



# NETWORK FOR A **FREE SOCIETY**

AUGUST 2017





# Network for a Free Society

A report on Network for a Free Society for the 12 months to August 2017

## Why poverty? Why prosperity?

For millennia the world knew only abject poverty but, in the nineteenth century markets began to open up both within and between countries and the escape from poverty since 1900 has been truly amazing.

All of which is good news but despite the progress there are many people still living miserable repressed lives. The approach to a solution has generally been to tackle what are perceived to be the causes of poverty yet a more fruitful approach may be to identify the drivers of prosperity.

[The Human Freedom Index 2016](#) from Cato measures personal, civil and economic freedom and “On average the freest countries in the world have a much higher income than those that are less free”. “Countries in the top quartile of freedom enjoy a significantly higher per capita income (\$37,147) ....the per capita income in the least free quartile is \$8,700.”

The World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index contains another useful set of indicators and suggests that, broadly speaking countries where people are freer to do business also tend to be those with higher incomes and vice versa. Not so surprising that there are more opportunities for prosperity in countries where there are fewer barriers to business. However, unless these relationships are widely understood, opportunities to escape from poverty will not be extended to the least advantaged in the world.

Network for a Free Society exists to make ideas about the relationships between freedom and prosperity available in countries and languages where they are currently not accessible so that many more people may have the opportunity to flourish.

*On the cover: Below: Students in Burundi jostling to get their copy of the CD “Ideas for a Free Society”. Above: Volunteers who run the Silk Road Radio Station in Kabul, Afghanistan.*

**Everything that Network for a Free Society has done is only possible because of the generous support of our donors and partners.**

**Thank you all so very much.**

## Promoting Freedom in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda

These are three very poor countries ranking respectively 122<sup>nd</sup>, 151<sup>st</sup> and 85<sup>th</sup> in the Human Freedom Index and not the safest places to be promoting freedom as the route to prosperity. Yet the team from Students for Liberty Burundi, led by Aimable Manirakiza, has set up SFL chapters in a number of universities in each country and plans to build on the very successful quiz contest, supported by NFS, that they held only in Burundi in 2016 and which attracted so much interest in ideas about free societies.

This year probably 20 universities in the three countries will take part in the training for the quiz which involves studying and discussing chapters from the Eamonn Butler, Institute of Economic Affairs publication [\*Foundations of a Free Society\*](#). Eventually the teams have to answer multiple choice questions on those chapters. Next is the selection of 80 teams of four students each who first take part in a university quiz contest then the winners from each university meet the winners of the other universities in their country and finally the winners from each country will meet in Burundi in a three way contest to find the winning team and country.



*Students in DR Congo, with their CDs, during the founding of their chapter of Students for Liberty 2017*

So approximately 320 students will be in the teams and many more involved with them or attending the events with an anticipated 1200 students taking part in some way and thousands more hearing about the ideas on associated radio programs. All the students get copies of the mini library of classical liberal texts on CD in French so can study the quiz texts and many more texts besides.



*Aimable Manirakiza being interviewed on Radio 10 in Rwanda on economic freedom which was a brave act as the government closely controls all media*

## **Lessons on liberalism for young Armenians**

A group of Armenian lawyers wanted to contribute to making Armenia a free and secure place to live for themselves and their children with a limited government, free markets and individual rights instead of the current corruption and oligarchical government. So they started the “School of Practical Skills for Young Lawyers” to promote liberalism in Armenia to create a community of Armenians who would promote liberty.

They were able to use the book [\*Foundations of a Free Society\*](#) that had previously been translated into Armenian by Arto Grigoryan and others from the Armenian Liberty Students Organisation who also held a number of seminars for students in early 2017.





*A first introduction to liberalism for young lawyers in Armenia*

## **An Inspiring Story from Sub Saharan Africa**

[The Rising Tide Foundation Essay Contest](#) for African Undergraduates was run by the [African Liberty Organisation for Development](#) also supported by NFS. 634 essays were received from 22 countries and we were pleased to hear recently from the Nigerian winner Linus Okechukwu Unah who was then in his last year at university as a student of journalism. His first prize was \$1000 and a scholarship to the Liberty and Entrepreneurship Camp at St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya.

