

# The Roles We Play

## Recognising the Contribution of People in Poverty



ATD Fourth World



Amanda, Kids Club Worker - The Roles We Play

# The Roles We Play

## What happened next...



ATD Fourth World

Dear friends,

Welcome to the second newsletter for our project: The Roles We Play: Recognising the Contribution of People in Poverty; a full-colour publication, exhibition and multi-media project from ATD Fourth World and artist and photographer Eva Sajovic.

The Roles We Play: Recognising the Contribution of People in Poverty is a collection of photographic portraits and self-written biographies exploring the roles played by those living in poverty within their families, communities and society at large.

**"The work aims to highlight the efforts and validate the achievements of people who experience poverty and social exclusion in the UK and to challenge the negative attitudes often held towards such people." Dann Kenningham, Project Coordinator**

When we last started this project, the individuals and families at ATD Fourth, we wanted The Roles We Play to offer a new and refreshing perspective on the lives of those facing poverty in the UK. Our goals for the project were: "To challenge the negative attitudes often held towards people in poverty by building new perceptions of others around us, strengthening community cohesion and encouraging positive interaction between social groups."



Tammy, Proud Mother - - The Roles We Play

We launched The Roles We Play on October 17th 2014. Our goal then was to take the project to community spaces within London. The public response to the project was overwhelmingly positive. This made us realise that we had to share this project with communities not just in London but across the UK, and beyond if we could. In our last newsletter, we said that we would do exactly that - take the project to community spaces all over the UK and beyond. That is when The Roles We Play project became 'Roles on the Road' and since June 2015, with the support of Friends of ATD Fourth World, the participants of The Roles We Play project have been sharing their stories, engaging with communities and furthering our goal of challenging stereotypes and negative attitudes towards the poorest in our society. Roles on the Road was challenging but rewarding as well. As one participant said:

**"I gained a feeling of accomplishment and getting to travel also confidence and self-esteem. I also do not feel as ashamed about poverty as I did before." Tammy, Proud Mother**



Alison, Truth Seeker - The Roles We Play

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## Roles on the Road...



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Those who have visited the exhibition have said:

**"Lovely, lovely. lovely project! Society needs reminding that having no job or home is nothing to be ashamed of and even without, many people do great things!"**

So what have we've been up to? Well the participants of The Roles We Play: Roles On the Road have been very busy these past months and here's what they've been doing...

June

**The Media and Governance Conference** focused on media in Latin America. Held at the University of Sheffield, it was the first time the exhibition was invited to a University outside of London. The theme of media and governance is very relevant to the Roles We Play project's aim of challenging stereotypes and negative discourse in the UK press.

Throughout the day many of the panelists and academics at the conference were drawn to the stand and ended up taking books to display in their departments. Amanda, Philosopher and ATD Fourth World Volunteer, Jason Devenny did an excellent job of engaging with passers-by and answering any questions they had.



Amanda, Philosopher, Jason Devenny and Sara Garcia with lectures from the University of Sheffield

The event lasted one full day and was significant in that it put us in contact with some top academics in media studies in the UK, such as Dr. Jairo Lugo, Dr. Emma Briant, Dr. John Steel and Dr. Martin Conboy. All of whom expressed interest in having us back for future events; and many of the panelists and academics ended up taking books to display in their departments. The contact with Dr. Emma Briant is noteworthy as she has written extensively on how disability and benefit claimants are portrayed in leading UK newspapers and we have since started to incorporate some of her research in our poverty awareness workshop: 'What does poverty mean to you?'

The link between ATD Fourth World and the department of media studies at the university was facilitated by Sara Garcia, a Friend of ATD Fourth World and a student at the University of Sheffield.

**"I have gained new knowledge from all different people that I have met and all the different events that I have been to. And I have gained more confidence in speaking up and speaking out not only just for myself but most of all on behalf of those that cannot speak up and out for themselves by doing more public speaking." Amanda, Philosopher**



Amanda, Philosopher - The Roles We Play

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July

**Southampton Library** was our second event at a library outside of the London area. Hazel, Voluntary Worker and Seamus, Defender of Human Rights were present for the workshop and were accompanied by Naomi Anderson, ATD Core Worker and an ATD Fourth World Volunteer, Jason Devenny.

The event lasted two weeks with a 'definitions' activity falling on the last day. The 'definitions' activity aims to explore the multi-faceted nature of poverty while challenging the pejorative language used to stigmatise those experiencing poverty in the UK. Developed as part of the 'poverty awareness' workshop; the 'definitions' activity encouraged participants to come up with their own, personal definitions of words that feature in the Roles We Play book. This activity challenged participants to question official definitions while exploring words such as poverty, benefits, work and so on.

