



ATLANTIC DIALOGUES

**EMERGING  
LEADERS**  
PROGRAM

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# ATLANTIC VISION 2025: BUILDING AN ATLANTIC COMMUNITY

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

2019 EDITION



THINK • STIMULATE • BRIDGE



# Table of Contents

<b>List of Participants .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Economic Challenges in the Atlantic Space .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Political and Geopolitical Challenges in the Atlantic Space .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Social Challenges in the Atlantic Space .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>14</b>

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## Introduction

The Atlantic basin faces considerable challenges on multiple fronts. Financial and economic struggles, coupled with political shifts and social turmoil, are reshaping the region's geopolitical landscape. Unemployment, poverty, violence, migration, extremism, climate change and other problems are on the rise and the need to tackle them effectively is pressing.

To find adequate solutions to these challenges, it is crucial to create inclusive discussions between the North and the South of the Atlantic and the older and younger generations, representing the diverse realities around the basin.

Thus, the 2019 edition of the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders (ADEL) program focused on bringing together a group of dynamic young leaders in order to identify the main issues surrounding the Atlantic region, and the ways to collectively come up with solutions. This report summarizes the discussions that took place during one of the workshops with the ADEL participants. This group of passionate leaders is made up of young people who have a strong sense of commitment to social, economic, and development issues within the wider Atlantic area. The fruitful discussions focused on the need to identify the major issues that exist around the Atlantic basin, and the urgency of finding effective solutions to face these challenges.

The Emerging Leaders focused on the importance of building a strong Atlantic community that is inclusive to countries of the global South. They were divided into three working groups with each focusing on one aspect of the challenges faced within the Atlantic space: economic, political, and social.

This exercise pushed the participants to look at the future of the region while exchanging ideas on the issues of the present. They were also invited to reflect on effective solutions that could ensure better prospects for the Atlantic community.

The Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders examined two main questions:

1. What are the main issues within the Atlantic basin?
2. What solutions can we come up with as an Atlantic community?

However, it is paramount to remember that these issues were discussed in a pre-COVID-19 context. The paradigm change that came with the coronavirus pandemic has shifted perspectives completely on both the issues and the solutions in the wider Atlantic, also challenging multilateralism, collective action, and global governance. Priorities today are most certainly different from what is highlighted in this report.

## Economic Challenges in the Atlantic Space

The economic relationships between the countries of the Atlantic basin are extensive but they lack the homogeneity that would permit deeper economic integration in the region. Many pressing issues relate to the actual and perceived widening of inequalities within the countries of the Atlantic community. These include unemployment, poverty and violence, the risks associated with the future of work, the migration crisis, the rise of extremism, the climate emergency and environmental degradation, and the need for more sustainability and a shift to a fully green economy. The main challenge the Atlantic community faces is to become more tangible to the citizens of the countries within this area.

The main purpose of this session was for the Emerging Leaders of the economic group to bring out the most critical economic challenges faced by the Atlantic basin, to details their reasons, and to suggest possible ways to tackle the challenges, keeping in mind the aim of bringing together the Atlantic community.

The group voted to consider the topics of economic inequality, labor, migration, productivity, and sustainability as most important. The first discussed topic was productivity and sustainability, with a focus on green growth and its opportunities. The aim was to find a balance between priorities including growth and sustainability and what they imply in terms of respect for the environment and the ecosystem. The group tried to work around ways that can achieve both of these goals and secure both short-term and long-term gains. The other issue was the parameters that will allow countries to evaluate these two indicators; the challenge is to establish benchmarks allowing the countries of the Atlantic basin to measure the effectiveness of their plans. The concept of leadership was also important for this dialogue; there was a consensus on the fact that there should be both bottom-up and top-down approaches, on local, regional and international levels. After a deliberation that allowed all participants to offer angles and possible solutions, the group set parameters that translated into a roadmap with concrete solutions.

