



Annual Report 2023

**DECENT WORK AND
SOCIAL PROTECTION:
PUTTING DIGNITY
IN PRACTICE FOR ALL**



Annual Report 2023

The best way to ensure access to all rights for all people is by involving people living in poverty, including them in the design of projects, and listening to their concerns.

Mati association members, Bangladesh, correspondents
of the Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty

International Movement ATD Fourth World



Leaving no one behind • Giving priority to reaching the most excluded people

CONTENTS

Message from Donald Lee , President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World	5	International Centre • Family Advocacy Project	36
Latin America and the Caribbean Region • Haiti	6	International Advocacy	
Latin America Region • Guatemala	8	• Advocating for dignified work	38
Asian Region • Thailand	10	• Job Guarantee side event at the Human Rights Council	40
African Region • The Central African Republic	12	• Round table at UNESCO on 17 October	42
African Region • Cameroon	14	• Webinar on combating socio-economic discrimination	44
Indian Ocean Region • Mauritius	16	• European youth gathering at the Council of Europe	46
Indian Ocean Region • Madagascar	18	Joseph Wresinski Archives and Research Centre	48
North American Region • USA	20	For a new social philosophy	50
North American Region • Canada	22	"¿De quién es el conocimiento?"	52
European Region • United Kingdom	24	International Administration, Ethics, and Finance • PAEFI	54
European Region • Switzerland	26	Perspectives from the International Leadership Team	56
European Region • France	28	The International Movement ATD Fourth World	57
The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty • Philippines	30	Index	58
• Democratic Republic of the Congo	32		
International Centre • Tabori	34		

Message from Donald Lee, President of the International Movement ATD Fourth World

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promised to end extreme poverty and halve poverty in all its forms by 2030. Last year marked the mid-point of the SDGs and progress has been disappointing. Extreme poverty is still high globally and unlikely to fall as quickly as expected when the SDGs were originally launched in 2015.

The United Nations reports that overall progress has been inadequate. For approximately one third of the SDGs, progress has stalled or reversed, prompting the United Nations to take steps to try to accelerate progress through more effective policies and initiatives.

The slow progress towards eliminating extreme poverty globally makes ATD Fourth World's advocacy work at the international level even more crucial to ensure that governments fulfil their commitments to attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. At the same time, our work in communities and at the regional and national levels is vital to support the efforts to overcome extreme poverty worldwide.

In 2023, amid the multitude of initiatives undertaken by the International Movement



ATD Fourth World around the globe, I would like to highlight two projects: The pilot project "Territoires zéro non-recours"¹ (Zero Non-Take-Up Zones) is underway to promote access to social rights in thirty-nine departments in France. ATD Fourth World is a key partner in this project, providing collaborative training for social workers and residents that encourages people who do not assert their social rights to come forward and get more effective information and support.

The training programme "Merging of Knowledge from Latin America"² resulted in a series of projects that explore the principles

and methodologies used in the Merging of Knowledge approach. One of these projects entitled "What prevents young people living in poverty from accessing decent work?" took place in Guatemala during 2023. Its objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the causes of unemployment for young people from families in poverty and to produce an informational document for the government, businesses, and civil society organisations involved in this issue.

I wish to thank our partners and ATD Fourth World activists and teams who have worked tirelessly this past year to build a better world for all.

Donald Lee

1. The goal of this French experimental programme is to facilitate and simplify access to entitlements and thus reduce the number of people who do not take up these important rights. All the programmes in the thirty-nine departments aim to develop targeted approaches to identify, inform, and support people in accessing their rights.
2. Merging of Knowledge is an inclusive methodology that enables dialogue among people facing extreme poverty and social exclusion, policymakers, academics, and practitioners. The goal is to create new knowledge that is rooted in lived experience, as well as in practice and in academia.



Weekly Welcome Babies session

Latin America and the Caribbean Region • Haiti

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ATD Fourth World is present in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru, in both urban and rural areas. This report highlights our initiatives in Haiti and Guatemala.