Linus had told us in 2016 that he had been excited about the ideas he heard at the camp and in particular the two films from the Acton Institute that were shown "The Call of the Entrepreneur" and "Poverty Cure".



*From student prize winner..... Linus is 2<sup>nd</sup> from right*


# Linus Unah

Freelance Journalist

Linus Unah is a Nigerian journalist with a penchant for long-form stories that go beyond the surface to offer in-depth coverage of issues on health, agriculture, education and technology.


Nigeria <https://www.clippings.me/linusunah>

## Portfolio



**The Christian Science Monitor**  
05/30/2017


**With few memories of Biafra War, young Nigerians renew calls for independence**



**The Development Set**  
04/06/2017

**Where Pregnancy Isn't A Death Sentence - The Development Set**

Reproductive Health Toyin Alade cleans her own



**IRIN**  
05/03/2017

**Flood-ridden Nigeria farmers need more help adapting to climate change**

Okeshukwu Onwuma still remembers the painful

*.....to successful freelance journalist one year later*

He had always hoped to go into journalism however was not sure whether he was confident enough to try and go freelance but in a recent email he said “I graduated a couple of weeks after I returned from camp in Limuru. Got my degree and thanks in part to what we learnt in the camp began my journey as a freelance journalist. If not for the camp and the award things would have been more difficult after graduation.”

“Life as a freelance journalist has been, well amazing. I travel a lot and do a lot of short flights around the country. I visit the countryside and speak to people and share their fears and worries and get to [write](#) about all of what I have witnessed.”

He added that “the contest gave me the tools and also the skills to kick-start my career as an entrepreneur in the realms of journalism”. The prize money enabled him to buy the laptop and the smart phone he would need plus a little capital to set him up.

Linus’ story demonstrates the potential for our strategy to inspire individuals with an understanding of the benefits of a free society and support them so that they can in turn promote the ideas amongst a much wider audience.

## Projects in Afghanistan



*Presenters on the Silk Road Radio Station*



[The Afghanistan Economic and Legal Studies Organisation](#), AELSO was set up in Kabul in 2009. Its mission is to promote the values of economic freedom and responsibilities which includes strengthening the institutions of the free-market economy, such as clear definition of, and respect, for property, and promotion of freedom of expression, toleration, human rights, and civil peace.

They run youth study and student groups on free society values from their base in Kabul and also their White Assembly Group runs major events of up to 1000 people in different parts of the country on issues such as the market economy and peace. White is for peace. This particular aspect of their work was started by someone who was inspired by what he learnt from AELSO.

Another project is to translate relevant texts into Dari and develop an expanding online library of texts in Dari, Farsi and English which they are also putting on a CD for wider distribution where internet connections are limited.



*An open discussion in Kabul on the book [Islamic Foundations of a Free Society](#) which is now being translated in Dari*



Two years ago they set up the [Silk Road Radio Station](#) to provide opportunities for young people to discuss issues related to free society values including in religion. Listener numbers are about 1000 a day and rising because anyone in the world can get access via a free mobile app from the Google store.

They built the radio station themselves and manage it with 115 volunteers and four employees. The total cost is under \$20,000 a year. A very small cost you may think especially if you share our view that the challenges faced by Afghanistan are more likely to be resolved by ideas than by force and at a fraction of the cost. NFS support has been vital for this project.

## Residential Camp in Pakistan

[The Alternate Solutions Institute](#) ASI organised their annual 5 day residential course



*Discussions during a break in the sessions*

‘Ideas for a Free and Responsible Society’ at Khanaspur, Ayubia with NFS support as they have done for the previous 6 years. There is always much competition to get a coveted place which takes about 35 post graduate students and teachers. Its aim is to educate them in the principles of the philosophy of rights with an emphasis on the concept of economic freedom and its significance for prosperity.

The event is always run by an alumni and other alumni of this program help in many aspects of the ASI's work which also runs a student outreach program to engage youth in activities related with development of an entrepreneurial society in Pakistan.

## **African Journalists for Liberty**

[The Institute for Liberty and Policy Innovation](#) in Ghana set up AJL because the media play such an important role in shaping ideas and yet few of them have knowledge about economic freedom and systems of governance which work for the many and not the few.



