

## **Workshop Budapest 2018: “Experiencing a fairer and more caring society”**

**4 July – 8 July - Hungary**

### **Introduction to the Workshop**

This Workshop brought together 31 people, coming from different groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and some members of ATD Fourth World from Belgium, France, Poland and the United Kingdom. The participants are concerned with reaching out to those whose contribution is missing because they live in extreme poverty, and who seek out their participation. The participants are from different walks of life; some work in a group or an organization; some are isolated; some are involved in their community and neighborhood.

This Workshop took place at the European Youth Center in Budapest. Their translation facilities were necessary for this workshop, held in 5 languages. The workshop is a continuation of the one held in Sofia in 2016<sup>1</sup>, and of the e-book “Stories of change”<sup>2</sup>, and is also a new step to go deeper in a common knowledge, built together with people experiencing poverty, on how to overcome these unacceptable situations; and in sharing know-how acquired through the actions that participants are involved in.



They are all struggling towards a society without poverty, with more solidarity, more justice. Of course, the participants are fighting against poverty in different manners, as some of them have experienced such a situation in their life. Their common challenge is not to forget anyone, as the contribution of everyone is needed to build a society without poverty.

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1 Workshop “Towards those still missing” – 25-29 May 2016 Sofia – Bulgaria

2 <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/ebook-southeast-europe/>

This challenge is difficult. Every day, people can see that poverty is still affecting children, young people and adults. Nevertheless, the experience of ATD Fourth World and of the participants, due to their involvement, are making a difference ; they are offering opportunities for change and they are experimenting a fairer society. They have something in common. They act with people living in poverty, not speaking or acting in their place.

The theme of this Workshop wasn't chosen casually but was developed during the meetings and preparation done in each of the participant's countries: *Experiencing a fairer and more caring society*.

To work on this, participants suggested targeting three main aspects:

- Access to education for all;
- Access to decent housing with energy, electricity, running water and heating;
- Strategies experimented, by the participants, to allow a real access to the rights of everyone, including the people in the situation of poverty, and to develop a more inclusive society? Including that nothing is possible if you don't access to legal documents.

If one of the aims of this Workshop was to work together on different topics, it was also to facilitate the sharing of experiences from different initiatives.

The first step of the Workshop was to get to know each other and to talk about the different initiatives that participants are involved in. In annex 1, it is possible to discover more about each participant and where they come from.

### **First Day:**

#### **How do we experiment a fairer society in our groups?**

Each of us is exploring ways to build a society in which no one is forgotten and in which the contribution of people facing the biggest difficulties is also taken into account.

Through **creative workshops**, the participants were able to start working on the topic together. It was also a chance to discover different best practices.

### **Drawing workshop**

L. Ritok Nora facilitated a workshop using a collective drawing technique.



The aim of this workshop is to find a way for each member to express him/herself through a collective drawing.

Nora said “ *My target is that people can get experience, that to draw together with others can bring a new message. It is a picture about group-identity... It is very important that they understand that the person is a member of a group and that the personal performance strengthens the group performance.*”



Each member is invited to draw an image of their hand in a way to express what is most important to them, what characterizes them, what gives them strength. Then they stick their drawing on the same colored panel than the other participants; choose a word that defines what they wanted to express with their hand. Everyone writes their word, in their native language, on a curvy line of the collective poster.

### Bread making workshop



Sandra Topalska explained the workshop:

*“First we drew in the flour, then we mixed the ingredients in pairs by attaching metaphors to the salt, sugar and yeast. Afterwards, we made figures with the dough and created a common story. The main topic of the workshop was "How do we experiment a fairer society in our groups?", so I asked participants in both groups to design the initiative they found most effective and important in achieving more justice in their community. Afterwards, we mixed the different ingredients. By adding salt, participants shared the challenges of their work, looking at the initiative they described but also at their work in general. By adding sugar, they shared what helps them to overcome these challenges.*



*And for yeast, I asked them to express, in a word, the motivation by which they continue their work despite the obstacles.”*



Some have designed specific initiatives - music workshops (Marci), circus workshops (Alina), shared meals (Erzsi) and some have expressed, that for them, it is education in every form that helps to achieve a more just society (Metodi, Anne).

The purpose of the bread workshop is not only to make the best bread, but to give participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and share their view point with others in an equal and inclusive way.