A sizeable challenge

Every day, international media cover the ongoing takeover of Port-au-Prince by armed gangs. Against this extremely difficult backdrop, the ATD Fourth World team in Haiti is pressing ahead in its efforts with determination and vigilance. **The Health Card** programmes* carried out in partnership with the Saint-Michel Health Centre and the initiative **Welcome Babies** are of particular importance but must be adapted to the following challenges:

➔ **Displacement of families:** Having fled their neighbourhoods because

of violence, many families have found refuge in more distant locations. For some, this was a repeat scenario: refuge, armed violence, escape, homelessness. Excessively high transport costs and the risks involved in travelling make it difficult for families to seek treatment, even if it is free or low cost.

➔ **Scarcity and high cost of medication:** This is due to fewer, less reliable, and more hazardous deliveries because of extortion at roadblocks set up by gangs, confiscation of goods, kidnappings, sporadic shootings, and so on.

➔ **Mounting pressure on the programme:** New families are obtaining the health card or may be in need of one. Partner care facilities and other sites that may be more accessible to families living in poverty (such as the University Hospital of Haiti and Médecins sans Frontières) are operating with difficulty or not at all. In fact, the entire healthcare system is at risk of collapse.

➔ **Greater and greater instability:** Lack of security prevents people who earn their livelihood through informal work from conducting their activities. They often go months without income with no hope for improvement in the near future. Their support network is weakened and displaced. The United Nations estimates that hunger affects **44 per cent of the population**. The ATD Fourth World team explains:

When mothers are fully involved, Welcome Babies is a life-saving opportunity for their children. The programme also offers accompanying adults an opportunity for personal development. Cecilia's experience can testify to this. She used to hide at home with her head bowed and her voice barely a whisper, traumatised by her family's struggles and shamed by the sight of her newborn baby wasting away. But thanks to her neighbour's patience and kindness, she was persuaded to attend Welcome Babies. Gradually, Cecilia found the energy to smile, the joy to express herself, and the pride, not only in being there, but also in supporting other mothers and watching her baby grow stronger.

* Families subscribe to this programme by paying an annual contribution of 60 gourdes (£0.75/€0.87/\$0.96), for which they receive a family health card. Their subscription gives them access to a continuum of care, with primary care provided by the Saint-Michel Health Centre and secondary care provided by public sector facilities and a few partner agencies.

Parents who used to come to the Welcome Babies nutritional programme for their first child felt empowered and better able to support the development of their second child. Today, the second child often has to be treated for acute malnutrition, sometimes after only three months. Treatment takes longer, and once normal weight has been reached, support must continue for several months to prevent a relapse.



Research participants



An example of the forum theatre depicting the various factors preventing young people with lived experience of poverty from accessing decent employment



Research participants

Guatemala Research project on the Merging of Knowledge

"Merging of Knowledge from Latin America" brought together a diverse group of academics, professionals, and people with lived experience of poverty from five countries in the region — Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru — and Spain. This collaboration has resulted in a series of projects that explore the principles and methodologies used in the Merging of Knowledge approach.

What prevents young people living in poverty from accessing decent work? *

One of these research projects, "What prevents young people living in poverty from accessing decent work?", was developed in Guatemala in 2023.

This research aimed to delve into the causes of unemployment among young people from families living in poverty and to produce an informational document intended for the government, civil society organisations concerned with this issue and, above all, the business community.

Discrimination was among the factors identified. Many young people have experience being denied employment due to either disclosing their neighbourhood of residence or their physical appearance.

The research project brought together three peer groups:

