

“Wherever human beings are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.”

Joseph Wresinski (1917-1988), Founder of ATD Fourth World



Antananarivo, Madagascar; 2005, Photo Efpaix, ATD Fourth World

“People mired in extreme poverty are the first victims of today's global crises, whether it's due to energy, food and water, climate change, the economy, or social conflict. We live in a world which is organized in such a way so as not to have contact with the poorest people, while at the same time it wonders why so many of its inhabitants feel excluded. In this world which is always on the lookout for ways to build a greater collective humanity amongst its people, ATD Fourth World is a link that allows people to come together, to think together and to act together.”

Eugen Brand, Director General

ATD Fourth World, an international organization

The International Movement ATD (All Together in Dignity) Fourth World is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that aims to eradicate persistent poverty and exclusion in both the northern and southern hemispheres through partnerships between people in extreme poverty and other individuals and institutions.

ATD Fourth World is not affiliated with any political party or religion; it encourages societal change that promotes dignity and the fulfilment of human rights for all.

ATD Fourth World's primary objective is to reach the most excluded people living in poverty and to promote their participation in the lives of their communities and nations.

This is achieved by building trust over time and through inviting people from different backgrounds to unite in a joint effort to tackle exclusion and poverty. Projects are initiated and evaluated in partnership with people living in poverty, in keeping with their aspirations and capabilities.

Founded in 1957 by Joseph Wresinski (1917-1988), who himself came from a family in extreme poverty, ATD Fourth World is active in more than 30 countries over 5 continents. ATD Fourth World is also in contact with individuals and organizations working with people living in poverty in over 100 countries through a network called the **Permanent Forum on Extreme Poverty in the World**.

People living in extreme poverty, actors in the fight against extreme poverty

People experiencing poverty are often actively involved in improving their neighbourhood, providing positive examples within their communities of the efforts people living in poverty make to better the lives of those who surround them, as well as their own. This recognition from within their community, in the context of a daily life fraught with daunting obstacles, strengthens their sense of dignity. Given their unique experience and first-hand knowledge, they are indispensable partners in the fight against extreme poverty.

Haiti

An ATD Fourth World team has been present in Haiti since 1980, working principally alongside poor urban communities in order to support them in their fight against extreme poverty, help them break out of their isolation, and encourage an environment of peace. The team thus witnessed first-hand the earthquake that struck the country in January 2010 and the tremendous courage and solidarity with which the Haitian people immediately reacted. In the wake of the earthquake, ATD Fourth World has identified several priorities:

- to ensure the needs and experience of very poor families are recognised, and their participation secured in relief and reconstruction programs,
- to respond to the urgent need for access to medical care,
- to work alongside Haitian and international partners who share a concern regarding access to services put in place for the poorest families,
- to contribute to clearance and reconstruction efforts.

Visit: www.atd-fourthworld.org/-Haiti,329-.html

Grassroots projects

ATD Fourth World is involved with very poor families living in extreme poverty in a variety of projects which help them to access their rights and to assume their responsibilities within their families and communities:

- By gaining access to the means needed to live as a family (decent work, training, housing, access to social safety nets, health care, civil registration, etc.).
- Through access to knowledge and culture, promoting the sharing of knowledge and access to new technologies (street libraries, pre-school education, skill-sharing activities).
- By speaking out and taking part in public life (gaining awareness of their rights and how to defend them).

France: Working & Learning Together ("Travailler et Apprendre Ensemble - TAE")

TAE is a small enterprise founded in 2002 by ATD Fourth World in Noisy-le-Grand near Paris. It employs 18 people in various sectors of activity (computer equipment reconditioning, cleaning services, and building maintenance).

TAE is an independent association based on the principle that, given the right support and training, people excluded from employment can regain the confidence to get back into work, be part of a team, and make a valuable contribution to society.

Website: www.tae-asso.org



Street library in Manila, Philippines (ATD Fourth World photo)

Street libraries throughout the world

Throughout the world, ATD Fourth World organizes more than 100 street libraries, which offer cultural programmes that build on the interests and strengths of the children and their parents, strengthen relationships within communities and establish links between the poorest members and their surrounding communities (through links with libraries, schools, local governments). The cultural activities of the street libraries provide access to books, computers, arts and crafts and encourage children and parents to express themselves and share their experiences and aspirations through these creative media.

Publications of interest

<http://www.atd-uk.org/publications/INDEXPGC.htm>

- "How poverty separates parents and children: A challenge to human rights" 2004, 155 pages
- "Participatory Approaches to Attacking Extreme Poverty", Case studies led by the International Movement ATD Fourth World, Xavier Godinot and Quentin Wodon, World Bank Working Paper n°77, May 2006

Research

Working in partnership with the most marginalized families, ATD Fourth World carries out research studies on poverty. The objective of the studies is to analyse the mechanisms of extreme poverty and exclusion and promote ways of eradicating it.

