

ATD Fourth World has been active in Asia for a number of years, initially through the Permanent Forum on Extreme Poverty in the World. Since 1980, full-time volunteers in Asia continue to deepen their understanding of the conditions that surround the lives of those in extreme poverty.

The Friends of ATD Foundation in Thailand was set up in 1992 and registered under Thai law in order to create a formal structure for their work. It is currently chaired by Dr. Narumol Nirathron, professor at the Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University. In November 2004, ATD Fourth World received from the Ministry of Labour the permission to operate in Thailand as a branch of a foreign Non-Governmental Organisation. In the Philippines, ATD Fourth World is declared at the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) since 1996. ATD Fourth World's work in the region is formed around three principle objectives:

→ **To support families living in poverty** to turn their lives around, by strengthening their self-awareness and self-confidence through cultural and artistic activities, and by finding new ways forward by building on family support.

→ **To increase public awareness** of the positive contribution that the experience and knowledge of people living in poverty can make in the search for ways of creating a fairer society.

→ **To advocate for greater attention to the situation of families living in extreme poverty** and give them opportunities to take part in events organized by the United Nations, UN agencies and other international organisations.



Empowering families by enabling access to Knowledge and Expression

Street Libraries are held in four communities in Manila providing children with access to learning.

For small children it helps to prepare for primary school. An annual **Festival of Learning** lasts 5 to 6 weeks during summer holiday including preparation and evaluation. It is the chance for children and young people to produce something beautiful of which they can be proud and gain in confidence. It may also be the occasion to enjoy outings to places they have never visited: an art museum or an interesting part of their city they rarely frequent. For the last few years, a facilitation group, mainly composed of mothers and young women from the 4 communities have been involved in the planning, facilitating and evaluation of street libraries and the festival of learning event.

They receive training to enhance their skills in facilitating activities for the children. The facilitators from the communities have discovered new skills and developed a real partnership from

working together with the team of full-time volunteers and friends.

In 2007, people from several communities were particularly concerned about efforts to evict and relocate many poor families who are “squatting” in different areas of Manila. They spoke of their fear for those who do not manage to support themselves and their families in suburbs distant from where they used to earn a livelihood. The **Adult Forums**, held every 3 weeks, provide a space for adults from the communities, friends and full-time volunteers at the ATD Fourth World office to discuss concerns and topics and to share news. The Adult Forums gave participants a vehicle to share their experiences and fears of eviction, unifying them, building solidarity among those from different communities, and helping them to have a clearer picture of the issue. They were also able to discuss issues regarding relocation with

public authority representatives. Participants see the building of partnerships between families targeted for eviction and public authorities as a possible future direction for the Forums to work towards better outcomes in relocation projects for everyone.

In October 2007, an active participant in the Adult Forum, who previously lived in a community under a bridge in Manila, was invited to share his, as well as other Forum contributors', experience of eviction and relocation to the suburbs as part of a delegation

taking part in a seminar in Paris, France. Other members of the delegation were a facilitator from the Festival of Learning and the Executive Director of the Philippines Red Cross, who was previously Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.



Strengthening solidarity within the community

In **Bangkok**, ATD Fourth World has been running street libraries in Saphan Phut since 1988, a slum community of about 80 families. For several years, residents had voiced their wish for a **Community Centre** to be used for: activities with the children; shelter when they are playing, reading, or doing their homework; community meetings and celebrations and to welcome guests respectfully. Even though the Community Centre project stemmed from the community itself, the challenge remained to strengthen solidarity within the community and to unite people in taking responsibility for the project. During the planning

phase, a resident explained that as they lived in constant fear of eviction, *“There is no solidarity among the community. If we weren’t afraid of being evicted, our sense of unity would probably grow stronger.”* The Air France Foundation, which has supported ATD Fourth World projects in other countries, funded the building of the Centre. ATD Fourth World’s role was to facilitate the partnership between the architect and members of the community – male residents took an active part in its construction – and liaise with the community to ensure the project met their expectations and needs. It also involved inviting local Thai

organizations working with poor communities where similar projects had succeeded to share their experience with the community, who in turn invited Saphan Phut residents to see how projects had helped build solidarity within their community. The Centre was successfully completed and inaugurated on 2 December 2007.

“It is a way to help, give joy, speak with the children and talk with their parents and to have exchange about our life. I can share my life with them.”

A mother, part of the facilitation team in Manila.