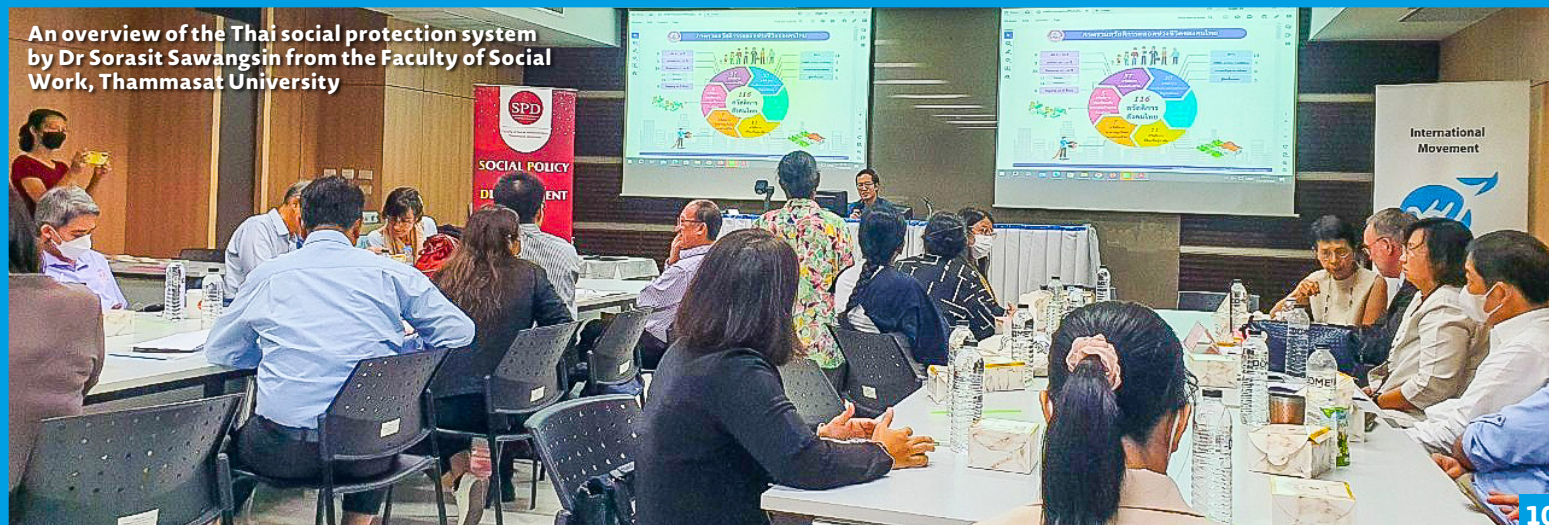
- Young people from Guatemala City and Escuintla, where ATD is present;
- Allies and volunteers with experience in youth mentoring;
- Employers who have hired young people in their workshops or small businesses.

The day-to-day lives of families living in poverty are another factor. When parents do not have a stable job, children have to work from an early age to help with family expenses, hindering their development in school or

forcing them to drop out of school early. In addition to these challenges, the substandard education provided to children from impoverished families undermines their prospects of obtaining decent employment in the future.

Participants from the three peer groups joined in proposing solutions to these experiences. They included bringing together multiple stakeholders from government and civil society to promote institutional partnerships and developing programs that take into account the economic and social conditions of the young people.

* In Spanish: *¿Qué hace que los jóvenes en condición de pobreza no accedan a un trabajo digno?*



Asian Region • Thailand

ATD Fourth World is present in the Philippines and Thailand and collaborates with NGOs and partners in other Asian countries. Every year on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is marked in several Asian countries, including Thailand. This day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and struggles of people living in poverty, gives them a chance to voice their concerns, and recognises that they lead the way in taking action to end poverty.

Observing 17 October in Thailand

To observe the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, ATD Fourth World Thailand, the Friends of ATD Foundation (FATD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Faculty of Social Administration at Thammasat University organised a joint workshop on the theme "Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting Dignity in Practice for All". The workshop was held at Thammasat University in Bangkok, with around thirty participants from relevant government agencies, NGOs, international organisations, and academia, and representatives from communities living in extreme poverty.

In her opening speech, FATD President Professor Narumol Nirathron introduced the work of ATD and FATD. For over thirty years, these efforts followed the lives of people facing extreme poverty in a particular Bangkok community, until the project was suspended during the 2019 coronavirus outbreak. The pandemic has worsened the difficulties of this community, not only with health issues but also with their ability to earn money and with their children's education. This workshop aimed to bring stakeholders together to learn from the lived experience of people facing extreme poverty and to think of ways of improving their access to decent work and social protection.

Mr Markus Ruck, a Social Security System Expert at the ILO, shared insights on the decent work agenda at the international level, highlighting the vulnerability of Asian workers and families without basic social protection.

FATD committee member Professor Sorasit Sawangsin from the Faculty of Social Work at Thammasat University presented an overview of the Thai social protection system. This was followed by accounts of the families of two individuals, Mr Suk and Mrs Maew, presented by FATD members Ms Ratchakorn Kulsawet and Ms Viparat Panritdam. These accounts illustrated the nature of informal work and irregular employment and the inaccessibility of existing social welfare schemes for families such as these.