The group proposed the establishment of an Atlantic Regional Development Bank to foster productivity and sustainability and cross-Atlantic investment. This bank would put in place new models for capital allocation, and provide capital through a mix of public and private investors. This all depends on a call for action that will make people aware of the opportunity cost between growth and sustainability, but will also invite the broadest range of people possible to participate.

This new institution would emerge from cooperation between local, regional, national, and international-level institutions, which would offer space for civic conversations to build an institution following a bottom-up logic.



Challenges	Aims / Goals
<b>Enhance Economic Integration between countries of the Atlantic basin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen economic ties and break out from the traditional sub-blocs within the Atlantic basin</li> </ul>
<b>Build a tangible presence of the Atlantic community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Atlantic identity around which different communities can group a create opportunities of cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>Green Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a balance between growth and sustainability</li> <li>• Secure both short-term and long-term gains</li> </ul>
<b>Set up references</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable the countries of the Atlantic basin to measure the success rate of their cooperation</li> </ul>
<b>Establish an Atlantic Regional Development Bank</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster productivity and sustainability and cross-Atlantic investment</li> <li>• Encourage people and companies to invest within the Atlantic framework</li> </ul>







## Political Challenges in the Atlantic Space

Given the litany of challenges throughout the Atlantic region, generating solutions to improve outcomes in the political sphere is critical. From the havoc being caused by climate change to the perceived disenfranchisement of citizens in democracies, navigating through this disruption to achieve reform requires an introspective process. Against this backdrop, the political working group of the Emerging Leaders identified the most pressing threats and provided some recommendations on how to tackle them. The geographical diversity of the emerging leaders, hailing from North and South America, Europe, and Africa, provided the working group with an eclectic collection of voices that simulated how real-life crisis management would take place today.

The working group process began by surveying all the current political challenges, followed by a thematic consolidation. It is noteworthy that throughout the discussion, all working group members acknowledged the need for collaborative efforts and multilateralism as a solution amplifier, and the need for traditional concepts and institutions to evolve. After voting, two dominant political challenges emerged: addressing climate change and improving inclusive governance.

### Ringling Alarms

The current and future dangers from climate change are quickly approaching an irreversible stage. From the record bush fires in Australia to dwindling polar ice caps and subsequent rising sea levels, the consequences of global warming are now a permanent feature for the Atlantic and international communities. Despite the alarming evidence and global civic activism, governments and businesses are failing to act with urgency. Underscoring the climate risks is the expected increase in migration, which will continue to challenge national governments and non-government organizations. The working group also established that the belief in an impending technological breakthrough to cure the ills of climate change is a false prophecy and an unreliable solution. Consequently, it was unanimously agreed that continued complacency towards climate change would only change in the aftermath of a near apocalyptic catastrophe that leads to buy-in from all members of the global community and not only individual states and citizens. Until this breakthrough moment occurs, the current model will only yield marginal gains.

## More Voices, More Fairness

Like combating climate change, the need for buy-in from all areas of society to tackle the maze of issues is naturally interconnected with improving the concept of inclusive governance. It is suggested that the general public views governance as a closed and corrupt process that is reserved for the elites. This perceived exclusion of the people from the governance process explains why support for mainstream parties is eroding. They are being supplanted by fringe parties who claim to represent the voice of disgruntled citizens. Consequently, in order to re-shift the political balance across the Atlantic community, reform initiatives must concentrate on encouraging more civil participation and spaces for dialogue, with more transparency and better accountability mechanisms, as well as elimination of corrupt practices.

The working group agreed that the existing governance architecture found in many states throughout the Atlantic community has failed to offer sufficient pathways for governance participation. This closure extends across all levels of governance, where more meaningful engagement must materialize in formal and informal areas. Bolstering participation for average citizens, minorities, and NGOs, lies in more organization of public consultations and citizens' assemblies. Both models are growing in popularity and gaining legitimacy, which could represent a support to the wave of growing populism in the Atlantic community. The prevalence of digitalization and social media platforms within our society is a resource of great power that, when channeled correctly, could further increase inclusivity and participation.