Raising public awareness – International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, October 17

In the Philippines, October 17 was proclaimed National Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty in 1993 with the inauguration of a replica of the Commemorative Stone to the victims of extreme

of the celebration of the 2007 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, Nina Lim Yuson, Filipina, and

Minister of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand leading to the 2007 commemoration being held in partnership between the Ministry and ATD Fourth World, and a



poverty in Rizal Park, Manila. For October 17 2007, ATD Fourth World was invited to take part in a core-group organizing the National Week for Overcoming Extreme Poverty. A public event was organized with the United Nations and the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), for which ATD Fourth World took responsibility for drafting the programme, which gathered 2800 people at Rizal Park.

In addition, two members of ATD Fourth World in Manila were asked to join the International Movement's delegation in New York to submit the signatures from the Campaign to the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, as part

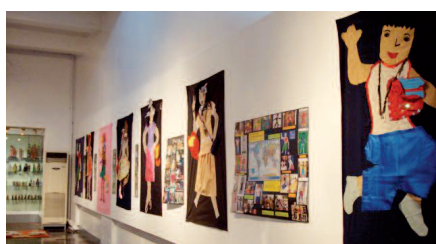
Susie Devins, then deputy director general, led this delegation. One of the delegates, a young street library facilitator, who had previously benefited from the activities in his community as a child, was asked to speak and read the pledge alongside the Secretary-General at the official UN Commemoration, organised in link with Millennium Campaign's *Stand Up* event.

In Thailand, 17 October celebrations are held in partnership with UN agencies in Bangkok (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - ESCAP). In August 2007, a delegation of ATD Fourth World members met the

second event being held with ESCAP. ATD Fourth World ensured people experiencing poverty were at the centre of both events: a Singtho Group performance (lion dance) by residents from the Bangkok Noi community, testimonies from slum dwellers and a *Tapori* silhouettes exhibition: "*Listen to us and we'll change the world together!*"

In 2008, a seminar was held entitled '*Inclusive Society: Human Rights-Based Approach to the Eradication of Poverty*', coinciding with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was organized in partnership with UNESCO's Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences

in Asia and the Pacific (RUSHSAP), The Friends of ATD Foundation and ATD Fourth World in Bangkok. Delegates living in extreme poverty from the Bangkok Noi and Saphan Phut communities stressed the challenge of accessing their right to housing which allows them to earn a living without permanent fear of eviction.



“Listen to us and we’ll change the world together” – Tapori Silhouette Exhibition

In 2006 and 2007, the Tapori Silhouettes Campaign enabled children from around the world to express feelings about their life, their responsibilities and expectations for the future. In Manila, ATD Fourth World exhibited silhouettes and messages of children from the Philippines, Thailand and France at several locations in the city, including the Museo Pambata, National Museum and the National Library. This has led to an invitation from the National Library to enable facilitators from the communities where

Street Libraries are run to participate in storytelling training.

“It was truly a beautiful event, because my child was there and her work was on display. Many parents from our community were very happy and proud that their children’s work was exhibited in the Museum. It also helped some parents understand that ATD Fourth World is an international movement.”

A mother from community where Street Libraries are held at the opening of the Tapori exhibition at the Museo Pambata, Manila.

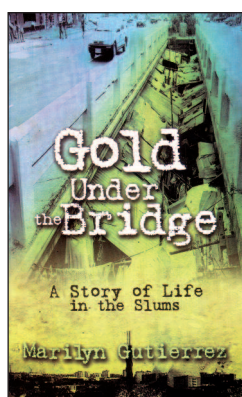
Consultation on the UN Draft Guiding Principles: The rights of the poor

In 2007, the International Movement ATD Fourth World organised a series of meetings with people living in poverty in order to ensure that their knowledge and opinions directly inform the Draft Guiding Principles on Extreme poverty and Human rights. A consultation event was held in Bangkok with Professor Yokota, expert of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, community members, ATD Fourth World volunteers and friends. Following this meeting, a member of the Friends of ATD Foundation invited Professor Yokota to address a lecture at Chulalongkorn University. He developed the strong link between the fight against extreme poverty and reaching human rights for all.

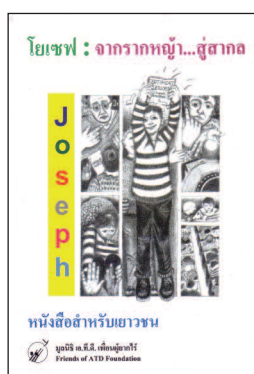
In October 2007, a Thai delegation was also part of a group who travelled to Geneva,

Switzerland to meet Doru Costea, **the president of the United Nations Human Rights Council**, to present her with the findings of ATD Fourth World’s worldwide consultations.

Books, publications:



“Gold Under the Bridge”, written by Filipina full-time volunteer Marilyn Gutierrez, illustrating the life of a family living under the bridge in a district southeast of Manila.



Translation in Thai of the book “Joseph” by Annelies Willemin

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