### Theatre-Image Workshop

The theatre-image comes from the Theater of the oppressed, created by Augusto Boal. For Benoit Reboul-Salze, *“It is a tool to help people to express themselves, not with words sitting around a table, but by acting, by sculpting images with the other participants. Each images created is a way to learn how to think, decide and act with people living in the situation of poverty and exclusion.”*

The aim was to create a common image to answer questions, observe how it was possible to make them evolve and to understand how change occurs. After the preparation exercises, the participants tried to create their theatre-images and agree on the three same questions:

- 1- What does it mean to live in poverty nowadays?
- 2- What would it be to live in a fairer society, with more solidarity?
- 3- What do we do to move from the 1st image to the 2nd image?





*We can move from a society with poverty to a fairer and more caring society by being connected to one another and to everyone, by helping others to gain access to education, and by joining the efforts of people who are living in poverty to overcome their situation.*



### Stories of change workshop

Véronique Reboul-Salze introduced the various Stories of Change, coming from the e-book published in 2017. The group discussed how it's important to have such stories, in which people express individually, or collectively what they are doing to fight against poverty and what it has changed in their lives. It's important to give a positive message that shows poverty can be overcome and that could inspire others.

Some of the participants have experimented what it means to take the time to interview people and to have their story written. They said that it inspires people living in poverty when they understand that their life is interesting for others as well.

These contributions are needed so that other people can understand their situation. It provides an opportunity for interaction.

Reading, listening to stories and to contributions helps us to understand what people living in poverty are facing. These stories can make you want to become involved. To share them with others, like Mirela did with the children at Parada, motivates them and gives them hope that “*They can make it*”. The participants are willing to write new stories of change.



Some of the participants are used to communicating via different medias. It was agreed that it's very important to communicate but it is necessary to be cautious and to include the community when thinking on how to communicate, and to give them the possibility of expressing themselves. Sometimes the media can increase prejudices. Overall, communication is a tool to build solidarity between people.

**On the second day**, the work on the two first aspects of the workshop started:

- Access to education for all;
- Access to decent housing with energy, electricity, running water and heating

The discussions took place in 4 small groups in order to help every participant be able to express themselves, starting with the following questions: What is the current situation in which people are living in? What example of good practices do we know?

### **Access to education for all**

The discussion was based on participant's experience. Some of them are involved in a poor neighborhood or organizing after-school activities. Some of them are parents living in a poor area or are teachers.

It is important to understand the obstacles that prevent children from going to school and also from learning when they are at school. They are linked to what their families are living. Children need the support of their parents but sometimes it's difficult because some parents are illiterate and never went to school. They are not comfortable with school; they don't see school as useful and they are afraid. The lack of identity documents is also an obstacle. Children often live in precarious housing conditions and have to look after younger siblings.

Even if children are going to school, some of them don't succeed in learning how to read and write. For example, after 4 years at school they don't know the alphabet. And above all, poor children are facing discrimination at school.

On the other hand, the education systems in all of the countries didn't help the teachers to deal with all of the challenges that they need to face:

- classroom with students having different levels of education,
- segregated schools,
- lack of teacher training,
- when a child misses school, the parents have to pay fines or they receive some punishment which creates, in the school, an atmosphere of authority and also a bad atmosphere because the children are forced to be there.

When children are going to school, they need to find the motivation to go regularly and to learn. The goal is not to take positions against the people involved in education but to share best practices and to make recommendations.



In Romania, children who don't go regularly, or at all, to school can join a second chance school to acquire a basic education. Classes are held in public schools in the evening and people can have a document saying that they have followed the program. After the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, it's possible to enter a professional school and/or to be authorized to take driving lessons which is a real motivation for young people and adults.

The organizations participating in this debate are supporting children and youth in order to give them a greater chance to continue their education.

***“Our recommendation is to keep parents connected to education, to identify the strength or resources within the community and to work with them, being creative and motivated. We want to bring parents and teachers closer.”***

It's based on different best practices, experimented by the participants:

- teachers visiting families;
- meetings between teachers and parents outside of the school;
- common activities (celebrations, cooking together...);
- parents showing their appreciation during Teacher's Day, events, ...;
- school mediators.

- For example, in Romania, educational assistants from the community are going around the neighborhood to get the children who didn't go to school. They also speak with the mothers about what is happening at school. They are doing it in a natural way because they live in the neighborhood and they are used to sitting and discussing with other mothers.

During their weekly meetings of the Mom's club, mothers share their problems, try to support each other and look for solutions together.

One of these mothers, Elena, is employed to work inside the classroom with the teacher, to support the children. This helps to make the link between the school, the children and their family.

