

**“Merging Knowledge”
A People-Centered Approach to Tackling Poverty
UNESCO/MOST round table, Paris, 17 October, 2023, 3-5pm**

Concept note

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has found that tackling inequalities and exclusion requires active citizen engagement throughout the policy cycle. Furthermore, it is particularly imperative that those who are under-served or marginalized, or unable to access services, are involved in decision-making processes.

In order to establish effective and sustainable policies, it is essential to seek the views of individuals and communities impacted by these policies, and incorporate them in the search for new solutions. However, despite years of discussions on this issue, policy decisions often continue to be made without the full involvement of affected populations. Merely consulting impoverished communities is insufficient; genuine participation — from the outset of policy formulation, to implementation, to evaluation — is imperative.

As a result, the need for innovative approaches is evident. In the context of the International Day for Eradication of Poverty, UNESCO/MOST (UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformations programme), in partnership with ATD Fourth World, aims to further the fight against inequalities and poverty, as well as their persistence.

UNESCO/MOST's partner organization, ATD Fourth World is a nongovernmental organization dedicated to eradicating poverty. For 60 years they have worked with individuals with a lived experience of poverty and marginalisation: involving them in the search for solutions, and calling for real changes in how we think about poverty and poverty eradication. As a result, ATD Fourth World has developed the Merging Knowledge technique. This approach fosters equitable dialogue between academics, professionals, and marginalized individuals, ensuring all insights are valued and utilized. However, despite recognition from prestigious universities, Merging Knowledge still faces challenges in being integrated into the development of poverty reduction policies by policymakers.

Round table objectives and features:

This round table will explore the Merging Knowledge technique in the context of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. It is planned as a 2-hour, in-person event, with engaging discussion and insights. This event will also feature cross-continental dialogues through videoconferencing: as a result, ATD Fourth World speakers from regions such as Latin America and Africa — who may be unable to travel — will be able to take part. The panel composition brings together key stakeholders, including academia, ATD Fourth World members (many with a lived experience of poverty), and a policymaker supportive of Merging Knowledge's relevancy. This diverse assembly ensures insightful and inclusive discussions on poverty eradication and inequality reduction strategies.

French, Spanish, and English interpretation will be available.

Agenda**Moderator:**

Nana Boateng, UNESCO

- Introduction and Opening Remarks:

Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO, ADG SHS

Pascale Budin , ATD Fourth World, Merging of Knowledge for France

Alberto Ugarte Delgado, ATD Fourth World , Training on Merging of Knowledge for Latin America, Peru

- Presentation of the "Merging of Knowledge" approach:***History***

Marc Couillard, ATD Fourth World with a lived experience of poverty, Belgium

Monique Couillard-De Smedt, ATD Fourth World, Belgium

Relevance, necessity and requirements:

Emma Poma Janco, ATD Fourth World with a lived experience of poverty, Bolivia

Marion Carrel, professor, Lille 3 University, CERIES, co-director of the “GIS Démocratie et Participation”, France

- Implementation of the approach:**- *Training in Latin America (UAM University Mexico)***

Beatriz Monje-Baron, ATD Fourth World, Training on Merging of Knowledge for Latin America, Mexico

Patricia Urquieta Crespo, Academic researcher, Research and Action for Global Development Institute ([IIADI](#)), La Paz, Bolivia

- *Research “Dimensions of poverty” (Oxford University, ATD Fourth World)*

Kitojo Wetengere, Academic (economic diplomacy), University of Arusha, Tanzania

- **Policy Relevance:**
Alain Pothet, Ministry of National Education, former adviser to the Minister for Urban Affairs and Housing on educational success and community involvement, France
- **ATD proposals on the use of the “Merging of Knowledge” approach**
Bruno Dabout, CEO, International Movement ATD Fourth World
- **Q&A Session**
- **Wrap-up and Closing Remarks by Moderator**