Seamus, Defender of Human Rights and Anne-Marie, Friend were in attendance – both had experienced homelessness. Other attendee's included a woman currently doing her MA thesis on gentrification in London, a woman who had recently moved into a market rate flat nearby, and some passers-by who were intrigued by the topic.

The event discussed the implications that rising rents have for low-income families in inner London and aimed to address the question: 'What does gentrification mean for you?' The discussion explored the diverse meanings of gentrification through the shared experiences and stories of those in areas undergoing regeneration.

There was an impressive turnout of 21 participants including the key note speaker, Rashid Nix, Green party candidate for Dulwich and West Norwood who gave a very informative talk on housing injustice in South London.



Seamus, Defender of Human Rights and Hazel, Voluntary Worker

**The Roles We Play discussion on gentrification at Marcel & Sons, Elephant and Castle, London,** explored the diverse meanings of gentrification through the shared experiences and stories of those in areas undergoing regeneration.



Seamus, Defender of Human Rights - The Roles We Play

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July continued...

The relevance of the subject at hand, as well as the diverse make-up of the participants made for a stimulating discussion that heard arguments from those who saw some aspects of gentrification in a positive light and those who were strongly opposed to it. Some highlights included Anne-Marie's story of her struggle with homelessness and how the rigidity of the housing benefit system creates a vicious circle in which one is constantly in fear of losing their home. Eva Sajovic, artist photographer for the Roles We Play, also shared some experiences from her work with families facing eviction on the infamous Heygate Estate.

**"When me, my partner and young daughter were made homeless, we got put on an emergency housing list. Then we were placed in a hostel where we stayed for the next seven months. We had lost our flat in August, just before my daughter was about to start school. So when we moved to the hostel I tried to enrol her in schools in the area. It took six months to get her enrolled in a school. From August, when we lost our flat, to March, she lost six months of her first year of school"**

**"What was hard was the uncertainty. It's not fun being in that situation when you have a kid; good advice and support can make all the difference in the world." Anne-Marie, Friend**

Overall, the evening at Elephant and Castle was a great success that saw all participants engaging in discussion while learning about the current housing situation in South London. The evening was especially enriching, as it provided a space for participants from various socio-economic backgrounds to share their experiences and learn from one another. This event was followed up the next day with a definitions workshop on gentrification led by ATD Fourth World Volunteer, Jason Devenny and Eva Sajovic at **#Transacting: A Market of Values at Chelsea College of Arts**. It has inspired future workshops in collaboration with Eva Sajovic.



Anne-Marie, Friend - The Roles We Play

**"Challenging and inspiring all at the same time. Great stories we don't often hear."**  
Anonymous



The Roles We Play at Marcel & Sons, Elephant and Castle, London

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August

**Camberwell Fair** was a one day event on Camberwell Green that was funded by Southwark Council, Wormfood (Afro-inspired live music specialists) and the UK National Lottery/The Arts Council. It was a community event where local businesses, organisations and charities were encouraged to have a stall.

The Roles We Play stall attracted a wide range of people and project participants - Seamus, Defender of Human Rights; Georgina, Poet; and Patricia, Helper - spoke confidently about the project, promoted the book and even got people to donate. One person we spoke to commented;

**“Wonderful project, beautiful photographs, great people.”**

Due to the event being local and having a high footfall we were able to make several contacts, the majority of them based in Camberwell including Julian Lambin, Research Associate, University of Glasgow, who's main area of research is Human Rights. Julian is also connected to Glasgow Human Rights Network, who ATD Fourth World UK have worked with in the past.



Seamus, Defender of Human Rights at Camberwell Fair

## **Church Action on Poverty Anti-poverty residential**

bought together five anti-poverty organisations who had been working on projects to tackle negative attitudes and stereotypes towards people in poverty. The five groups came together to present their projects and learn from the success and failures of others as well as see how we could work together in the future. We were invited to the Lake District by Jackie Cox - Poverty Media Co-Ordinator for Church Action on Poverty.

Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner - The Roles We Play, was joined by ATD Fourth World Core Workers, Chiara Artale and Naomi Anderson. The project was presented by Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner and Naomi Anderson, with Moraene taking the lead.

Projects were also presented from:

**Stoke Expert Citizens (Voices)**, who work with people who have been affected by one or more of the issues of homelessness, addiction, offending and mental health.

**Food and support drop in**, a peer mentor, participant lead organisation who work with people who are homeless and single parent families.

**Poverty Truth Commission**, they aim to create spaces where an exchange can take place between people experiencing poverty and those who are making decisions on the front line.

**Church Action on Poverty (CAP)**, who presented three projects: Non-judgmental, Integrity, Compassion, Equality (N.I.C.E) and School of Participation and Real Benefits Street.