- In Hungary, Moni, a key worker in the village of Told, said: *“It works very well in our village. We have a good connection with both parents and teachers and we have the opportunities to talk to them both. Teachers even come to visit us, they see us at home, and we have parents meeting in the village.”*

***“Another recommendation is to propose to children alternative activities in order to motivate them with the purpose of building their self-confidence. This demands a step by step approach to create achievable goals in the minds of children.”***



It's difficult for children to have ideas about the future when their families are facing so many difficulties (about housing, work...). It's necessary to move forward slowly and to take into account the parent's situation.



For the children, working in the streets or homeless, there are lots of necessary steps for them to overcome their situation, but through creativity and with time, trust can be built with them. This is the experience coming from Serbia and Romania. Alina, from Parada, can attest that: *“Our government doesn't see us, we are still invisible but we help the children to move forward.”*

This recommendation has been experimented by many groups which are involved in informal education. They provide educational activities locally, in the streets, in poor neighborhoods (architecture and art workshops in Plovdiv, sports in Sofia, street library in Poland...) or in an office very close to the neighborhood – but not inside - so that children can

meet other people (theater and dance in Bucharest, foreign language using the Suggestopedia method in Sofia...).

Some of the participants are struggling in their initiatives, and sometimes, it's difficult for them to see the successes. Nevertheless, they want to continue to give children the possibilities to build confidence.

Other participants have experienced that they have results, but after a long term commitment, for example 8 years of activities.

**As a recommendation, it was proposed to harmonize all stakeholders' efforts.**

It's important to have workshops with teachers, the municipality, parents from poor neighborhoods and school mediators. These workshops have to be organized in a way that people can hear the point of view of others and try to build together a school open to all children.



**Access to a decent housing for all**

The participants working on this topic were coming from Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, and the United Kingdom. First, we discussed the housing situation for people living in poverty in the different countries. Then we started to look for common points, differences, and ideas for new steps in our actions.

**Knowing and understanding the difficulties**

All participants agreed that no actions can be undertaken without knowing and understanding what people living in poverty are facing in their daily lives. At the same time, in all represented countries, we are facing similar issues:

- lack of access to public services;
- not enough space to live with your family;
- debt for electricity, water;
- fear to have the children taken away by the social services;
- bad housing quality;
- poor infrastructures: bad roads, lack of heating and water;
- lack of documents: This can be identity documents or housing documents because they are illegal or because the owner (including municipalities) doesn't give the appropriate documents.

We noticed that there are big differences between the situation in villages and cities.



Some situations are country specific: *“There has been an amendment in the law. Now the law says that it is illegal to live in the street. It is compulsory to go in a shelter, but in the reality there are not enough shelter beds for all. This is terrible and we didn’t succeed to change the government’s mind”*.

### **Prioritizing the problems and working on the solutions TOGETHER**

Workshop participants agreed that in order to resolve any problem, those who are facing it need to have space for sharing and discussion, where confidence and trust can be built. An example of such a practice can be found in Told, in Hungary, with the support of the Real Pearl Foundation, *“The community meets every week to list the problems that we have. We created a map of our problems. Lots of problems we had listed for the 1<sup>st</sup> time aren’t problems any more. When we find ourselves challenged with something new, we can just write it up on a list that is visible for everyone. We call it “the problem map”. Then, we sit down together, talk about it, choose which problem has the highest priority and quite often find a solution. Our community became united thanks to communication.”*

Another example is the Mother’s club created in the Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, in Romania: *« Beginning 5 years ago, we meet with mothers, once a week. We discuss problems, and we choose one or 2 which are the most important. We discuss what to do, like writing a petition, or deciding who’s going to the city council because the other can’t do it. In this way everybody does something. We solve a problem and then we move to the next one. So we define an action plan and it’s what we have been doing for the past 5 years”*.

We agreed that action plans are important because the people from the group, the neighborhood or the community need to take action, by finding their own solutions, and get engaged in dialogues through regular democratic discussions. It’s also important to communicate to the whole society that people living in poverty and/or from ethnic minorities who are negatively stereotyped do want to make a change.

