



ATD Fourth World Annual Review 2008



ATD Fourth World is a human rights-based organisation with more than 30 years' experience of engaging with individuals and institutions to find solutions to extreme poverty in the UK.

We work in partnership with families experiencing long-term poverty to develop their potential and enable them to participate fully in the life of their communities and society at large. Creating spaces where the voices of those who face hardship every day can be heard, and their insights shared with policy makers and professionals, is essential.

For these voices need to be heard. Speaking at the European Parliament last year, one mother said, *“We should re-evaluate some of the good things that have been working in our communities and families for centuries, like caring and sharing,*

Moving forward together



giving strength to and depending on each other and standing alongside the weaker and more vulnerable in our society instead of blaming or punishing them... Community should be where our common wealth is shared, resources aren't wasted and real work is rewarded."

Place these words in the context of a year that has witnessed a financial and moral crisis on a global scale and we are all faced with some serious questions. This economic downturn is not just about money; it is about our inability to share it. Fairness and equality should be the stepping stones that lead us out of this crisis, and the most excluded people in our society should be included at the heart of this process.

This is why ATD Fourth World last year undertook an evaluation of all our activities

and programmes, clearly guided by both our friends and the families that we support. As we move forward, it is important that our actions and projects stay innovative and relevant to the challenges faced by the most vulnerable and excluded families. It is the commitment and enthusiasm of all those involved with ATD Fourth World that will make this happen, just as they have made possible the projects described in this Annual Review.

With appreciation for your ongoing support,

Martin Kalisa, Dann and Sarah Kenningham
The National Co-ordination Team
ATD Fourth World



ATD Fourth World has a long history of supporting disadvantaged parents to achieve positive outcomes for their children and to overcome the difficulties associated with poverty and social exclusion.

Families living in poverty in the UK face many challenges, ranging from poor health and inadequate housing with little access to recreation to a lack of regular employment, financial emergencies often linked to debt or housing arrears and a lack of educational and cultural development. These challenges, often combined with difficult relations with Social Services departments, mean that the families we make contact with are rarely accessing the services they are entitled to. By supporting families to access these services, ATD Fourth World acts as a bridge, giving families and professionals the time, space and resources to build positive

Building bridges



and long-lasting relationships.

A recent example of this role has seen the creation of a multi-agency support package for one young family, with the input of the family themselves and Social Services. By including residential support through 'Family Learning' weekends at Frimhurst as an element of the package, accompanying the family to a local Sure Start group and encouraging the parents to participate in discussion groups and creative activities, a positive change in the family's relations with professionals has been recognised.

As the mother says, "It is good to be accompanied by someone who knows you and your children, to help you to understand what professionals are saying and to express yourself in meetings with social workers and other professionals."

"You feel more confident when you have someone on your side."

Our family support programme also aims to counter the feelings of loneliness and isolation that frequently go hand-in-hand with living in poverty by helping families meet others in similar situations. This 'peer support' allows families to share their experiences and explain how they overcame their difficulties, providing parents with the opportunity to draw strength from those around them and to begin to hope that their own situation will improve.

By creating this holistic, proactive family support programme, ATD Fourth World encourages families to focus on the positives in their lives and to work through their difficulties in the full knowledge that they will be supported every step of the way.

family support



Many of the parents with whom ATD Fourth World is involved consistently voice their willingness, and their need, to learn the basic parenting skills necessary to keep their family together and to offer a better future to their children. A recurring theme in these discussions is that confidence is a vital prerequisite for parents taking part in local parenting courses and that Frimhurst Family House has a role in building and fostering that self-confidence.

With its emphasis on providing families with a setting in which to relax, to spend quality time together, to think clearly, to learn new skills, to meet other families in the same situation and to learn together in a respectful, non-judgemental environment, Frimhurst is more than just a house; it is home. Parents continually tell us that Frimhurst is where they come with their

Skills for life

children to take a break from the stresses of their daily life. In the words of one father, *“When I’m at home, if my son is playing outside I watch him from the window all the time, and if I can’t see him I start to panic and react. But when I’m at Frimhurst, even if I can’t see him, I know he is safe and I go and make a cup of tea.”*

The ‘Family Learning’ weekends held throughout the year offer residential support to many families living in poverty, thus giving them respite from the everyday pressures they face. But they also aim to create the right conditions in which families can learn the skills they want and need. Working closely with parents and children, professionals are invited to facilitate workshops such as early child bonding, budgeting, accessing rights and healthy

eating. *“It is hard to work with professionals when we don’t trust each other. It is important to build trust,”* one mother said during a recent residential stay.

Having always believed that, with the right conditions, people living in poverty and professionals can work together and learn from one another, ATD Fourth World makes every effort to ensure the participation of very disadvantaged families. Visiting families at home or in their communities in preparation for these learning weekends is fundamental to the success of this project, as is continued support once the families have returned home to encourage them to put these newly discovered skills into practice.