It was clear that participant's involvement in their respective projects had a positive impact on the way they view themselves. It came up time and time again that people no longer caved into the feelings of shame but were proud to call themselves mothers, fathers, activists and friends to name but a few titles.

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ATD Fourth World

August continued...

Also involved in the residential were two journalists:

The first used to work for the BBC but is now doing an MA at the University of Lincoln in Journalism and is writing a thesis on 'alternative approaches to poverty' – avoiding stereotyping language, church involvement in helping people in poverty and the level of government responsibility.

The second, a university lecturer and freelance journalist, who came to the residential to work with participants in creating a 'National Union of Journalism Poverty Pack' – what language did participants find offensive and what did they want journalists to take note of.

The response to The Roles We Play was positive with at least two groups using it as inspiration for their future photographic projects. The director of The Windermere Centre, Lawrence Moore, responded to The Roles We Play with great enthusiasm. He invited The Roles We Play to have an exhibition in the church next door. The 'chalkboard' campaign was also well received. All of the participants were keen to support the campaign and showed this by having their photos taken.

The event was ideal for networking and peer support; as all of the participants had grass roots anti-poverty activism in common as well as a shared experience of poverty.

**“When I hear stories of others that are struggling it makes me more determined to carry on fighting poverty.” Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner.**

There was a great feeling of camaraderie. Throughout the residential participants informed, supported and encouraged one another to try and build on what we learnt during the residential. Away from the exacerbated and sensationalist media headlines, the picturesque location of Windermere provided an atmosphere that was so different from people's day to day life. It was almost like a holiday.

**“I'm impressed with how brave people are, willing to share their experience” (Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner).**



Moraene, Poverty Campaigner at Church Action on Poverty Anti-poverty residential



Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner, Chiara Artale and Naomi Anderson with Stoke Expert Citizens (Voices), Food and support drop in, Poverty Truth Commission, Church Action on Poverty (CAP)

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August continued...

An exhibition in Southend-on-Sea Library provided a neutral space to have a positive discussion about poverty. In attendance, were Kathy, Human Rights Activist and Amanda, Philosopher. One highlight of the day came from a conversation that Kathy, Human Rights Activist had with two members of the public:

**“I explained why we started it, to give different perceptions of people who are on benefits or lower working class to say to government we are normal human beings like yourselves and we deserve to be treated with dignity, respect, fairness because after all we are human beings like them and deserve the right to be treated as such, as they expect to be treated themselves. When I was talking and after I said it the two gentlemen were impressed with what I said. That made me feel quite happy and proud of myself considering it was something that I said off the top of my head without having to think about it or it being written down in front of me, or rehearsed.”**



Kathy, Human Rights Activist, Amanda, Philosopher and Naomi Anderson

September

**The University of Roehampton: the Language of Money and Debt Conference**, aimed to better understand the financial struggles that ordinary people face by looking at how they talk about money in their everyday lives, moving away from the economic and financial jargon used by government and financial institutions that often obscure the social issues on the ground.

The event offered an opportunity for project participants Georgina, Poet and Seamus, Defender of Human Rights to engage with academics from relevant backgrounds; and to share their experience of making the book, as well as their struggles with finances.

The occasion also proved useful for reaching out to new contacts and potential collaborators in academia. Lecturers from the University of Nottingham and Goldsmiths University expressed interested in having us at future events.



Georgina, Poet - The Roles We Play

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September continued...

**At Parsley Park Fair, Walworth Southwark**, our very own Seamus, Defender of Human Rights met with the Mayor of Southwark Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle. It was a busy but fun day. Seamus, Defender of Human Rights, Amanda, Philosopher and Patricia, Helper met a lot of local people and made a lot of new friends interested in the project.

**"I've enjoyed every part of it. I enjoyed like taking part in the exhibitions and speaking up and being able to get my voice across. That helps us to build bridges." Seamus, Defender of Human Rights**



Seamus, Defender of Human Rights with the Mayor of Southwark Cllr Dora Dixon-Fyle.

**The Chocolate Festival was part of the Norwich Food Festival** and was a fitting event for The Roles We Play, as it promoted trade and social justice in cocoa producing countries and raised awareness of the underlying psychological effects that poverty has on people both in the West and in the developing world.

The Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Brenda Arthur was also in attendance and stopped by to talk to us about the project. Eric, Freedom Fighter was more than happy to tell her about how the book came about to which she responded how **"important the project was for combating austerity"** before taking a book home with her.

We were invited to participate in the festival by festival organiser and Friend of ATD Fourth World, Lynn Lockwood. This high profile event attracted over 20,000 visitors and allowed us to make some very promising contacts and provided us with an opportunity to reconnect with longtime friends of ATD Fourth World, who lived in the area. We also met the head of The Feed (the caterers for the event) and a social enterprise that employs ex-offenders - motivating them to live more fulfilling lives.



