Agenda.

During the 2018 edition of the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders program, the 45 selected participants took part in a closed-door meeting to discuss and elaborate a strategy to push forward and reinforce the feeling of belonging to the Atlantic community, and they tackled the two aforementioned priorities. The program coordinators designed a workshop that examined the two following questions:

- 1. What is standing in the way of fulfilling the dream of an Atlantic community?
- 2. What are the priorities and actions that we need to collectively undertake to plan for the road ahead?

The Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders were invited to first imagine the possible scenarios of a future Atlantic community in 2025, and then elaborate concrete actions that could lead to those potential

scenarios. The instructions provided were the following: We are hypothetically in January 2025, and we are gathered to celebrate the indisputable success of the Atlantic **Community Roadmap 2025** that served the purpose of establishing a new Atlantic model. What have we done over the past couple of years that has led us to this resounding success?

The purpose of this exercise was for the participants to enumerate the current challenges and reasons for the current failures of the Atlantic community, and to creatively imagine corresponding solutions. To achieve this, they were broken up into three different groups, namely an Economic, a Political, and a Social group to discuss challenges and solutions within these respective realms. Within each group, they were invited to choose 2 to 5 sub-topics that they perceived as priorities in their ability to change the course of things in the Atlantic.

They were asked to identify actions, the people or institutions responsible for that action, the timeframe, the possible impediments, and the benchmark for success. This report summarizes their discussions and recommendations.

# **Economic Challenges in the Atlantic Space**



Trans-Atlantic economic integration still faces challenges, since African countries are significantly disconnected from the economies of the other continents. The last decade has seen an increase in the correlation between GDP growth of different countries within each region. Moreover, Latin America and the Caribbean seem to be more integrated and connected to the European and North-American economies nowadays, even though this integration does not compare to the level of interaction of the developed regions of the Atlantic. Finally, Africa seems to have economic dynamics of its own.

In general, a strengthened economic integration is essential to overcome the consequences of extreme imbalances in the Atlantic region. Among these, extreme poverty and lack of opportunities lead to uncontrolled migratory movements between lagging regions and developed ones. Moreover, humanitarian concerns are constantly raised and productivity stays in extremely low levels in the poorer parts of the region.

The main priorities to overcome these imbalances are the following:

- the need for an alignment of economic interests of the different regions;
- the creation of a favorable and stable environment for economic growth and cooperation;
- the need to build human capital in lagging regions.

The first challenge, alignment of economic interests, relates to a need for greater communication between the relevant stakeholders of the different countries of the Atlantic. This process is essential for the identification of opportunities and barriers to a greater integration of the area. The lack of alignment results in a less than optimal trade level, with low knowledge exchange and low-income development traps.

To enable the creation of a favorable and stable environment for economic growth and cooperation. It is imperative that parity is established between all major Atlantic partners. The Global South is economically disadvantaged in comparison to their northern counterparts. Colonialism has had a debilitating effect on the economies and development of the South, therefore it is imperative that there is a collective deconstruction of the colonial mindset and borders through the establishment of a positive Global South identity.

Finally, it is essential to focus on the construction of human capital, since there are people who work every day to generate economic growth in their respective country. These people have fundamental rights, which must be considered and not violated. Such fundamental rights should be taken as the essential basis of economic development and should be promoted with the best possible quality. Also, it is crucial to stress the importance of policies guaranteeing that each person can have access to not only development, but also basic services, and equal opportunities and services – most important of them, medical assistance, education, and food.

The next sections present further details of suggested actions to overcome these specific challenges for a greater economic integration of the Atlantic. These actions were thought in a timeframe of implementation from 2025 onwards. In this sense, even though some of the conditions required for their adoption are not present yet, they could be pursued in the medium term.

#### 1. Alignment of Economic Interests

The key point to strengthen economic interactions between Atlantic regions is to improve their communication and develop a joint vision for the Atlantic basin. In this sense, a political forum could aim to create an institutional framework to enable a better economic relationship in the region. On the other hand, a parallel business forum could be formed in order to showcase opportunities and seek investments, as well as to share best practices towards the improvement of networking and trade.

It is essential that African and Latin American countries strengthen their global voice on trade issues in a similar manner as the EU has been doing over the past decades. This would allow them to better define their priorities in an Atlantic context. Finally, another action would be to create economic incentives for multinationals to invest in emerging economies.