For the past 21 months, a team of volunteers and friends of ATD Fourth World have been running a Doorstep Library on a disadvantaged housing estate in West London. More than 35 families have welcomed the project, allowing the team to read with children, offer loans of books and build relationships with parents.

Although the team running the Doorstep Library and the families living on the estate come from different walks of life and very different cultures, the project is a very real partnership. While children are encouraged to experience the joys of books, parents are supported to engage their children in learning, even when their own literacy skills are limited, and embrace books and communication as essential for the education and well-being of their children. In addition, the team offers reassurance and a bridge to

Hopes for the future



local services and resources that parents are often afraid to access.

Through regular contact, the relationships between the team and the families grow. This approach, based on mutual trust, gives the families the opportunity to choose the timing and occasion to broach difficult subjects or look for support. Some parents have asked, *“Do you think that my son has a speech problem?”* or *“Can you read every week with my older boy? He is very shy, but he loves it with you.”* Others have discussed with the team a teacher’s claim that their son is restless in school or how the family routine now includes visiting the library on the way home from school.

By focusing on the interaction between parents and children, the team works to increase the self-confidence of parents

and to enable them to cope better with the challenges of nursery and school. In return, the families share with the team the barriers they face and their search for solutions. This long process takes years, not months, grounded in a respect for each family’s personal aspirations and in a recognition of the obstacles they face on a daily basis.

The project has attracted the attention of several professional groups involved in family support, both in the Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and elsewhere, and resulted in the team training other organisations how to reach out to the most excluded people.



The Community Project was born from our ambition to work together with families from a disadvantaged community in South East London, and with other organisations, to build a relationship with the local council and its services. It is an attempt to make a more inclusive and friendly environment for residents, in which whole families can contribute to the lives of their communities and children can grow up happy and realise their dreams.

A number of events were held in the past year: pancakes were given out on Shrove Tuesday to publicise elections for the Tenants and Residents Association; basketball coaching sessions during the school holidays showcased Southwark Primary Care Trust's advice on healthy eating; a traditional egg hunt was held at Easter; and a member of ATD Fourth World

Practising social cohesion



from France ran a circus skills workshop and a mime show. The book bus also continued its regular visits throughout the year, bringing books onto the estate and encouraging people to access library services.

But the highlight of the year was the Summer Festival which, with the input of South London Gallery, focused on artist-led activities such as the *Art Through Play* scheme and puppet-making as well as gardening, dog shows, a sports day, storytelling and a barbecue. Looking back over our four-year investment in the estate, one mother said, *“I can see now how the project has had an impact on community cohesion and helped people develop a shared sense of belonging and see the best in each other. It is great to see the efforts of so many different people and organisations paying off.”*

Through contact with families on the estate, survey reports and interviews, and in partnership with Camberwell Neighbourhood Renewal and Goldsmiths University of London, we were also involved in academic research to better understand the families’ daily lives and their participation in their community.

This year also saw the launch of the *Even Better Together* project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, in collaboration with contemporary arts organisation Gasworks. This three-year programme, aimed at giving opportunities for families to participate in creative activities together, used drawing, clay modelling, writing and film to look at people’s ideas of home and the buildings in which they would like to live.

community project



Giving those who live in poverty the opportunity to influence policy and effect change is central to ATD Fourth World's aim of working with individuals and institutions to find solutions together to eradicate extreme poverty in the UK. We believe that if their experiences are listened to and taken into account, the policies created to meet their needs will be more likely to succeed.

Bringing policy makers and people from the most excluded sectors of society together has two important effects. First, it empowers people with experience of living in poverty to express their views and offer solutions to the problems affecting their lives. And secondly, it offers policy makers an invaluable insight into fighting poverty from the bottom up, as well as an important forum for dialogue.

Empowering voices



One example of the results of this approach was the *Voices for a Change* report published in June 2008. This was the product of an eighteen-month project to look for solutions to the problem of poverty in London, supported by the Child Poverty Action Group, the City Parochial Foundation and Oxfam's UK Poverty Programme. Twelve people with experience of poverty were involved in each stage of the project as 'peer researchers' - from setting the agenda and writing the questions to be asked in the interviews to analysing the information and making policy recommendations.

The report was presented to policy makers from local and central government, key figures from the voluntary sector and academics. Amongst its conclusions were that poverty should be better understood by those working in government services;

that viewing people living in poverty as having potential can have very positive consequences; and that the constraints imposed by poverty make it difficult for people to access services they are entitled to.

The peer researchers continue to feel the impact of participating in the project, with a number of them having now moved on to part-time voluntary or paid employment or college. One said, *"I feel that I have seen the courage, resourcefulness and talents that others have but often go unrecognised. It gave me the chance to do something constructive in bringing the voice of the poorest to attention and involving them in the project."*

policy development



The United Nations-recognised *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*, 17 October, is a special day for all those who refuse to accept poverty as a fact of life. Over 20 years ago, the first 17 October was celebrated with the unveiling of a Commemorative Stone in the heart of Paris, bearing the words of Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World: “*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.*”

This year, events to mark 17 October around the UK included a well-attended event in Camberley, Surrey, which used creative methods to explore people’s attitudes to extreme poverty, and a rally and act of remembrance in Glasgow.