**One of our most important conclusions was that we need to develop a long term strategy and a complementary short term strategy.**

### **A long term strategy and a complementary short term strategy**

Another conclusion of the discussions was that it is necessary to work on a long term strategy in order to find sustainable solutions and eradicate poverty, but it is also necessary to implement a shorter strategy so that people can have the opportunity to get out of their immediate difficult situation. The participants shared recommendations that can be included in these two simultaneous approaches:

#### **➤ Recommendations for short term strategy:**

**Ensuring that people have IDs** so they can have access to health care, education, electricity or water.

For example, in Romania, there is short term possibility to get identification documents with the help of the municipality. Here, the role of social mediators is crucial: *“The person has to go to the police section of the municipality to ask for it (the temporary ID), and after that the police will check that the person is living where he said. But fear of the police exists and when they come to check, some people are saying that the concerned person isn’t living there. They are thinking they are protecting the person from being arrested, as in some neighborhoods, the police aren’t trusted.*



*Here the help of the mediator comes in. He/she can speak with the neighbors and say that the police will come just to check if a person is living at this place and not for anything else”.*

### **Ensuring access to electricity**

Very often, electricity is being cut due to debts. In Hungary, there is a combined approach - long term and short term - that makes possible for people living in poverty to have access to electricity and reimburse their debt at the same time: *“There is the possibility of prepaid services for electricity. This took years of struggle. The first electric meters were taken from abroad, so that the local providers could believe it’s possible. This motivates people to save resources. It works like a prepaid phone: you charge your account with some money and when everything is used, the electricity is cut. It’s better because you can’t accumulate debts.”*

Another shared opinion was that to improve their situation, people need functional infrastructures and not just provisional accommodation: *“In Bulgaria, in my neighborhood, there are a lot of places without water and electricity. Infrastructures don’t exist. There are no lights at nighttime. So that brings up the issue of comfortable housing and not just any housing, not just shelters. We should look for facilities that provide comfort and infrastructure.”*

### ➤ **Recommendations for long term strategy:**

**Building and maintaining partnerships**, a network of partners and a network within the community and the neighborhood.

Time and patience is a very important factor when building relationships. Here is an example of how the situation changed thanks to the persistence of one of the participants in the Workshop: *“The first time I went to the mayor and I told him that I wanted to work on the legalization of houses in the village, he told me nothing would happen. The 3rd time I went to see him, I showed him the results I had built little by little, and he told me: “sit with me and tell me what you want”.*

**Working in the field every day**, speaking with people, adapting to the needs of the community and to their possibilities.

The need of stable relationships between activists or social workers and the underprivileged community was underlined by a participant from Parada-Romania: *“In the long term, you need more trust in yourself and the community! You have to speak with them, to encourage them. Even if it isn’t possible to help everybody, step by step, people can help each other and take care of their community.”*

### **Finding the appropriate funding**

The participants shared their experience that shows that time is needed to fight poverty and exclusion. It’s a matter of years, not of months. This is why they recommended working at the European, national and municipal level so that organizations from civil society can be able to work on long term, and not on short term project.

### **Evaluate the efficiency of policies and actions**

Sometimes the actions that are undertaken aren’t effective immediately, or have to be improved. The participants felt that it is normal and that we can learn from these attempts if we listen, think and make decisions with the people directly concerned. One recommendation is to evaluate the effectiveness of decisions made and the actions undertaken by working on long term consultations, and therefore to avoid top-down solutions.

It means that it is continually necessary to go back to the approach of acquiring knowledge and understanding the situation of people living in poverty together with them and those involved with them.

For example, one participant explained that, in United Kingdom, *“families are being relocated and displaced based on an arbitrary system when their homes are seen as too big or more suitable for other families. Instead of helping them, and decreasing debts, there is a rise in homelessness. It is an issue.”*

For some participants it is impossible to believe that this situation exists in western countries, where so many people from Eastern Europe are dreaming to go to.

### ➤ **Conclusion on this topic**

Many ideas have been expressed and many important practices have been shared during the discussions on the topic of housing. We have seen that building a strong sense of community and a sense of living together is an essential step. Without it, nothing can begin. Next, other people in society need to know the problems of those who don't have access to decent housing. Other members of civil society can support the efforts and the needs of those facing these situations as government and local authorities have their own responsibilities to respect.

It is crucial to create and maintain a dialogue and communication between the different people and groups concerned, even if it is hard, even if there is a loss of confidence in politicians that should have an active role and with whom we need to work with.



The main topic of the **third day** was: **What are the strategies experimented, by the participants, to allow a real access to the rights of everyone, including the people in situation of poverty, and to develop a more inclusive society?**

After understanding and building knowledge on some issues, what is our experience to move towards action? Three groups were asked to present their strategy, followed by a discussion with all the participants. The principle was to discover different kinds of strategies, including some presented by special guests who weren't able to participate during the whole Workshop:

- ATD Fourth World in Poland : the action called « Our voices »: how to go from an idea expressed by people living in poverty to a political action ;
- A Varos Mindenkie : a creative way of organizing demonstration and action to fight for the right to a decent housing ;
- European Roma Rights Center : starting from a struggle due to a local violation of human rights to the European Court of Justice.