	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Challenge 3	Challenge 4
What?	Create a political forum to bring together the major blocs in the region.	Create a business/trade forum to foster better exchange and trade.	Strengthening and re-integrating Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean's economic blocs to create stronger voices in the international arena.	Economic incentives for companies to work and invest in emerging economies.
Why?	To build a common vision at the political level. Political and social issues are key to allowing better economic relationships. Institutions, frameworks, and communication are needed to organize these views.	Showcase opportunities and seek investments, share working examples and best practices and improve inter-Atlantic networking.	Create stronger voices in the international arena.	Reduce imbalances, and boost FDI and economic growth.
Who?	Political leaders of the respective blocs.	Interested businesses, probably the leading companies in the region.	African Union, CELAC. (multilateral organizations embracing all countries in each region).	Local governments and regional organizations, support for instance by EU international development funds.
How?	One annual meeting of the head of states to set goals and quarterly meetings of sherpas. Costs would be covered by a fund formed from proportional contributions based on the share of Atlantic basin trade.	Parallel to the political forum, once a year, in a trade fair setting with debates and panels. Funding would come from companies paying to attend the event.	Identify shared interests and overlapping objectives between countries of each region.	State investment boards/ commissions who decide how these funds are allocated, with clear KPIs and alignment to countries' comparative advantages.

Increased participation in the entire value chain, increase in value added for emerging economies, technology transfers. Development and optimization of local resources.  Lower production cost and higher efficiency for multinational firms.	2 years before the constitution of the political and business' forums – start reducing regional imbalances to foster future integration.
Bigger bargaining power for the Atlantic South on a global scale and better definition of continental priorities.	2 years before the constitution of the political and business' forums.
More trade/business and increasing partnerships, foreign investment, technology and knowledge transfers.	As of 2025 to align with the kick-off of the political forum.
A vision of shared interests and eventually a positive political, legal and regulatory framework to enable trade. One of the first actions would be to simplify regulations and tariffs hindering trade.	Year 1: Agreeing on a framework/objective and mandate with a declaration by the end of 2024. Year 2: Kick-off summit in 2025 to set priorities for sherpas to work on and give legitimacy to the forum's vision.
Results	When?

# 2. Creation of a favorable and stable environment for economic growth and cooperation

It is vital that countries representing the Global South economic blocs realize that they had a glorious (trade) history prior to the advent of colonialism. Spanning great empires that were prosperous and already conducted cross-Atlantic trade with one another. This can be carried out through rigorous educational policies and effective dissemination through media.

	Challenge 1	Challenge 2
What?	Investment in essential infrastructure	Increase economic integration between regional African trade blocs
Why?	Lack of infrastructure hinders trade and increases costs	Boost intra-African trade and leverage status on global level
Who?	Governments and Regional Organizations with an Africa wide investment fund (similar to the EU Regional Development funding)	ECOWAS, ECCAS, COMESA, SADIC
How?	Strong institutions with clear KPIs	Identifying points of agreement for closer cooperation and partnership (following the model of Southern and East African states and the EU)
Results	Better infrastructure to enable trade, grow economies and attract investments	Stronger African states, better regional development, more cross-African companies and ease of movement of capital, goods and services
When?	Start immediately with 5-10 year infrastructure plan	Three to five years

#### 3. Building Human Capital

The point of this priority focuses on generating access to basic rights that guarantee a better quality of life and that result in empowerment and a favorable development in which each person can be productive; contributing their knowledge, experience and tools to overall growth and economic development in all senses. By achieving this, we can guarantee equity and economic growth at the same time, which will generate a win-win in favor of the same society.







	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Challenge 3	Challenge 4
What?	Building engagement through the diaspora: Winning reputation and bringing back the youngest populations of professionals	Education: Investment and empowerment in the capacities of people for equal access	Health: Train leaders of communities as health promoters	Community Empowerment: Creation of a Pan Atlantic research HUB for development or co- working
Why?	Because through this we can bring new, innovative and disruptive ideas transferring knowledge and expertise; and bringing different perspectives and points of view	Nations that invest and empower their citizens as a result of deliberate economic policies perform better than their peers	Because people need to know how to prevent diseases that are easy to treat. And they must know how to take care of them and their families. Having the basic knowledge can differentiate a non-serious disease from one that needs urgent treatment	To foster greater intersectional learning and create collaboration in the Atlantic Space
Who?	Companies, Banks & Policy Makers	Government, Citizens & Civil Society	Government through health dependence or civil society with a medical approach. They can be from any country	Atlantic Governments, Civil Society, NGO´s, Private Companies