The Feed, the caterers for the event

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ATD Fourth World

September continued...

**The department of Social Sciences at the University of Leeds** asked to display our full exhibition of book samples throughout the building. The exhibition will stay up indefinitely and offers a great opportunity for future collaborations between ATD Fourth World and the department. The Roles We Play portraits have drawn interest from students and academics; there has been talk of eventually developing a workshop and module as part of the undergrad curriculum.

**A week-long exhibition at Barton Hill Settlement provided a voice for the local community of Barton Hill.** The event was organised in collaboration with Barton Hill Settlement, a community resource centre in Barton Hill - an isolated area of Bristol, affected by poverty and negative media attention. Ben Cheney, social worker and a member of ATD Fourth World's National Coordination team approached Barton Hill Settlement with the idea to bring The Roles We Play project to the settlement.

Before the event, Sarah Dailly, Community Projects Manager at Barton Hill Settlement, and her colleagues promoted the event by distributing leaflets in the local area and asking people to participate to the 'chalkboard' campaign.

**"[I want the project] To 'out' the issue of poverty and give it a platform for open discussion. To break down stereotypes and assumptions that people may hold about each other and open dialogue to address common issues. I hope that people will want to continue to explore the issues in relation to themselves and others beyond the exhibition."**  
**Sarah Dailly, Community Projects Manager**

At the launch event, Angela, Ambassador; Eric, Freedom Fighter and Amanda, Kid's Club Worker presented The Roles We Play to people living and working within the Barton Hill community including social workers, based at the settlement. The discussion was poignant; shame and stigma being two of the issues that came up at the event. Representatives from the settlement spoke about their efforts to try to reach everyone in the community and to identify those who are most isolated.

The day ended with a tour of Bristol's main attractions, which the Roles We Play participants enjoyed.

Putting together an event with an organisation that shares common values and applies a similar approach was a positive experience. We hope to collaborate on future projects with Barton Hill Settlement.

The exhibition and the 'chalkboard' campaign continued for a week after the launch event.



Angela, Ambassador; Eric, Freedom Fighter and Amanda, Kid's Club Worker with the workers and residents of Barton Hill community

# The Roles We Play Roles on the Road...



ATD Fourth World

October

**International Day for the Eradication of Poverty at St Giles Church, Camberwell**, was one of the most successful October 17 events we have hosted since it was started in 2008.

The aim of the event was to reach out to new people locally in Camberwell, to raise awareness about our work - projects like The Roles We Play - and October 17.

Preparations for this public event started in June 2015 in link with a new Friend of ATD Fourth World Rory Lemon.

On the evening, a mix of team members, supporters and activists represented ATD Fourth World and the Roles We Play project. The bands were exceptional and got the whole place moving. The energy levels were high, the music was great and on message. The Roles We Play 'chalkboard' campaign was again a good tool to get people engaged in the theme of the evening. We were all surprised by the number of people attending. Halfway through the evening the venue was at capacity and we were forced to work on a one in one out basis.

There were between 200-250 people who took part. The event raised around £600 through donations and 95 people signed up for more information about ATD Fourth World.

The ongoing relationship with the Jazz Crypt is also a key factor to the success. Peter the manager is very supportive of this now annual event and promotes ATD Fourth World locally as the Crypt's official community charity.



The 'chalkboard' campaign



Susan, Community Enabler on the stage with her daughter

One of the highlights of the evening was the main presentation delivered by Susan, Community Enabler, who did really well presenting her speech standing alongside her daughter. Sue's daughter had also prepared a poem that she presented to the room with great energy and confidence.



Bands on the night were: London Gypsy Orchestra, Ariadne's Labyrinth, The ladies of Tell Tale Tusk, No Frills Band, The Discount Orchestra, DJ Chango Mutley.

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ATD Fourth World

October continued...

**A delegation visits Ireland as part of the October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty celebrations.**

Embarking on a 5 day visit to Dublin and Belfast, Anne-Marie, Friend; Thomas, Analyst; James, Jack of All Trades and The Roles We Play Artist photographer Eva Sajovic, the had the opportunity to meet others active in the anti-poverty struggle, share experiences and learn from those they met.

The delegation was accompanied by Pierre Klien, from ATD Fourth World Ireland and Professor Robert Walker from the University of Oxford, who travelled to Dublin to deliver a presentation focusing on Poverty and Shame at Trinity College on October 16 as part of the October 17 programme.



Anne-Marie, Friend holding a portrait of her father - Seamus, Defender of Human Rights

The trip started in Dublin, where The Roles We Play exhibition had been set up in the Custom House Quay. The main event was held at the commemorative stone with a workshop on the afternoon of the October 17.

The next stop was Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office, on October 19. The event pulled together a wide range of key people from the anti-poverty sector.