### **ATD Fourth World in Poland:**



Jan Swiatek et Ela Klaus presented the projet “Our voices”. It has been implemented in three countries (Poland, Ireland, Spain), from February 2016 to June 2017 for the first phase, and is still going on in Poland.

The project was based on the Merging of Knowledge© (MoK) approach: it involves representatives from three groups of knowledge: knowledge from people with the experience of poverty, knowledge of professionals who have experience from actions against poverty, and academic knowledge. The confrontation of these three types of knowledge gives rise to new and shared knowledge. After many discussions, it was decided to focus on relations between social workers and beneficiaries of social assistance because the groups found that fear was an important reality in their relationship.

The 3 stages were:

- analysis of the relationship between social workers and beneficiaries
- choosing recommendations
- implementing one of the recommendations: together, the 3 groups chose to work on the recommendation about the creation of an ombudsman on social rights.

During the first stage, *“we had difficult discussions, we did not agree, especially in the beginning; but more and more it was possible to feel comfortable with a university professor, to have a chat with him.”*

During the second stage, after we analyzed the relationships together and after editing the recommendations, the group decided to look at implementation. They chose to fight for the creation of a position of an ombudsman on social rights.

Why? Because *“we know how difficult it is often with social services; and then to have no one to talk about these problems. So we found that we need a kind of mediator, having the right knowledge and skills, with good relations with both sides.”*

During the third stage, we reflected more in detail about the expectations for the tasks of an ombudsman on social rights. A questionnaire was developed. Now the analysis of all the answers have to be done, with all the participants.

To check the feasibility, we met the ombudsman for Human Rights in Poland, and we hope he will support this effort.

### **A Varos Mindenkie – Hungary**



The presentation was done by Jutka Lakatosne, Gyula Balog with the support of Istvan Varady.

The “City for all” was founded in the summer of 2009. Initially, half of the members were homeless or low-income members, but today they represent 3/4 of the members. At the beginning, the problems were collected and training was held for the members concerned.

We are always preparing our strategy, which we review every summer after we evaluate our previous work. We develop a strategy with long term, medium term and short term goals, declined into actions.

Our main objectives are:

- a society based on justice and equality,
- decent housing for all,
- solidarity with other disadvantaged groups.

Mid and short-term tasks and activities are defined to achieve these goals.

We do advocacy and use the method of pressure-control over power. We will mail, discuss, petition and make suggestions to the professionals in charge. In the case of ineffectiveness, we use flash mob, demonstrations, open letters, and press releases, and ultimately civil disobedience, which concerns actions from the seizure of the offices of power, to the home life of the families waiting for eviction. We can deploy and are instantly able to work with the most radical means. This demands training.

For example, in our fight against eviction, we support a lot the families with children. It must not be admitted that children end up living on the street. And it’s important to know that in 3 out of 4 families that are evicted, the children are taken away and put in foster care.

To avoid these situations, we want to change the law. We submitted a bill with the support of three opposition parties so that families with children could not be evicted without a humane solution. One day, we organized two actions, took over the stairs of Parliament, and then we organized a large demonstration in the evening in front of the Parliament. It was a huge media event, but the government is postponing their answer, so we're all starting it again.

For years now, homelessness is repeatedly becoming punishable nationally. We are still fighting against the change in the Constitution criminalizing homelessness (4th amendment).

We will continue our campaigns and our long-term goals to the end of our strength despite the fact that our membership and method have changed regularly since our foundation. We are continuing to recruit people permanently.



## European Roma Rights Center



To illustrate their strategy and show how they started from a struggle due a local violation of human rights and move to the European Court of Justice, a short presentation was made about the group Ambrela in Macedonia.

They are involved with a group of 120 people, including many children of all ages, who were living in barracks. After living in the improvised area for 8 years, they were evicted two years ago by the municipality without any proposal of rehousing. During 2 winters, they lived in shacks and tents. They expressed their strong desire to stay together. For the moment, they are relocated in a former children's home and have filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights with the support of the European Roma Right Center.

Adam Weiss is the Director of this organization:

We are a Romani led organization, the board chairman and members are Romani.

Our aim is to overcome anti gipsyism and for that we support Roma to take legal cases to court. For a long time it was thought that racism and poverty were different problems, but we found, when we look at the living conditions of Romani across Europe that they are strongly connected. The question of housing, especially, is a big issue.

