

UYARINACUSUNCHIS | EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE CHANGES OUR LIVES



Sessions of “Uyarinakusunchis” – which means “hearing us” in the Quechua language, take place every two months in the region of Cusco in Peru. It is a regular meeting place for people that live in situations of extreme poverty, representatives of institutions and public offices, and other members of ATD Fourth World. Their objective is to exchange knowledge that will enrich participants. This exchange is based on a dynamic of dialogue and mutual listening. This project is known in other parts of the world as the [Fourth World People’s University](https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/uyarinacusunchis-exchanging-knowledge-changes-our-lives).

With regular participation in the Uyarinakusunchis, the people in situations of extreme poverty initiate a process so that their voice reaches society and they gain recognition from their community. Through regular participation in the Uyarinakusunchis, people in poverty:

- Lose the fear of expressing themselves in public, which enables them to denounce what they consider unjust
- Have the opportunity to hear other people and realize that the problems of their neighbor could be theirs too
- Learn, together, to know what their rights are, in order to improve their interactions with local institutions, such as schools, clinics, the town hall, etc.
- Discover other places and meet new people, including decision-makers in society who will listen and value their opinions.

For [members of ATD Fourth World](#), basing this work on the experience and knowledge of the most disadvantaged people is essential. It is therefore important that these meetings are prepared by small groups of participants who have an experience of poverty. This method of preparation promotes a continuous reflection about what makes the participation of each person possible. It is also a key step for each participant to prepare her or his contribution before speaking in the larger group. In this job of common preparation, each person has the possibility to summarize the newly acquired experiences and to play an active role in the process of exchange and personal growth.

The topics proposed for the collective work must be interesting for everyone.

Throughout 2015 and 2016 the Uyarinacusunchis worked on the themes of: education, health, legal rights and responsibilities, and social programs.

There is also regular evaluation of the changes produced by participation in the Uyarinacusunchis and each participant's expectations. This shows that this action changes people's lives.

The Uyarinacusunchis are a place where participants make new friends, invite new people to participate in our actions, and [work together with local authorities](#). This is how we effect change: by starting with reflections that eventually manifest themselves into this collective experience.