“Eradicating Extreme Poverty - Democracy, Globalization and Human Rights”:

Edited by Xavier Godinot

The Introduction to this new publication draws on the work of Amartya Sen and demonstrates the differences between poverty, which should be reduced, and extreme poverty, which should be eliminated as a violation to human dignity.

The first section (*Resisting Extreme Poverty Every Day*) presents the life stories of people in situations of extreme poverty in Burkina Faso, the Philippines, France and Peru.

The second section of the book (*Human Rights and Responsibilities: The Foundations for Living Together*) demonstrates the ways in which renewing or strengthening individuals' ties to family and community, and enabling their participation in public life, are a necessary precondition for their recognition as citizens and their access to fundamental rights.

Set against a backdrop of globalization, these life stories are then examined in the light of the analysis by Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World, of the links between personal and social transformations that are central to the eradication of extreme poverty. The English edition of this book will appear in 2010.

Exclusion, a Challenge to Democracy - How relevant is J. Wresinski's thinking?



On 17-19 Dec. 2008, in Paris, an international conference provided the occasion for 300 academics and other thinkers to discuss the major challenges in the present world in relation to Joseph Wresinski's ideas on policies for eradicating extreme poverty.

Visit <http://www.joseph-wresinski.org>

Participation in the development of public policy

At the local, national and international levels, ATD Fourth World aims to make the voices of the poorest people heard in decision-making processes on public policy. Working with people living in extreme poverty, ATD Fourth World raises awareness of the ways in which their rights are violated, and puts forward recommendations on the remedial actions to be taken.



Mr. Adonis Salas, ATD Fourth World Activist, addressing Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, and other participants at the October 17th event in New York, 2007 (UN photo)

Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

In August 2006 the UN Sub-Commission for Human Rights adopted the *Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*.

In 2007 ATD Fourth World organized participatory meetings with people living in extreme poverty, in order for their knowledge and opinions to also be taken into consideration as part of the consultative process on the draft guiding principles. Meetings were held in France, Peru, Poland, Senegal, Switzerland and Thailand. In February 2008 a report entitled "Dignity in the Face of Extreme Poverty" was submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

See: <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Dignity-in-the-Face-of-Extreme.html>

The Human Rights Council is now considering the next steps to be taken on the draft guiding principles.

UNESCO / Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights - 10 Dec. 08

ATD Fourth World received an honorable mention for the UNESCO/Bilbao Prize. It rewards the efforts of institutions and individuals that have made a particularly important contribution to the promotion of human rights through education and research, and through efforts to raise the awareness of decision-makers and the general public.

October 17, World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty

Observed every year on the 17th of October, and officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the Day was observed for the first time in 1987 by ATD Fourth World. Through commemorations organized by NGOs, governments and international institutions, the Day invites the public at large to hear the voice of people living in poverty, and encourages all sectors of society to consider ways to combat poverty and defend human rights.



17 October 2008 in Guatemala (ATD Fourth World photo)

Who is involved in ATD Fourth World?

ATD Fourth World has over 100,000 members. These include grassroots activists who have direct experience of fighting extreme poverty in their daily lives. Others belong to the 400 strong permanent volunteer corps, coming from more than 40 countries from both the global north and south. They choose to live on a modest living allowance and work closely with people living in extreme poverty and their communities around the world. Others give their time as “Friends” or “Supporters”, and build links between their communities or professions and people in extreme poverty.

All these members contribute their experiences and perspectives to shaping ATD Fourth World Movement's ambitions and projects for a world without extreme poverty and exclusion.

Who we are

- President: Nina LIM-YUSON (Philippines)
- Vice President: Marco UGARTE OCHOA (Peru)
- Director General: Eugen BRAND (Switzerland)
- Deputy Directors General: Isabelle PERRIN (Belgium), Diana SKELTON (USA)
- Executive Secretary: Thierry VIARD (France)

Status with international organizations

- General consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1991
- Consultative status with UNICEF, UNESCO and the ILO
- Participatory status with the Council of Europe
- Permanent delegation to the European Union

Worldwide locations

Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Republic of Central Africa, Rwanda, Senegal, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Reunion Island (France), Tanzania

America: Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, USA

Asia: Philippines, Thailand

Europe: Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom

International headquarters

ATD Fourth World

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95 480 Pierrelaye, France
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<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Contact-us.html>

180,000 people from 155 countries signed the call
“Striving Together to End Poverty” - Sign on line on <http://www.oct17.org/en>
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visit www.atd-fourthworld.org