Going to court is only one of the options. It frequently creates frustration because judges often have the same prejudices and ideas as other people. And going to the European court takes time. But when you succeed, you succeed not only for yourself, not only for receiving reparation for yourself but for all the people who may be in the same situation in the future in your country and in all the 47 countries members of the Council of Europe.

We are also fighting against segregation, and especially segregated education. In the Czech Republic, Romani children were considered systematically to have learning problems. They were sent to special schools. Legal action has been undertaken and has been successful.

Housing is a more difficult issue. There is far more adhesion to the right to education than to the right to housing. Evictions are also seen more as being caused by poverty and not by racism, so a lot of people in the European Roma Right Center were reluctant to invest in action against evictions. But this has changed. We are now going with a Roma family evicted from social housing in Belgrade to the European Court of Human Rights.

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## Questions, answers and reactions

After these three presentations, a moment was taken for discussion between the participants, divided into 6 different groups. The aim was to discuss the links with their own actions and to identify some key points (common or really different) to answer the question : *What do we learn about strategies to allow a real access to the rights of everyone, including people in situation of poverty?*



The first common point identified was the aim to work for interchanging mentalities. It starts from the knowledge coming from the life of people experiencing poverty, in order to address a large public from society or more specifically social workers, policy and decision makers, academics, judges, the police or teachers... Many examples have been given. Changes are necessary and breaking down prejudices involves everybody.

*“These actions are united by a common goal: solve problems which are really deeply rooted.”*

*“If we want to achieve the same goals, we need voices of those at the bottom who are experiencing difficulties and also the ones at the other side of the barrier, in order to [make a change]. Otherwise we’ll remain two separate groups: us and them.”*

The second common point identified was that it requires time.  
All the strategies presented are implementing processes that can be long.

*“It takes a long time for people to express what the challenges are for them and obviously people can become discouraged in such a long process. If you don’t see any effect and you are also not sure if there will be any results and this is what we learn from this process. We learn that we have to be constantly in touch with those people taking part in the project in a long term perspective.”*

*“It is very difficult because it is very long for a case to reach its end. This are people who were waiting for a decade just for the European Court of Human Rights to deal with the case and 15 years from the start to finish. People are not losing all hope. We want to try that people who are accepting to be litigants be heroes of that case, to be proud of what they have undertaken.”*

The third point identified was that there are common points to fight poverty and racism.

*“What we realise is that poverty and discrimination can become one and do become one easily and that change in legislation, but also in human perspective in general, can and must be made with partnership and perseverance.”*

*“As homeless people in Hungary, we feel intimidated now. Until recently, migration was used as the great enemy. Now we are the target. It’s difficult to fight this problem and only activists who aren’t living in poverty can help homeless people or people segregated to speak out.”*

*“In the education field, in our country, there is a huge segregation at school from which one of us has suffered from. There is not a solution for this at this moment, but we think it’s very important to have conversation about this. It is very good to say loudly that racism and poverty go hand in hand and it was really good to hear it in such a form.”*

An example, about the struggle to succeed for the reunification of a school in Albania which was separated in two parts (different ethnicities separated, as well as rich and poor also), highlights this point. Children are going to school together now.

To conclude this plenary, it was said that we need to support one another to build trust, to keep focused, even if we don't see results coming as quickly as it is needed and expected: *"We realized that much can be done by investing in partnership."*

It makes the group think again about the different steps in strategies:

- Starting from the people living in poverty:

*"It's important that there are people from the community, from the poor areas, in each of our activities to make more visible people living in poverty. They can support their children to discover that they are like other children";*

*"I am proposing football to the children, and through sports, pushing them to go to school. The work that we are doing in our neighbourhood is very difficult, but if we don't do it who else will?"*

*"Offering a circus or football activities to children is one of the first steps. It shows them that they are capable. But the next step is also difficult: to make the schools more open, more friendly; to make jobs accessible... These steps together will make the school, but also the police for example, change their mind set about poverty and that will make the society change."*

Many other examples were given during these days that show it is possible to provoke change in our societies in order to make them fairer and more caring.