When looking for alternative decision-making models, much can be inferred from the International Labor Organization platform that integrates members of governments, private sector, and the general society. The re-tailoring of this platform for governance purposes would be a pragmatic solution. Furthermore, structured dialogue among diverse stakeholders as another engagement model should be further explored. One extreme example to consider—derived from ancient Athenian democracy—would be the mandatory placement of citizens for a year in the governance process, regardless of their education. This concept, akin to jury duty, would give every citizen a sense of ownership of successful governance.

In addition to these recommendations, improving transparency and accountability mechanisms within the current governance model must be done. There are pervasive elements of corruption across the Atlantic community where politicians and their surrogates act with impunity. Combating corruption is essential to the building of a sense of duty and honesty towards political governance.

## Continued Efforts

Political governance throughout the Atlantic community remains a work in flux. Continued efforts to broaden democratic participation and integrate more views is needed to ensure the viability of democracies as the primary form of organized governance throughout the Atlantic region. Finally, democracies must continue to advocate collaborative approaches and multilateral platforms, as an alternative to transactional policies, to solve global problems.

Challenges	Aims / Goals
<b>Climate change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutions should join the international civic movement to combat climate change</li> <li>• Effective government action to deal with current migration trends</li> <li>• Action should emanate more from Atlantic cooperation than individual state actions</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusive governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change how citizens perceive governance</li> <li>• Include citizens in the decision-making process by encouraging more civil participation and spaces for dialogue</li> <li>• Encourage transparency and accountability mechanisms to fight corruption</li> </ul>
<b>Boost multilateralism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broaden the scope of cooperation between the states of the Atlantic basin</li> <li>• Work on improving traditional concepts and institutions</li> </ul>





## Social Challenges in the Atlantic Space:

### Designing Collective Solutions for Social Problems Within the Atlantic basin

The Social group discussed the Atlantic basin as a region with a lot of untapped potential. As of today, we agreed that there are very few instances of international cooperation within the basin, which we saw as an opportunity to strengthen ties within our community. So far, the transatlantic community has been regarded as including Europe and North America, but never as comprising also Africa and Central and South America. One challenge in building the identity of an inclusive Atlantic community is overcoming grievances related to our tragic common history of colonization. The question of whether further integration or cooperation within the region would require asymmetrical contributions from the countries that have historically oppressed and those that have suffered from the hands of the colonizer, remains an ongoing issue. In any case, we agreed that the confluence of cultures in the Atlantic region, even in tragic contexts, has led to the birth of beautiful cultural creations, such as music ranging from jazz and rock n' roll to Bosa Nova, the Fado and flamenco. It is therefore up to us to now to create an overarching positive narrative that brings the Atlantic basin community together and gives everyone a sense of common purpose. This narrative should tell people from all the countries of the region why they should set aside their differences and engage in a common project.

With the goal of a narrative in mind, the Social group decided on a few priorities that would bring the Atlantic basin community together. In an initial brainstorming session, we came up with a number of challenges that resonated with us, including access to healthcare, mental health, diversity at the institutional level, family planning and education of young women, gender equality, women and youth representation, participatory democracy, mass incarceration, early childhood education, continuing education, social inequalities, sustainable development, participatory media, inclusive migration, the climate crisis, and respect for the diversity of identities.

To take the conversation a step further, we decided to gather these topics into two major categories that we would try to tackle with our proposal. These categories were health and social equality. Some of the reasons why we believed these were unique to the Atlantic Region were the fact that many of the imbalances and social inequality that we experience today are rooted in our colonial past and are perpetuated today through a global economic system in which multinational corporations from northern countries of the Atlantic basin extract wealth and resources from poorer nations of the Southern Atlantic. Other challenges (or opportunities) that we experience, such as migration flows, are also endemic to our region because of the high level of inequality that exists between different nations.

