



# All Together in Dignity

*ATD Fourth World's Common Ambitions for 2013-2017*

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POVERTY CAN BE AND MUST BE ERADICATED



In Great Britain, members of ATD Fourth World say "NO" to extreme poverty.

*In the USA, ATD Fourth World's team in Gallup, New Mexico develops actions in the field of education and culture with families experiencing poverty, reaching mainly Native Americans but also other population groups. Once, a volunteer noticed a couple and their baby sitting outside a food store in Gallup, looking as if they were living out of a shopping cart. He reached out to them by going over and starting a conversation. One of the first topics these parents spoke about, sitting on the sidewalk that first day, as people walked by and handed them money or food, was wanting to find ways to support their child in his development. The relationship grew over the months, as the team accompanied them in their search for housing and obtaining birth records, clothing and supplies for the baby, trying to give them opportunities to pursue whatever seemed most important to them for their future. The mother said, months later, that different agencies were willing to help them as long as they fit their criteria and accepted their "solutions." "You guys are there for us. I know that wherever we go, whatever we decide, you're still with us."*

Gaps in living conditions between people struggling against extreme poverty and others continue to grow. In recent years, major ongoing crises--environmental, economic, political, and others--have hit populations in extreme poverty the hardest, reinforcing the human rights violations families in poverty already suffer. The violence of extreme poverty, ignorance, deprivation and contempt isolates people and locks them in silence to the point where they doubt that they are part of the human community. But families in poverty have experiences and knowledge that are important to share and which our society desperately needs.

And yet, too often, society's attempts to respond to extreme poverty, whether by running emergency shelters or through large-scale international aid, are planned with almost no consultation with the people this aid is intended to benefit. Our work evaluating the Millennium Development Goals showed that if the poorest are not consulted in every step of a planning process, these initiatives won't reach them.



*In Madagascar, when the shanty town of Lalamby was demolished, the residents were forced to live in tents in the middle of nowhere. The members of the Movement have joined and supported them in making sure that they were not abandoned and in getting the authorities to take them into account.*

## OUR CENTRAL FOCUS

*Reaching Out to Those Whose Contribution is Missing*

Acting all together in dignity means acting such that all people will be taken into account wherever decisions are made that affect humanity. It means creating an opportunity for the world: when no one is left behind, projects and policies can bring people together instead of dividing them, we can stem the tide of inequality, and we can draw closer to the ideals of justice, freedom and peace. This central focus is a compass for everything we undertake, be it on our own, with partners, or wherever else each of us may be involved, whether in our communities, places of worship, political parties, labor unions, or elsewhere.

### *We Must Ask Ourselves:*

- Does our team or group work together and support one another to reach out to those who are still missing, welcoming new participants even when we lack the capacity to include a greater number of people?
- How can these people find their place and the freedom to express themselves and to contribute alongside others to our programs and projects?
- How can we link to and learn from other organizations who are also working alongside people struggling against extreme poverty, and how will people in poverty be able to enter into dialogue about the future of our world, at the local, national, or international level?

# 1 BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESSING EDUCATION - EVERY MIND COUNTS



Education for people of all ages remains a priority around the world because it is far from being achieved. Because people in situations of extreme poverty are prevented from expressing their own experience, they cannot contribute to projects that affect them. Wasting the intelligence of men, women, youth and children living in poverty is a serious form of discrimination and a tremendous waste for society. Their intelligence could contribute to renew our knowledge base so that the struggle to overcome poverty can be truly efficient in building a more just world.

## We will work to:

- Identify and recognize existing life skills and how they complement the knowledge taught in schools or training institutions, and to explore how this knowledge can help young people and children grow within their families and communities to become citizens of the world. For this, we will develop further and promote the Merging Knowledge approach.
- Intensify our contribution to education and ongoing learning for all, based on partnership and cooperation.
- Stimulate the joy of learning together, unleashing hidden potential and creativity to bolster confidence that everyone can learn in all our actions (street libraries, people's universities, creative workshops, etc.).
- Support families as the first place of education, learning to notice and support initiatives parents take for the education of their children and the barriers that impede their success, partnering with other organizations, and promoting cooperation, not competition, among learners.
- Develop our ongoing learning programs to prepare ourselves for an ambitious implementation of these commitments. Increase our potential to learn from one another's work through increased internal communication among our teams and members.