The final words could be those of Ela, from Poland: *"We need to stay united, even when confrontation and conflicts may happen... There is always someone, somewhere, who is going to give support to overcome them."*



**The last part of the day was focused on the conclusion of this Workshop.**

Let's give the floor to the participants:

*- "All of us are feeling isolated and alone in our work. Finding each other in this place is inspiring in that we are not alone in what we do. We even found ideas of cooperation for the future. The other direction that we really like and that impressed us during these 3 days, and that we will take back home, is what we learned from all the other countries. We were impressed with what you do, with how much that matters and the results that you have achieved."*



*- "We wrote down a few words about what we are taking home, and what all of us have mentioned is that we saw the value of persevering, of working and not expecting for things to happen from the first try. They just won't."*



*- "I think the conclusion is to involve more local people, people from communities in our work, just to give them a chance to*



*talk, to express themselves, to give their own opinions and to include them in our plans for the future.”*

*-“It’s interesting that all of you develop methods and also, with ATD Fourth World, we develop our own ways of actions, but I appreciate a lot your different good methods. We can learn from them and we hope you can learn from ways of actions we have.”*

*-“I appreciate the contact with so many various projects and the inspired people behind them, who find creative solutions.*

*-“It was the most interesting experience because we had a translator and we could listen to people’s ideas and experiences.”*

*-“For me, this meeting was a positive experience and I would love to repeat it as many times as possible.”*

*- “Good balance between working time and informal time.”*





## **Conclusion of the Workshop**

We felt how much the participants wanted a new workshop. The evaluation showed that this type of workshop strengthens participants and makes possible for them to move forward in their daily actions. During the Workshop, the participants have gained capacities to think together, to decide together and to act together with people living in poverty.

Participants also held several very high expectations, including:

- to continue to work on the theme of access to education;
- to continue to learn facilitation techniques and skills that they can use in their own actions.

This provides strong points for preparing a future Workshop. The "School on wheels" team in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, has offered to host the next Workshop, as the city will be one of the European Capitals of Culture in 2019.

Some of the other aspects mentioned during the Workshop Budapest 2018 will continue to be discussed, either during other European meetings, such as the Fourth World People's University at the European Parliament in February 2019, or when organizing meetings between groups from two different countries.

October 17<sup>th</sup>, World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty, was proposed as a path to develop our means and tools to involve more people in everyone's struggle to be part of a better society. This begins by giving the floor to people who live in poverty, working with them as it has been said during the Workshop.



## Annexe 1 : Who are the participants ? Where do they come from ?



From **Hungary, Marci and Viola** are working for the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service in Tiszabö and Tiszabura. Marci and Viola explained that one of the big challenges in these villages is that children are not continuing school after the primary cycle. One reason is the lack of secondary schools in Hungary. Another challenge is that everybody is looking for employment. *“We try to operate small manufactures, like a carpentry facility and an agriculture program”*. *“We’ll work in a Sure Start Children’s house for mothers with children aged from 0 to 3 years old, to learn with the mothers how to educate the children, also with the help of educators and psychologists”*. Maria and Zoli, inhabitants from the village of Tiszabö prepared to come to the Workshop but were not able to participate at the last minute.

From **Hungary, Moni, Erszi, Aliz and Nora** are involved with the Real Pearl Foundation in Berettyóújfalu and Told. Amongst the many initiatives taken by the Foundation, they want to underline how they started with art education and talent development and continued by also doing community development through education and job creation. *“Job creation is the more recent project that begins to produce results, through crafts for example. At the beginning, Nora spent a lot of time visiting us and talking with us and then she began to make proposals about things we could do together, for example embroidery. The aim is to build the community then we can help each other better”*.

From **Romania, Oana, Rodica and Elena**, are involved in the Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities, in Bucharest. In the Alternative Education Clubs, children are offered a space for homework, socializing and learning where they are accompanied by educational assistants and auxiliary personnel.

*“I worked first with children to help them to be able to go to school. For 3 years, I was the coordinator of the Alternative Educational Club in several schools and now I am working as a math teacher. We do all we can to keep children living in poverty in school, essentially by offering interesting activities”.*

*“I am developing activities with the children. We did also actions in the neighborhood to have trash bins, electricity, also for people living in informal housing. I support also the job search.”*

*“People like me, from the community, are needed to help to work with the children. The children should succeed to learn to read and write. We are also active against domestic violence. We work with women and mothers”.*

From **Romania, Mirela and Alina** are members of Parada which is supporting children, young people and adults living in the streets in Bucharest. Parada began with a social circus program and now has many projects like the educational program to bring children back to school because most of them abandon school because of bad living conditions.

*“I am working with Parada as a volunteer. I have known Parada since the beginning in 1992. I was 11 years old and living in an orphanage. Our country does not recognize the problems of people living in the streets. A lot of them do not have official papers, so they do not exist for the State and therefore for the hospitals and medical care... Children living in the streets are visible only after a show, a parade. Otherwise they are invisible. It makes me angry.”*

From **Serbia, Gordana** is coming from the Centre for Youth Integration, in Belgrade. The center has been working for 13 years on improving the position of street involved children.