Julia Unwin, CEO of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, had invited us to display the Roles We Play in the Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office, and to participate in the 'Why Fight Poverty?' Lecture. At the event, Julia Unwin introduced ATD Fourth World stating; **"we can all learn a lot from ATD Fourth World when it comes to working closely and respectfully with people in poverty."**



James, Jack of All Trades, presenting The Roles We Play project in Dublin



James, Jack of All Trades; Anne-Marie, Friend and Thomas, Analyst

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## Roles on the Road...



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October continued...

The evening was a success and was a nice end to a very active, full-on and engaging week. We have been invited back to Belfast to exhibit and run a workshop in January by the city council.

**"We learned that the people struggling in Ireland with poverty are just the same as us, all they want is to be treated as people not numbers or a waste of space. The turnout for the 17th October blew me away, I was really pleased and proud to be in our delegation and to present our project and have it received so well was awesome. The links we made in Belfast were good and I hope over time they will grow and become even more positive. Speaking at the stone great, it was one of my highlights from the last 10 years with ATD. The Irish stew was good too." James, Jack of All Trades**



James, Jack of All Trades - The Roles We Play

**The University of Nottingham** was a three day event in partnership with the ICEMiC centre at the Department of Sociology and Social Work. On the third and final day of the event we ran a newly structured workshop around the theme 'what does poverty mean to you?'. The workshop explored the multi-faceted nature of poverty and how this 'nature' is often overlooked and simplified in the mainstream media. This was an important event for The Roles We Play, as longtime Friend of ATD Fourth World and partner for our Social Worker Training project, Dr. Kate Morris used to work there. Not to mention, the University of Nottingham has one of the largest Sociology departments in the UK with some of the leading academics in the field.

Overall, the event was a success and we were received with much enthusiasm from the whole department who expressed their appreciation for the project and seemed eager to work with us in the future. Participants included a mix of lecturers, Phd candidates and Masters students from the department, as well as ATD Fourth World Volunteer Jason Devenny, ATD Core Worker Naomi Anderson; and The Roles We Play project participants Thomas, Analyst; Angela, Ambassador; and Eric, Freedom Fighter.



Thomas, Analyst; Angela, Ambassador; and Eric, Freedom Fighter; Jason Devenny and Naomi Anderson at the with the ICEMiC centre at the Department of Sociology and Social Work, University of Nottingham

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## Roles on the Road...



ATD Fourth World

November continued...

Thomas, Angela and Eric, Freedom Fighter were all more than happy to share their personal experiences with poverty which helped to put various definitions of poverty in perspective. Participants were curious to hear more from them.

Most of the workshop partakers were academic professionals who have studied poverty issues extensively; they all listened to us talk and asked us questions as saw us as the experts. This was the utmost sign of respect and admiration for what we do and it was evident that Thomas, Eric and Angela all felt very proud afterwards.

**"I do like getting out there and meeting people." Eric, Freedom Fighter**

Once the workshop was over nearly all participants came up to us to ask how they could get involved and if we could come back and give a module to their undergrad students. This relationship with ICEMiC was very promising, one we will aim to maintain.

**The Roles We Play exhibition was invited to the University of Sunderland, Student Union** as part of their on-going 'diversity month.'

A week after a successful event at the University of Nottingham, the exhibition lasted three days and was displayed in two separate venues for one and a half days each.

We came in to contact with several interested passers-by, who were happy to see an exhibition tackling issues of poverty, stating that Sunderland was a fitting venue for The Roles We Play as the North East is one of the most economically deprived regions in the country and has the UK's lowest university enrolment rate.

There was a keen interest from students and professors from the Department of Education and Society. Dr. Kim Gilligan, who looks at how children's books can be used to overcome stigma and stereotyping in the early stages of life, was especially interested in the project and spoke about organising a discussion with her students. Later, Dr. Kim Gilligan returned later with her students who each took a book, she stated that they could use it for their dissertations.

Another professor who was excited to see the exhibition on campus was William Ang'awa, a professor in marketing and social enterprise. After talking with us Professor William Ang'awa introduced the project to a group of his students studying social enterprise. He suggested that we organise an event with his department and the Department of Education and Society as this would be an opportunity to break down barriers between departments and expose his students to social sciences.

The University Chaplain, Chris Howson mentioned the need for a project like this in Sunderland, an economically deprived city with few prospects, high unemployment rate and growing racism. He insisted we get in contact with him for any future events in the region.



The 'chalkboard' campaign

# The Roles We Play

## Roles on the Road...



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November continued...

The idea to display a **Roles We Play** exhibition in the **Link Gallery at the John Radcliff Hospital, Oxford**, came from Maggie Guy, who is a member of ATD Fourth World board.

This is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness among the general public about inequality and discrimination towards people in poverty.