Their aim is to engage journalists in projects where they can debate and learn about the role that property rights, freedom, free market, individual sovereignty etc. play in providing opportunities to escape from poverty. This will encourage them to include content in their writing on economic freedom and the benefits that come from capitalism.

Their first event brought together 27 selected journalists from different media outlets in Ghana on the theme: “Diffusing Economic Freedom through Journalism”, on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and it received an impressive 54 media mentions.



## Partner Projects in Other Parts of the World

Other partners are running equally interesting projects but as your time and our space are limited here is just a mention of some of them.

[The Audace Institute Afrique](#) in Cote D'Ivoire ran a 'caravan', called 'Freedom the Solution to Poverty', to 5 different cities. Its purpose was to discuss the international aid on which a large part of the development of their country is based and its sustainability as a system which may even present dangers in a fragile or failing state. Also discussed were the solutions that economic freedom brings.

Our long term partners the [Arab Center](#) have run an impressive number of training and other events in Morocco and other Mena region countries in the last 12 months and they get a great deal of media coverage for all their work. Also their program of translations and publications continues and this year *Foundations of a Free Society* was published in Arabic in hard copy and *Islamic Foundations of a Free Society* translated into Arabic.

We are delighted to now have a new partner in Uganda, Mugabi John Socrates, who helped promote the essay contest there, played a critical role in founding Students for Liberty, Uganda and has also started ALED, Action for Liberty and Economic Development. We were able to supply copies of the mini library on CD Ideas for a Free Society and some funding for his events.

The [Istanbul Network for Liberty](#), whose mission is to 'explore and promote the principles and values of a free society within the Muslim world', have set up a permanent office in Kuala Lumpur with plans for many much needed projects around the world and we continue to support them

### .....and regarding the mini libraries of texts on CDs?

We continue to have requests for them from all over the world even though the technology may seem out of date in many countries. There are now versions in English, Kyrgyz, Portuguese, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, French and one currently being prepared for an audience in Afghanistan and neighboring countries which will include texts in Dari, Pashto, Farsi and English and will be accessible to people in Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

We get regular requests for them and recently new ones from Cambodia, Mongolia, South Africa, Mozambique and Venezuela with people wanting access to the texts on them either for CDs or memory sticks or to put on their own websites where copyrights permit. Without access to these texts promoting understanding of the principles and values of a free society is very difficult.

## Finally New Programs for NFS in 2017

NFS is delighted to announce a colloquium for 20 to 25 young African graduates to be held in Nairobi in October with a goal of bringing them together for an in depth discussions of philosophical issues relevant to Africa. The title is *The Market Economy and Christian Social Teaching* and it will be led by Dr Stephen Davies, Director of Education at the Institute of Economic Affairs.

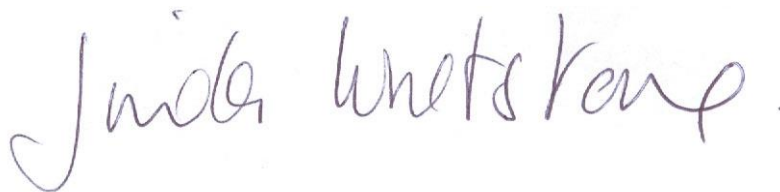
Also a somewhat similar event in Jakarta for 18 Indonesian academics and other intellectuals titled *Liberty & Development. Human Identities between Religion and Globalization*. This topic dominates Indonesian public debate at the moment and needs substantial input from the perspective of individual liberty in order to counterbalance the view that it is the government's duty to uphold moral and religious values while also managing the economy for the sake of the poor.

We are also hoping that Foundations of a Free Society will be translated into Khmer to make the ideas available in Cambodia.

**We want to thank everyone who has supported us in any way most sincerely for making this possible and we urge you to continue to do so because without you it can't happen.**

**Also if you have ideas or advice we would be so pleased to hear from you.**

**Very best wishes to you all in your efforts to increase opportunities by promoting freedom.**

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Linda Wetskamp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chairman, Network for a Free Society

So please help us if you can by donating through our website [here](http://www.networkforafreesociety.org) or directly by contacting [linda@freesocieties.org](mailto:linda@freesocieties.org).

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