Human rights for all



In London, ten thousand people joined the *Keep The Promise* march, organised by the Campaign to End Child Poverty, calling on the Government to honour its pledge of halving child poverty by 2010. *“This shows that so many people are willing to stand up together against poverty, with unity and respect,”* one father explained after the march.

A delegation from ATD Fourth World also attended the Trades Union Congress conference *Challenging Povertyism*. Focusing on the stereotypes and negative portrayal of people on low incomes in the media, Ruth Lister CBE set the tone of the day in her opening presentation by stating, *“Challenging povertyism is a human rights question; treating people with dignity and respect is fundamental.”* In the words of a later speaker, *“Povertyism,*

like racism and sexism, should no longer be tolerated; it should be a thing of the past.”

Other delegations of ATD Fourth World UK members were invited to varied events taking place all over the world: the unveiling of a Commemorative Stone in Dublin; a meeting at the United Nations in New York; and seminars in Marseilles and at the European Parliament in Brussels.

By taking a human rights-based approach, and encouraging more and more people to take part in these types of events, ATD Fourth World promotes the belief that everyone has a valuable contribution to make to society and that everybody is entitled to the dignity and respect that most people take for granted.

17 october



The three-month internship programme offers participants active involvement in ATD Fourth World's diverse projects and the opportunity to better understand the organisation and its approach while also sharing their own skills and abilities.

The aim of the internship programme is to offer a practical introduction to the philosophy, approach and work of ATD Fourth World. This is done through a programme of reading, research, videos and discussion, manual work and ongoing evaluation and feedback. Living and working alongside other members of the ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps, interns take part in our activities and programmes, at both the National Centre in London and Frimhurst Family House, with families and children who have experience of poverty and social exclusion.

An inspiring experience



According to Billy Lansdell, who spent 12 months working with the team after his internship programme, *“My time with ATD Fourth World was an eye-opening, inspiring and challenging experience. Hearing first-hand accounts of poverty and seeing how it can tear lives apart is something that will stay with me forever.*”

“I had the chance to meet people I would never normally have come across and to come face-to-face with the incredible injustices that are an everyday reality for the most excluded sections of our society. The experience shattered many illusions I had about the reality of life in the UK today: despite our major technological advances, we are still destroying lives with a system that is rooted in blame and prejudice and lacking in understanding and partnership.”

“ATD Fourth World is the most amazing organisation I have ever encountered. I love its philosophy, ambition and humanity, and I love the way it challenges the so-called ‘established order of things’ by offering a totally unique way of living and working together. Above all, I love the wonderful, inspiring people who are drawn to it.”

“ATD Fourth World has enriched my life in so many ways and I am certain the lessons I have learned will continue to inform my actions for the rest of my life.”

Further information on the internship programme can be found on our website at www.atd-uk.org.

volunteer corps

How can I get involved?

ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps members make a full-time commitment to eradicate poverty and to live on the same basic wage. They live and work alongside families living in extreme poverty and are involved in ATD Fourth World projects in the UK and abroad. Come to an **information weekend** to find out more.

Being a **friend** of ATD Fourth World can involve anything from helping out at a family learning weekend or doing a sponsored bike ride to offering new project ideas, writing articles or making the tea! The friends group is currently active in family support, fundraising, partnership initiatives and creating new ways of supporting the team and one another.

For more information, visit www.atd-uk.org.

The **financial support** we receive enables us to continue ATD Fourth World's vital work with adults and children living in poverty in the UK. There are many different ways in which you can help.

You can **fundraise** through your university, workplace or church, or as an individual, through a sponsored event, selling Christmas cards, organising a raffle etc. A range of materials is available to support your efforts.

Setting up a **standing order** with your bank guarantees us a regular income, allowing us to plan ahead and save both time and money in administration costs.

Last but not least, you can make a real difference to the society of tomorrow by bequeathing ATD Fourth World a **legacy** in your will.



Summary of accounts

Year to 30 June

	2008	2007
INCOME		
Grants	£220,000	£193,000
Donations and legacies	£61,000	£76,000
Publications, contributions and interest	£25,000	£25,000
	<u>£306,000</u>	<u>£294,000</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Family Support	£208,000	£208,000
Policy development and training	£85,000	£66,000
Publications	£6,000	£6,000
Administration, fundraising and depreciation	£8,000	£8,000
	<u>£307,000</u>	<u>£288,000</u>

Board of Directors Rev. Nicholas Edwards (chair), Eugen Brand, Margaret Howells, Paul Paroissien, Ajanta Sinha, Jo Tunnard and Anna Vass

Company Secretary Dann Kenningham

finance



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