The exhibition is on display until the 14th February 2016.

**The Roles We Play, an audience with the real experts of poverty and welfare reform, Shipley.**

Co-organised with Dr Ruth Patrick, of the School of Sociology & Social Policy at the University of Leeds, the event was an opportunity to have an audience with the real experts on poverty and welfare.

Held at the Kirkdale Centre, the panel of experts were: participants involved in The Roles We Play project, Thrive (Church Action on Poverty), Voices (a group of people from Stoke-on-Trent) and Leeds-based group, The Dole Animators, who came together in 2013 to make an animated film about their experiences of welfare reform and remain active in sharing their experiences of the benefit system.

Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner co-chaired the event with longtime Friend of ATD Fourth World, Dr Ruth Patrick. On the panel of experts, from The Roles We Play project: Amanda, Philosopher; Patricia, Helper; and Seamus, Defender of Human Rights. Amanda, Philosopher spoke about challenging the stigmas around being on benefits, being part of ATD Fourth World and helping others who are struggling; Patricia, Helper spoke about the stigma attached to sanctions with the JSA Work Programme; Seamus, Defender of Human Rights who spoke about The Roles We Play book and what that meant.



Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner - The Roles We Play

Martin Stubbs, Bradford Council's Assistant Director of Revenues and Benefits introduced the event simply and clearly. He set the scene with the harsh reality they face in and around Bradford: generational poverty, low wage, low skill economy, many tax-credit claimers and the impact of welfare reform on people. It's seen as one the poorest parts of Britain and has a lot of stigma around it. He spoke of the priority needs of better jobs, with more skills, training and higher level of education. He emphasised the need to look at poverty more holistically rather than issues such as food poverty, fuel poverty etc. He stayed for the full event and talked with people afterwards.

**"We are told and hear a lot about what people in poverty think and this about actually listening to them." Dr Ruth Patrick**

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November continued...

The event continued with a discussion around the impact of the stigma of poverty and benefits and how this affects people living in poverty in Britain today. Participants explored their experiences of recent and ongoing welfare reforms, reflecting on the new shape of welfare in England following Chancellor George Osborne's Autumn Statement.

**"This was an important event which brought together members of the public and real experts (by experience) of poverty and the impact of welfare reform. The speakers came from diverse groups with common aims to end the stigma of living in poverty and to bring about changes to Government policies that create deeper poverty. Through speeches and films the subjects raised were Peer support; Welfare Reforms; DWP Sanctions and the Impact of Stigma. The exhibition, The Roles We Play set the scene for very open and frank discussions on painful experiences and the power of people working together. One person quoted Ken Loach who spoke about Government policies that seemed to be "conscious cruelty" towards the poorest, another raised the issue that poverty must be treated as a human rights issue. One woman said that she had never heard of sanctions before and could not believe that , just for missing an appointment or arriving late, all benefits could be withdrawn leaving the person totally destitute and in danger of starvation and eviction." Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner**

A young guy spoke out stating that he had been sanctioned so many times that he was no longer entitled to hardship payments. A young mother who spoke out was very frank about what she revealed about her life, having faced drug misuse, homelessness, prison and having her kids taken into care. This woman related strongly to what had been said in the Poverty Is video on kids being put into care. This woman spoke of her passion stating;

**"I don't want people to go through what I have gone through. It kills me to see people going through what I have gone through."**

Another woman on the panel, on several occasions made it very clear that for her money is central to social change - without it, you don't have any power or a voice. For her, it's required at all levels and without it people are not able to mobilise and be heard and influence policies whether locally or nationally. She also stated;

**"Nobody should be ashamed because they haven't got money."**

There was clear cross-over with the groups on the panel of experts but at the same time, each one had a different focus and approach. One man in the audience who had also experienced long-term poverty stated that politicians are aware of the negative impact of their welfare reform policies on people and that it is "conscious cruelty." For him there are human rights issues that need to be addressed.

# The Roles We Play

## Roles on the Road...



ATD Fourth World

November continued...

The event created and strengthened connections between the different groups. Presenting those experiencing poverty as 'poverty experts' was a bold move, but the audience engaged positively with the panel. They welcomed the chance to ask questions and to think about how the knowledge and expertise of the real experts on poverty and welfare reform can be better included in policy and practice.

**"I don't think we can underestimate what it takes for the 12 or so people from different groups to be up in front as a panel of experts, discussing with a mixed audience. I was really impressed at their courage to be up front. For me this is the first in any conference, seminar or discussion of this kind where I have seen the absolute majority in front of the audience/participants on the sharp end of poverty being considered the experts. How many seminars and conferences would look like that this locally or nationally? I imagined that it would be a really intimidating experience for them but on the contrary, the majority appeared relatively at ease, prepared and ready to speak out. I asked Patricia Bailey the question of how she felt to be up there in front. She called it "exhilarating" to be on this panel"**  
**Naomi Anderson, ATD Fourth World**



Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner; Amanda, Philosopher; Patricia, Helper; and Seamus, Defender of Human Rights with Thrive (Church Action on Poverty), Voices and The Dole Animators.

