

ATD FOURTH WORLD UN WEBINAR

Posted on 9 February 2021

**Behind the Screen: Grassroots Experiences
Accessing Social Services and Education in a Digital World**

- Side Event to the 59th United Nations Commission for Social Development -

A Panel Discussion Featuring:

Tammy Mayes
Parent activist with
ATD Fourth World in the UK

Christiaan van Veen
Director of the Digital Welfare State and
Human Rights Project at the Center for
Human Rights and Global Justice
at NYU School of Law

Joongil Shin
Second Secretary of the
Permanent Mission of the Republic
of Korea to the United Nations

Esther Rodriguez
Activist from the Apache Nation in
New Mexico, ATD Fourth World USA

Moderator: Virginia Eubanks
Associate Professor of Political Science at SUNY
Author of "Automating Inequality: How High-Tech
Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor"

 **ATD
FOURTH WORLD**

"Behind the Screen: Grassroots Experiences Accessing Social Services and Education in a Digital World"

Watch this Webinar:

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In a world of rapid digital change, citizen interaction with public social services are evolving. However, it's easy to forget the impact of these changes on people in extreme poverty. Yet it is them who need such services the most.

Many governments to improve services are digitizing how people interact with them. While welfare systems are supposed to help people, these changes often make it harder to access benefits. For instance, online education due to COVID-19 meant families in poverty faced huge barriers because they lacked devices. This included internet service or even electricity. Unfortunately, such inequalities create more acute poverty and exclusion.

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In addition, it is especially hard for individuals in poverty when services take place through ineffective or badly designed technology. For example, remote family court hearings can lead to unjust outcomes or deny people the support they legally deserve. Ultimately, algorithmic and design bias can also lead to dehumanization, stigmatization, and discrimination.

The diverse panel includes activists in poverty who have experienced these changes in public services. Joining them are academics studying the digital welfare state and Member State representatives proposing good practices. Together the group discusses how governments are changing services in the digital era and how they can protect the

rights of citizens, especially those of families in poverty.

Panelists

Esther Rodriguez: Activist with lived experience of poverty from New Mexico, [ATD Fourth World USA](#).

Tammy Mayes: Parent activist with [ATD Fourth World in the UK](#).

Christiaan van Veen: Director of the Digital Welfare State and Human Rights Project, Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, NYU School of Law

Joongil SHIN: Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

Moderator:

Virginia Eubanks: Associate Professor of Political Science, University at Albany, SUNY. Author of *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*; *Digital Dead End: Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age*.

[Download the Webinar flyer.](#)

Ms. Taliah Drayak, Co-founder of the International Parent Advocacy Network and the Parents, Families and Allies Network, will speak at one of the Commission for Social Development panels: the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Friday 12 February, 3pm to 5pm EST. ATD Fourth World is part of the Parents, Families and Allies Network and has been collaborating closely with Ms. Drayak since 2019. See article on [The Injustice of Remote Family Court Hearings](#) in the UK. To watch Ms. Drayak speak, please connect to webtv.un.org on the day.

[Concept note on the Forum](#)

[List of speakers and panelists](#) at the UN Commission for Social Development

The Program for the entire UN Commission event, Feb. 8-17 can be found [here](#).

[← Previous](#)

[Next →](#)