	Organizing events in the North	Government initiatives that	First, it is necessary to	Allotment of project funds to
How?	and reviewing the policies. In other words, to facilitate the transition and to facilitate the integration	focus on unlocking the capacity of individuals and also focus on grouping entrepreneurs together for more efficiency.	select the personnel that will teach the training courses in preventive medicine. Second, it is necessary to go to the communities and identify the leaders who will help us look for the right people in the community to take the course. Third, it is necessary to prepare material in a common language that can be understood by all stakeholders.	and follow up on implementation conferences.
Results	Creating a new community of people coming back to the country. Build a strong connection with the north through the diaspora. (Ex. Company in France/Morocco). Scale up by educating and interacting with people in the country.	Improve the quality of life and opportunities access to all people who are interested, building human capital with excellent knowledge.	An empowered community team with basic knowledge of preventive medicine that can help treat basic cases of health or send serious people to the hospital. In addition to the decrease in public spending on health by taking preventive actions.	Empowerment of the community and Creating experience in young people.
When?	September 2019, grant scholarship for people through NGO, Government, SchoolsOrganizing 3 events a yearIn 1 year make a policy transition to get people ready and smooth the transition.	By mid-2019, after creating an agenda of content relevant to people.	January-February 2019: Create a medical profile to teach course.  March-April 2019: Selection of health personnel.  May 2019: Prepare the course to be taught.  June-July 2019: Search for community leaders.  August-November 2019:  Training for community leaders.  December 2019: Evaluation of acquired knowledge.  January 2020: Replica of the program.	To start in March 2019.

# Political and Geopolitical Challenges in the Atlantic Space



The transatlantic region faces many political and geopolitical challenges, which impede the creation of Atlantic community based on common values and interests. Some of the most pressing issues standing in the way towards the development of a tight-knit community are political instability and conflicts, mistrust and therefore increasing disengagement from multilateral institutions, as well as the rise of nationalism. Moreover, political, cultural and historical differences, historical legacy, as well as construction of political discourses, leading to misunderstanding and growing negative attitudes towards other nations make the trans-Atlantic political integration even more difficult. The misconstruction of political systems, lack of accountable and transparent institutions as well as balanced and inclusive debates on current and future challenges and ways to address them, and corruption, further hinder the formation of a transatlantic union.

The first major challenge identified was the increasing breach between domestic and international priorities and policies. Indeed, there is a need to find a balance and to work towards the convergence of domestic and international priorities. Moreover, there is a necessity to increase the awareness and understanding that domestic problems can only be tackled if partnerships with other states and within the international and regional organizations are created. Only when this idea is embraced by the states and societies in the trans-Atlantic region, a truly transatlantic community could be built.

A second major challenge identified was the presence of widespread misunderstanding and misconception about other countries and nations as well as relationships between countries and regions in the Atlantic basin. Opportunities to connect and to experience other countries and culture, and to strengthen ties across communities, are insufficient: mobility is severely limited especially within Africa and between the African continent and Latin America. Moreover, politics and media often contribute to the creation of wrong framing and misleading narratives: it is important to pay attention to the way the public discourse is constructed if we aim at building a trans-Atlantic community. To tackle this second challenge, it is necessary to act on two fronts: first, mobility and connectivity should be increased, by improving means of transportation and communication, and by providing opportunities for students and workers to experience other realities first hand through exchange programs. Education and media are also part of

the picture if we want to allow individuals to develop their own consciousness about the region and the nations in it. Moreover, politicians, as well as think tankers, civil society representatives and community leaders have the responsibility to do whatever is in their power to provide a fair and transparent narrative of realities on the ground and the entity and results of relations in the wider Atlantic in an increasingly globalized world.

A third major challenge identified was a lack of inclusive and stable institutions, as well as poor governance. Stable and accountable institutions are a sine qua non condition to build predictable and accountable system, create equality in front of the law, as well as build trust of the citizens in the governments. Therefore, in a longer term, it is also a precondition to build an Atlantic community. Regarding the first challenge, the actions leading to a growing convergence of domestic and international priorities could be developed both on a national and on an international level. On a national level, an agreement on major domestic problems to be tackled should be reached, based on consultation with all the layers of the society. Only with this united voice, the states could turn towards the international. Moreover, complex issues should be communicated by the governments in a simpler and clearer manner, in order to raise public awareness on the major challenges faced. In addition, the accountability of national institutions should be increased. On a national and international level, discussions on the most pressing social, cultural, economic, and political challenges should be more inclusive. In addition, charismatic leaders are needed in order to break narratives. On an international level, a reform of international institutions should be undertaken in order to make them increasingly responsive and more adapted to a new political environment.