**IGNITE: The summit was an event organised by The Challenge Society**, the largest provider of the National Citizen Service (NCS). It took place at the University of West London and brought together more than 200 young people who had just completed NCS in West London. The aim of the summit was to give NCS 'graduates' an opportunity to learn about national and international campaigns and to inspire them to take action.

The focal points of this year's summit were: Poverty and conflict, climate change, HIV and AIDS, refugees and migration and creative activism.

There were 17 charities involved in the event, running various workshops to promote their projects. Between them, some examples are Oxfam, Climate Talks, Jessica Found It, The Forum, Progression, Revolution Hive and many more.

The event was introduced by MEP Jean Lambert, who had met us previously and mentioned this during her speech.

Angela, Ambassador presented the project to a group of young people and spoke about the emotional effect that living in poverty had on her. The young people showed a genuine sensitivity for the issue of poverty and actively took part in the workshop, exchanging ideas and point of views between them and listening to Angela's point of view. At the end of the workshop, they all were happy to receive a copy of the Roles We Play book and one young person expressed an interest in helping homeless people. They even asked for some advice on how best to organise a project he's been planning.

This was a unique opportunity to engage with over 200 young people and present The Roles We Play alongside 17 other charity projects; as well as to reach as much people as possible; and to spread ATD Fourth World's values and principles.

**"I thought we achieved a lot from the project. For example meeting different people and talking about the project."** Angela, Ambassador

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# The Roles We Play

## Roles on the Road...



ATD Fourth World



Angela, Ambassador - The Roles We Play

January 2016

### **An Audience with the Real Poverty Experts, The Old Fire Station, Oxford.**

"The evening was well attended and I thought the whole audience was really engaged. The inputs from the team who had worked on the Roles We Play and the accompanying video clips clearly really made people think. The audience variously described themselves being 'moved'; 'struck by'; 'impressed' by the accounts of people with direct experience of poverty. There was also a lot of discussion about the responsibilities we all have to help change the views/perceptions of others - the public, the media etc - that feed negative stereotypes of people in poverty and/or in receipt of benefits. There were heartening anecdotes of how the exhibition book had really changed people's ideas/values and attitudes within local communities. I was struck by the amount of discussion there was at the end of the event; people evidently wanted to stay behind and continue the discussions and share their own experiences and ideas. I am always moved by the exhibition and the narratives of the team involved. I think it is an exceptional piece of creative engagement which I hope will continue and develop in different ways." Elaine Chase, Researcher at Oxford Institute of Social Policy, University of Oxford and Friend of ATD Fourth World



Thomas, Analyst; James, Jack of All Trades; Amanda, Philosopher ; Seamus, Defender of Human Rights and Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner

### **The Roles We Play exhibition and delegation was invited back to Belfast by Belfast City Council to exhibit in the historic Ulster Hall.**

The Roles We Play was in Belfast for its first major event of the new year. The exhibition, which lasted two weeks was displayed at the Ulster Hall, Belfast's most prestigious concert hall. The event was organised in two separate viewings and discussions groups - one morning session and one afternoon session, and was fully catered for guests and participants. ATD Fourth World hosted the event in collaboration with the Belfast Strategic Partnership, an organisation made up of three government agencies, that aims to address life inequalities that impact many of Belfast's residents. The event was also attended by a handful of local community organisations of who were deeply impressed with the project and were curious to learn more. The day was made all the more special when our colleagues from ATD Fourth World, Dublin showed up for the second session.

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# The Roles We Play

## Roles on the Road...



ATD Fourth World



Thomas, Analyst; James, Jack of All Trades; Patricia, Helper and Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner

January 2016 continued...

The first session started with an informal viewing where guests had a chance to browse through the hall and learn more about the project from the attending Roles We Play project participants: Thomas, Analyst; James, Jack of All Trades; Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner and Patricia, Helper. During this time, small discussion groups naturally formed around the hall, as individual Roles We Play participants were interviewed from a local journalist from the Belfast Telegraph. These informal conversations provided a perfect transition to our 'poverty is' workshop and discussion group. At this point, members of the public had had the chance to familiarise themselves with the project and its participants and were more than comfortable to present themselves and engage in discussion with others. After a short introduction to The Roles We Play from the participants of the project themselves, the workshop was underway, elegantly facilitated by Moraene, Anti-Poverty Campaigner. All four of The Roles We Play project participants were feeling very confident, which made for some very compelling firsthand accounts on their experiences with poverty. The audience was particularly receptive to these accounts and resulted in a very interesting dialogue between the two groups.



