

WORLD DAY FOR OVERCOMING POVERTY 17 OCTOBER 2013: ALL TOGETHER IN DIGNITY

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ATD Fourth World General Delegation's message

Dear friends,

Just days ago, hundreds of men, women and children trying to immigrate to Europe drowned off the coast of Italy's Lampedusa Island. They were trying to escape hunger, a way of life with no way to earn a living, schools where their children could not learn. Starting with nothing but hope, they were searching for decent lives.

Divers, sailors and island residents who tried to save people were surprised by a simple detail. Many of the children who drowned were wearing new shoes. A purchase that symbolized their parents' longing for a future of opportunity: our children will be clothed with dignity. We shall be welcomed in this new land with our heads held high.

Yesterday, near Paris, a group of families from Eastern Europe were evicted from their makeshift homes. They too tried to escape poverty in a new land. Now they are driven to wander, once again. Just a few miles away, there are French families who must leave their run-down homes that are slated for demolition. Are they undesirable tenants because they are poor? For whatever reason, the city is sending them "*somewhere*" else. But where is "*somewhere*"?

How many millions of people like these—struggling to live decently, raise their children, and help out their neighbors—are continually ill treated, sent away, displaced, unwanted by anyone?

The heart-wrenching tragedy of poverty should call out to us with renewed urgency. More and more people are realizing that we need to work toward a world of justice and respect for every single person. But who exactly gets to have a say in shaping that future?

Will parents in forgotten neighborhoods have a say? Doña Maria, who lives in a

neglected Latin American neighborhood, says: *"I've always done everything I could to keep my children from going hungry, but it wasn't enough. No matter how hard we try, it is never enough when we're alone."* Her tears are anguished because her 16-year-old daughter just left home without a word. Doña Maria and similar parents constantly lose sleep in anxiety about their children.

How about young people living in poverty — will they have a say about the future? So many of them see their world as utterly confining, with no possibility for escape. They suffer because they have no way to share their dreams, talents and new ideas. In many parts of the world, even where life is torn apart by armed conflict and chronic shortages, we see young people trying to break through the walls that box them in, volunteering to read books with smaller children, sharing the best of themselves.

Will people lacking decent work have a say? Most economies condemn people at the bottom to long-term unemployment, dangerous and humiliating working conditions, and insecure jobs. These working conditions day after day grind down people as they struggle to support their families and cope with threatening environmental challenges.

On this October 17th, World Day for Overcoming Poverty, we must remember how important it is to move forward with the adults, young people and children who resist the violence of extreme poverty every day. Only with them will it be possible for humanity to achieve its deepest aspiration: to live in peace, recognizing the dignity of every last person.

We will unite our efforts to reach out, as we have always done, to those whose contribution the world is missing, so that their courage, hopes and intelligence can help us all find ways to come together as part of one human community.

We will unite our efforts to continue sharing knowledge among all people, leaving no one out, and to work toward schools that will soar to be worthy of all children's minds and capacity for friendship.

We will unite our efforts to shape a people-centered and earth-friendly economic vision. We seek an economy that values each and every person's mind and skills in decent jobs with living wages, and also protects our planet's biodiversity and natural resources. We dream of an economy built on sharing, solidarity and fairness.

We will unite our efforts to develop opportunities for people to meet and understand one another, and to use communication tools accessible to everyone, in ways that help sustain the growing solidarity of individuals and movements that are already moving the world forward.

These are our Common Ambitions for the years 2013-2017. They are detailed in the [attached document](#). They have been chosen — with enthusiasm and confidence — by all of ATD Fourth World's members. These Common Ambitions are more than a strategic

plan or vision statement. They are the dreams that inspire all of us — a hope that each of our members sustains that the world must and will become better than it is. Having found strength and hope amongst ourselves, we share these ambitions with you this Oct 17th. We offer them to people everywhere who dare — not only to dream but to act — to make today a better future.

With all our friendship,

Isabelle Pypaert Perrin
Director General

Documents



Common Ambitions for the years 2013-2017