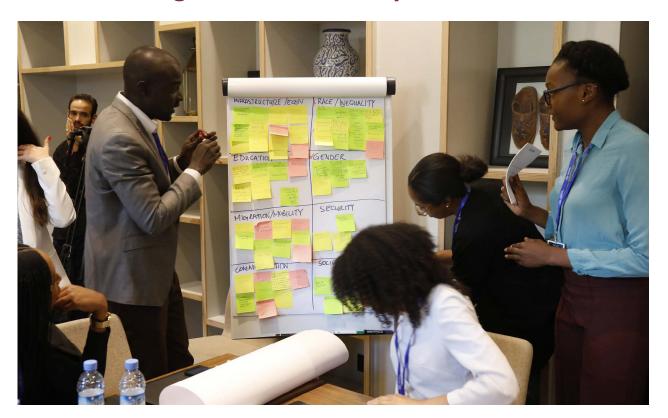
In order to address the third challenge, it is crucial that all citizens have access to information and data. Currently, most of the decisive information is being kept by the governments, which decreases public trust in state institutions, as well as their awareness about the key problems the states are facing. In addition, states should prioritize issues on which they act and select first the topics which are of major concern to the citizens - being it employment, migration, or access to basic services. More importantly, the solutions developed to tackle these challenges should be applied on all societal levels, which seems not to be the case currently, with some layers of the society being excluded.



	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Challenge 3
What	National vs Supranational	Existing misconception and misunderstanding of the reality of other countries and of the relationship between countries and regions in the Atlantic Basin	Poor governance and institutional systems
Why	There is still a significant challenge to grasp what the right balance between national and supra (inter) national decision-making is to implement policies and achieve results.	-Mobility and connectivity levels are insufficient. There are not enough opportunities to connectPolitics and media spread misleading narratives and wrong information	National institutions are not responsive and not sustainable. They do not deliver. More effort should be therefore put on finding solutions to common problems than to administrative tasks. National institutions should be rethought to make them more attractive to the citizens.
Ном	-In democracies, it is important to vote fora leader who is not afraid to break narrativesInternationally: accept the need for reform of international institutions as we live a different kind of globalization today, and institutions need to adapt to thatNationally: all stakeholders need to insure plurality of voices, explain complex issues in a simple manner without "dummy-proofing' the messages. Some policies must be left at the national level, so it is important to also insure accountability -A strong international partnership cannot be achieved without a national consensus firstAchieve a common denominator, a strong common agreement on basic values (e.g. human rights, rule of law, etc.)	Increasing mobility through mobility exchanges (students and professionals) + improving mobility and communication infrastructurescreating economic opportunities, particularly by developing trade flows and trade routes -changing the framing around identity and communities	-Advocating for and promoting access to information/open data both on national and on international levels -On national level address and prioritize topics of common interest and concern, as well as ensure the implementation of solutions on different levels

<b>E</b> xpected Results	A framework that incorporates a minimum standard in every country at national levelbased in these countries will be able to effectively cooperation on an international level, while also accepting each other's differences (religion, culture, etc.)	Increased independent and fair understanding of reality among the citizens that make up the trans-Atlantic community, as well as increased sense of community	Less corrupted and more inclusive, accountable, and transparent and predictable political systems and institutions.
Who	Politicians Influencers -Lobby groups, NGOs, think tanks -Industry -Other: including celebrities who have the power to influence	Governments, Corporations, NGOs, Think Tanks, Community Leaders, Individuals	Governments, NGOs, Multinational corporations
When	In the next 5 years	In the next 25 years	In the next 15 years

# **Social Challenges in the Atlantic Space**



The Atlantic region is a heterogeneous space comprised of different ethnicities, religions, cultures, and social practices. However, there are many shared challenges that Atlantic countries, both from the North and South, can address with common solutions.

There are two overarching problems on the social front that should be prioritized when discussing the Atlantic community. The first one is infrastructure, as it is an essential part of social development and provides the foundation for all other development and innovation. Infrastructure in much of the Global South, including the South Atlantic countries, was built using colonial logic, prioritizing the extraction of resources, which leads to further issues today involving accessibility, ownership, and financing.

The second overarching social problem that is plaguing the Atlantic Basin is inequality and tackling this problem is no small feat. Scholars, researchers, economist, and policy makers have all made attempts to address the glaring divides of our time. With this effort many goals have been achieved and efficacious interventions have offered marginal success; however, without an interdisciplinary approach to our outcomes and solutions will remain piecemeal-lacking the depth and rigor that a problem so complex deserves.