Thomas, Analyst; James, Jack of All Trades; Patricia, Helper and Moraene, Anti-poverty Campaigner

"The event reinforced for me how important it is that those who develop policy listen to the real experts, understand the barriers that people face day-in, day-out and work to remove those barriers...James reinforced the message of the 'Power of One'! While this is relevant to helping 'one' in need, James made the point well about how important it is to change the mind of 'one' who can also change, resource and help those in need. A win win. Thank you for creating this 'space' and sharing." Jacqueline, Belfast City, Council member

"Belfast was a very important event for us. It really showed how we are developing and honing our craft together on the road... the workshops are becoming more refined and the confidence in the group is building" Dann Project Coordinator.

"I just wanted to thank you for a really excellent event this morning at the Ulster Hall for the 'Roles We Play' exhibition - it was an incredibly insightful and thought provoking event and wonderful to have the opportunity to talk to people who directly took part in the project." Lindsay Regional Manager Belfast & SE Volunteer Now

You can read the article that was written about the event in the Belfast Telegraph. Search for: **Belfast exhibition highlights the hard truth of poverty across the UK** by Gary Grattan

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# The Roles We Play

## What's next...



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We would like to thank everyone for the support. It was challenging at times but the skills, knowledge, confidence, new friends and memories that we have gained was worth every moment. As one participant said;

**"It's nice seeing the exhibition in different places and I felt proud to be part of this project. It's just something that we should all be proud of because this is a big thing. It's been everywhere, even in other countries as well so hopefully we can continue." Patricia, Helper**



James Jack of All Trades - - The Roles We Play

The aim of the Roles We Play project was: "To challenge the negative attitudes often held towards people in poverty by building new perceptions of others around us, strengthening community cohesion and encouraging positive interaction between social groups."

We learnt a lot through taking the Roles We Play project on the road. Due to the evidence compiled through continued evaluation and monitoring, and the encouraging public response to recent activity, we are very keen to follow up on some the opportunities created through The Roles We Play project and Roles on the Road.

Over the next year we want to continue to develop the poverty awareness workshop that has already been incorporated in many of the Roles on the Road events this past year.

This will be a new strand of action based on the delivery of 'poverty awareness training' by our project participants. We want to develop further the concept of **#povertyexperts** and create public spaces where people in poverty led the debate, contributing through first-hand experience and collective knowledge.

These 'poverty awareness training' workshops will explore the multi-dimensional nature of poverty through first-hand accounts of people currently experiencing long-term poverty in the UK. And just like The Roles We Play, these workshops will aim to shed light on the positive contributions people in poverty make to society outside of paid work in order to counter the pejorative language and imagery so often used in the media.

The **#povertyexperts** project will challenge contemporary society's views on poverty by allowing real people with a lived experience of poverty to be advocates and experts, giving a voice to those in their community who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

The aim of the Roles We Play project was: "To challenge the negative attitudes often held towards people in poverty by building new perceptions of others around us, strengthening community cohesion and encouraging positive interaction between social groups."

Did we achieve this? Overall yes, but we didn't do it alone. We worked in collaboration with institutions, organisations and Friends of ATD Fourth World. All of whom help us to bring the debate to their communities.

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# The Roles We Play

## It's been an amazing journey!



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The Roles on the Road phase of the project is coming to an end but in its place a new action. [#povertyexperts](#) and our Poverty Awareness Training, will be a vehicle for positive change. It will aim to involve a range of people in the national poverty debate and build on the links created with universities, schools, community groups, professionals and practitioners. If you would like to help us to bring [#povertyexperts](#) to your community space contact us at: **ATD Fourth World, 48 Addington Square, London SE5 7LB. Email: [kenninghamd@atd-uk.org](mailto:kenninghamd@atd-uk.org) Tel: 0207 703 3231**

To find out more about The Roles We Play Project: [www.therolesweplay.co.uk](http://www.therolesweplay.co.uk) and [Instagram: rolesweplay](#). [#RolesWePlay](#). Go to: [www.jrf.org.uk/atd-fourth-worlds-roles-we-play-project](http://www.jrf.org.uk/atd-fourth-worlds-roles-we-play-project) to watch The Roles We Play films. The films were created in partnership with JRF and artist photographer Eva Sajovic, to bring you six personal accounts of daily life and aspiration from The Roles We Play project participants.

To keep up-to-date with ATD Fourth World news and the [#povertyexperts](#) project, follow us online at: [www.atd-uk.org](http://www.atd-uk.org) [Facebook: ATD Fourth World UK](#) and [Twitter: @ATDFourthWorld](#) [#povertyexperts](#)



End of project evaluation meeting with participants