*“We have 2 drop in shelters which give services for children working in the street and their families. They are living in 20 different settlements. It’s not only services, we also help people access their rights to papers and education,... The program of education is organized with a goal to include children in the educational system at an early age”.*

From **United Kingdom, Naomi** is a core-worker of ATD Fourth World UK. One of their aims is to work together with people living in poverty and social workers.

*“In the late 90s, it was the start of dialogue and now activists in situation of poverty are involved in social workers training to help them to understand where the families are coming from, what are their fears about social services, to help them to work with the families they meet”.*

From **Bulgaria, Magi and Genika** are coming from the project Mobile school Stolipinovo in Plovdiv even if they come from two different organizations: Discovered spaces and Children’s Architectural Workshop. Stolipinovo is one of the biggest discriminated areas in Bulgaria.

*“There are many people living in poverty there and lots of children are not able to go to school for various reasons”.*

*“We are using art, architecture to provoke the interest to learning. We do this weekly workshop in a school and in a street in the poorest area of the neighborhood.”*

From **Bulgaria, Ina and Metodi** are working with the Center of Hope, also called the Center for Inclusion through Sports.

*“With the help of sport activities and education in English, Bulgarian, Art and Mathematics, we try to create a new approach for the learning process, social competences and values of contemporary Europe. We would like to give wings to the children”.*

*“From my experience in my neighborhood, I know that sports are a kind of education. If we want to get children back in school we must encourage them by activities like sports”.*



From **Bulgaria, Bori** is volunteering in the Solidarity Club in Sofia. It is an initiative of the Sofia branch of the international movement Food Not Bombs.

*“One of the main activities of the Solidarity Club is the Solidarity Kitchen where participants— both volunteers and people from disadvantaged backgrounds - are able to meet twice a week, cook together and share food with dignity, as well as exchange ideas. The meal is strictly vegetarian/vegan.”*

From **Bulgaria, Sandra** is part of the team of the Bread House in Sofia, which is a social and cultural center, working with different vulnerable groups that need better social inclusion.

*“We’re organizing bread making events. During the events the participants are engaged in artistic activities such as drawing and making sculptures and share their points of view on important topics such as solidarity, challenges or friendship. Making bread is a simple activity. It’s a tool to make people come together, to liberate minds a bit and to stimulate communication. We mix people who would not meet together in normal life.”*

From **Bulgaria, Vlado** is involved in supported the community of Djurovo.

*“I became aware of the difficulties of a lot of people in two neighborhoods in a village. At the beginning, I supported one family in starting an agricultural activity. Recently, we got involved with two other families. They live in bad conditions in these neighborhoods: frozen water in the winter, no garbage collection. They live with their extended families, groups of relatives living together. They are facing discrimination as most of Bulgarians believe Roma do not want to change. I see the opposite.”*

From **Poland, Ela and Jan** are members of ATD Fourth World Poland, involved in two different cities (Kielce and Warsaw).

*“One of our main activities is the gathering on 17 October (World day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty). We want to draw the attention of the richer people on people living in the street and on the people who died living in the street.”*

*“We encourage members of the community to take an active participation in our mutual activities as we believe that unity helps to fight against poverty. We cooperate through different channels, such as meetings with adults, art and sport workshops with young people, or street libraries events with children”.*

**Bert and Anne** are involved at the **European level** with ATD Fourth World.

The Fourth World People’s Universities are based upon the conviction of ATD Fourth World’s founder that everyone, even the most excluded, has a contribution to make to society. The Fourth World People’s University also wants to enable people experiencing poverty to be real partners and actors in the construction of society. In Europe, there are currently 16 people’s universities or dialogue groups which meet regularly, each dialogue is prepared locally in small groups.

**Benoit and Véronique**, are core-workers of ATD Fourth World. They have been living in **Bulgaria** for 3 years, in order to get involved with and to support people and groups struggling against poverty in South-Eastern Europe. By participating in actions with others, they are learning from initiatives taken alongside people living in extreme poverty.

All the encounters they have made reinforce the importance of organizing such workshops in which people from all walks of life can work together and ask their questions, express their doubts and ideas and reinforce their capacities to fight poverty.

\* \* \*



Some participants from **Hungary** didn't have the possibility to participate in the presentation session. They are involved in the group "A Varos Mindenkie – the City for all" and in the organization "European Roma Rights Center". Their presentation was shown when speaking of strategies.



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