During the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders working group, the social group aimed to map out sustainable solutions that would create global impact. The discussion pulled in diverse approaches which led us into a rich dialogue and discussion that only serves to strengthen our outcomes. Our strategies are discussed as follows:

# 1. Infrastructure challenges and adequate Atlantic solutions

	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Challenge 3
What	Accessibility: who gets access to infrastructure and what is it used for?	Land Rights and Ownership: Who owns the land and how is it used?	Funding: How can we fund social projects independently?
Why	The goal is to change the mindset on accessibility and infrastructure. The logic should change to keeping the benefit of people in mind rather than their exploitation.	Land rights are fundamental because as of today, only 30% of the world's population has a legally registered title to their land. Secure land rights are important for reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity at the country community and family levels. Land rights matter even more for minorities and vulnerable groups	The purpose is to break the logic that we need international organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, or even countries of the North to finance the South's infrastructure development.
Who	Local authorities	Governments should work on policies that will facilitate the acquisition of land rights and ownership	States and organizations from the South
How	By tackling special poverty. How long does it take for the poor vs the rich to travel to a particular point, the reason behind this, and how this can be changed?	By implementing better land distribution policies, and accessible processes for land acquisition	South-South Financing

# 2. Addressing Inequality

# Race

Topic	Issue
Colonial Legacies	Antecedents and colonial narratives linger in national identity, otherism, and hostile relations with territorial neighbors leading to a lack of synergy and partnership
Intergenerational Trauma	Psychological imprint genetically and environmentally that affects processing of stress, cognitive abilities, nutrition, etc.
Xenophobia	Lack of tolerance and acceptance of difference. Political and educational fear mongering toward individuals from the MENA region and of Islamic religious and cultural heritage
Language	Intra and inter cultural language differences developing barriers for communications and connectivity
Immigration & Mobility	Policies and laws prohibiting free movement and transnational trade and cooperation

# Class

Topic	Issue
Income Gap	Widening economic gap between those in poverty and those of extreme wealth
Limited Economic Mobility	Limited growth or movement between classes. Location of birth determining economic trajectory

# Gender

Topic	Issue
Paternalism	Ideology leaves women out of the conversation across industries and offers limited opportunities for young women
Lack of Gender Inclusion	Women narratives are being excluded from the mainstream narrative on education, workforce development, and economy
Lack of Investments in Women Owned Ventures	Less than 3% of all investment monies offered to women on companies despite data indicating women leading innovation

# **Education**

Topic	Issue
Lack of Investment in Human Capital	Emphasis of technological contributions with little patience or interest in development of human skill. Anti-millennial agenda
Brain Drain	Best and brightest of the world all concentrated in specific areas, regions due to perceived opportunity
Disparity Public & Private Education Price of a "Good" Education	Educational opportunities that lead to mobility not available for all
Empath Education	Building empathy and compassion in school curricula to foster connection across differences

#### **Conclusion**

The concept of a Wider Atlantic community that includes South Atlantic states in its configuration may seem far-fetched. Although North-North relations are still largely endemic to Atlantic relations, due to a significant past that materialized into the Washington-Brussels Axis, a slow shift in the Atlantic geopolitical space is being witnessed through attempts at creating a new inclusive narrative and open dialogue. It is through dialogue and understanding that a heterogenous community can find homogenous solutions to shared challenges.

The Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders 2018 cohort, through its economic, political, and social groups, enumerated several challenges faced by both the North and South, and suggested appropriate solutions that could lead to a cohesive Atlantic community by 2025. The economic group focused on three challenges, namely the alignment of economic interests of all stakeholders of the Atlantic Basin, the creation of a favorable and stable environment for economic growth and cooperation, and the implementation of novel policies to foster the development of human capital. Similarly, the Political group focused on three challenges, namely the breaching between domestic and international priorities of countries bordering the Atlantic, the presence of widespread misunderstanding and misconceptions about other countries, and the lack of inclusive and stable institutions and poor governance. Finally, the Social group focused on infrastructure as a means of social development, inequality challenges within the race, class, gender, and access to education realms.

It is only through the acknowledgment of problems and challenges that we can properly address impediments to development. Creating a cohesive Atlantic community that includes the South Atlantic as an equal and legitimate partner must first come as a discursive solution before materializing into reality. This Roadmap serves the former purpose, as participants creatively identified issues and solutions to better reimagine the future of the Atlantic community.