To move our agenda forward, we decided on a number of principles that should drive our project. First, the approach should be bottom-up and decentralized. While we agreed that there was room and need for intergovernmental action, our preferred approach was that of a grassroots movement that would later receive institutional support. A second tenet of our proposal would be knowledge sharing. We agreed that the knowledge exchange would need to take place both between citizens and groups of different countries, and also between civil society and decision-makers. Third, and to facilitate such a decentralized exchange, we would need a digital platform that would take inspiration from the principles of the Real Democratic Process of Collective Intelligence: observation, interpretation, creativity, deliberation, action, and memory. It would also harness our collective power through the principles of the wisdom of crowds: decentralized information sources, cognitive diversity, independent judgement, and effective aggregation. In order to achieve this, we should use an innovative digital tool based on artificial intelligence and an intelligent design. Fourth, we stressed that the media would need to play an important role in publicizing both the initiative and our common narrative. Finally, we agreed that to be the most effective, our approach would be intersectoral, including civil society, businesses, and government.

Challenges	Aims / Goals
<b>Make the Atlantic community more inclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcoming the colonial narrative</li> <li>• Encourage more cooperation between the North and the South of the Atlantic basin</li> </ul>
<b>Social Inequality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other than intergovernmental actions, grassroots movements should be encouraged to take action on a regional level</li> <li>• This movement is to be decentralized and adopt a bottom-up approach</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Platform for knowledge exchange</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring the principles of Collective Intelligence to reality</li> <li>• Atlantic digital space that serves as a mean of interaction between civil society, decision makers and the private sector</li> <li>• Initiative to be encouraged and marketed through the media</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Divided into three groups focusing on tackling the economic, political, and social challenges within the region, the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders 2019 cohort was able to recommend solutions to the several challenges faced by the countries of the Atlantic basin.

The first group took an interest in the economic challenges faced by the countries of the Atlantic. In a region where economic and political divergences are visibly growing, they pinpointed the lack of homogeneity and the perceived widening inequalities within the Atlantic community. The group shed light on the most critical economic challenges faced by the Atlantic basin, deciphered the reasons behind them, and attempted to find an agreement on how to face them while bringing the Atlantic community together. The role of regional financial institutions and the need for a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches were key themes that emerged from these discussions.

The second group focused on the political challenges that currently exist in the Atlantic basin. They determined that creating solutions to improve the Atlantic political sphere is crucial. The two dominant political challenges that emerged were the importance of addressing climate change and the need to improve inclusive governance.

Finally, the last group addressed the social challenges within the Atlantic basin. They focused on three main challenges: make the Atlantic community more inclusive, deal with social inequality, and make a better use of digitalization. In terms of lack of inclusiveness, the leaders insisted on the importance of overcoming the remains of the colonial narrative, while encouraging North-South cooperation within the community. In response to the challenge of social inequality, the group recommended more action on a regional level combined with a bottom-up approach. They concluded by insisting on the importance of better use of the Atlantic digital space to facilitate interactions between civil society, decision makers, and the private sector.

Through the recognition of the problems and challenges faced by the region, the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders attempted to address appropriately the barriers to the area's growth. The ultimate goal was to find tangible solutions to the main problems of the greater Atlantic basin. These discussions served one greater purpose: re-envision a better future for the Atlantic community.





## **About Policy Center for the New South**

Policy Center for the New South, formerly OCP Policy Center, is a Moroccan policy-oriented think tank based in Rabat, Morocco, striving to promote knowledge sharing and to contribute to an enriched reflection on key economic and international relations issues. By offering a southern perspective on major regional and global strategic challenges facing developing and emerging countries, the Policy Center for the New South aims to provide a meaningful policy-making contribution through its four research programs: Agriculture, Environment and Food Security, Economic and Social Development, Commodity Economics and Finance, Geopolitics and International Relations.

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