*In the Central African Republic, families lead even more challenging lives because of the political turmoil that persists there. Some young people from ATD Fourth World have chosen not to leave the children alone to face this violence. They join them with books "to disarm the spirit." "If we are brave, it's because we are together in resisting, for peace."*

*In France and Belgium, as part of a training program, professionals from different sectors and activists with an experience of poverty share their experiences, their techniques, and their knowledge to build a way forward to equal rights for all.*



## 2 SHAPING A PEOPLE-CENTERED AND EARTH-FRIENDLY ECONOMIC VISION



Increasingly, today's economic systems create a permanent state of crisis for people in extreme poverty, driving them to a forced inactivity. Yet, day after day, these people struggle and toil to provide for their families, taking in hand the degraded environment in which they are forced to live, creating their own informal employment, and building their own networks of solidarity. Many people around the world, individually or in networks, are engaged in important explorations of alternative economic models whose aim is to foster the well-being of people and communities, especially the most disadvantaged ones.

### **We will work to:**

- Deepen our knowledge of people's efforts to make ends meet and to connect with their community through wage labor, informal or undeclared work, volunteer work, care for sick or disabled family members, etc.
- Continue "Working and Learning Together" projects as part of an international network where access to decent work or to various income-generating activities is linked to community building.
- Support people in their efforts to improve their living conditions and explore and experiment with initiatives for the public good (access to water, protection of the environment, improvement of housing...). We will bear in mind that projects involving money risk dividing communities instead of strengthening solidarity.



*In Guatemala, the project "Working and Learning Together" is an adventure in work sharing, learning to do hands-on repair work, to sell the products, to support one another, to value everyone's work so that "everyone wins."*

- Participate in dialogues (with universities, think tanks, business leaders, etc.) about the economy and its regulation, both nationally and internationally.
- Develop our partnerships with labor unions and all stakeholders to obtain full employment and decent work for all, and to implement social safety nets in every country in reference to human rights obligations and the recommendations of the International Labour Office.
- Participate in networks aiming to humanize the economy and alternative networks that contribute to a people-centered economy.



*In Senegal, the project "Gestu and xeex ndool" (finding and fighting poverty together) extends a group which works to fight flooding and allows young people to help out one another and be useful to their community. A soap making project brings several girls in the neighborhood together. "We make soap, but most importantly it's about creating relationships between people who are neighbors but who sometimes don't get along with one another. On the soap, we wrote 'man is the cure of man.' This allows us to work together, to open ourselves towards others. We talk about things in our lives that help us advance. Certain girls are discovering the Movement. We take turns meeting at each person's house in order to show that no one should be ashamed of their home, even if it's flooded. And the others are going to see that each person, even poor, has the right to welcome others in her home."*

# 3 ORGANIZING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACE

It is no longer possible to speak of peace without recognizing the violence of poverty, and the contributions of the poorest towards fighting violence and building peace. Ending extreme poverty depends on public organizing and civic engagement in society. We want all our members to be able to take advantage of the possibilities offered by modern means of communication, while remaining linked to those without access to them, and while continuing to stress the importance of people meeting face to face. By organizing in this way, we can also have greater freedom in the work we choose to develop by expanding our network of friends and donors to broaden our grassroots funding base.

## We will work to:

- Engage and organize by learning to integrate communication into the work of all our teams, exploring organizing by using the strength of social networks and other modern means of communication.
- Run public organizing campaigns and invite more people to stay in touch with us, and make known the life, the work and the writings of our founder, Fr. Joseph Wresinski, particularly around the centenary of his birth, 2017.
- Encourage civic involvement and stimulate dialogue by making known and supporting the involvement of each person or organization that is part of the movement for overcoming poverty, and inviting the general public to act in solidarity with people in extreme poverty.
- Invite people to support us and join in by making



*In the Democratic Republic of Congo, every Sunday, the Tapori group of Buvaku makes a presentation on local radio to talk about what they do and give examples of "the right to friendship for all." A delegation of Tapori children from the DRC took the floor in an event at the UN in Geneva marking the 20th Anniversary for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

a significant effort to increase the number of friends and people involved with us, and develop the means to stay in touch with all the people who come into contact with ATD Fourth World.

- Make time for ongoing learning to sustain our will to continue to fight poverty, by making sure that no one is alone and that everyone has the chance to talk about key issues coming from his or her involvement in ATD Fourth World. We will work towards a regular rhythm of organization-wide General Assemblies, and to improve our internal communication locally, regionally, and worldwide.



*In the Phillipines, ATD Fourth World comes up with original communication tools, such as a mobile exhibit paraded by members in very diverse places, or campaigns for recruiting volunteers and donations on their Facebook page.*