In her testimony, Mrs Maew said, *There are still many poor people. There are still many hardships and much poverty. There are still many people who have nothing and those who have everything. It has been like that since my childhood [...]. Why don't we have a chance? Why don't I get the same opportunities?*

The session workshops used a five-step design-thinking process¹ to

examine these two accounts and find solutions for their challenging situations, such as health problems, loan-shark debt, and children dropping out of school because of the family's lack of income. FATD member Professor Wanwisa Suebnusorn Klaijamlaeng of the Faculty of Education at Kasetsart University facilitated the workshops. Participants were then divided into two discussion groups to develop an empathy map² and a service blueprint³ for FATD, which will serve as guidelines for further action to support people in similar situations in future.

Mr Low Chee Peng, Regional Director of ATD Fourth World Asia, closed the event by outlining next steps. In particular, he highlighted the importance of giving a voice to people living in extreme poverty and involving them in the decision-making process.

1. A human-centred approach to problem-solving combining technical skills and creativity.
2. A tool designed to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and preferences of the person or organisation for whom the map is created.
3. A tool for conceptualizing service improvements



Bob Katembo, a Volunteer Corps member, discusses the vicious circle of birth certificates



Activists talk about the difficulties encountered in trying to get birth certificates

African Region • The Central African Republic

In the African region, ATD Fourth World is present in ten countries. It has Volunteer Corps teams in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal, and Tanzania, and supportive networks in Burundi, Cameroon, Kenya, and Togo. Highlighted are projects from the Central African Republic and Cameroon.

All children have a right to a birth certificate

On 18 August 2023, ATD Fourth World in the Central African Republic organised a panel discussion on obtaining birth certificates for children from disadvantaged communities. The aim was to understand the many difficulties that block the process of obtaining these documents and the underlying reasons for these difficulties, in order to consider possible solutions to break this vicious circle.

The session was attended by seventy-seven people from Danzi, Kokoro, Mbongosua Island, and Walingba, children living on the street from the centre operated by the Fondation Voix du Cœur, and people responsible for issuing birth certificates: urban and rural midwives, the children's court representatives, city hall representatives, and a representative of CIVIPOL.*

During the discussions, the participants tried to understand the obstacles encountered by families living in poverty, as explained by the families and children. They used this opportunity to develop policies and strategies that could enable families to play a more active role in the process of obtaining a birth certificate.

The families and children presented some of the challenges they face:

I am an activist. I lost my big sister, who left me with her baby, who is seven now. I had a lot of trouble enrolling him in school because he doesn't have a birth certificate. I tried to explain the situation to the principal, who agreed to enrol him on the condition that I present a birth certificate before the end of the school year. Germaine

I have six children, and all of our birth certificates, theirs and mine, were lost during the war. My husband is paralysed and we cannot file new requests; there are numerous obstacles. Antoinette

I come from north of Briä, more than 600 km from Bangui. I lost my birth certificate when my grandmother's house was burned. I live like an illegal immigrant. Loïc, eleven years old

I help deliver women's babies who are living in poverty and cannot go to the hospital. The hospitals refuse to give them the release notice that would trigger the birth-certificate process.

Flore, a rural midwife

The panel discussion enabled participants from this sector to address the obstacles preventing many parents from obtaining birth certificates for their children. They pledged to work closely together and to encourage people living in poverty to initiate the process themselves.

One result is that 218 requests for birth certificates were filed during the campaign organised by CIVIPOL with support from the local government ministry.

* A technical service of the European Union that supports the local government ministry in raising awareness and issuing birth certificates.



Christophe Mimche, a young participant on 17 October 2023,
talks of his experience with access to decent work
in marginalised neighbourhoods

African Region • Cameroon

Young people advocating for dignified work in Douala's informal sector

The socio-political crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon is accentuating the deterioration of the socio-economic situation and living conditions of many people. The Covid-19 health crisis has also thrown many into long-term unemployment. Faced with this situation of vulnerability and fragility, a number of companies have taken on internally displaced persons and young people from poverty-stricken neighbourhoods to work in precarious, informal jobs with no legal coverage (accident risks, etc.).

To combat these appalling working conditions, many civil society organisations, such as the Association of Young Entrepreneurs of Bonassama in Cameroon, regularly denounce these human rights violations. The association mobilises various stakeholders (human rights activists, local elected representatives, and people with lived experience of poverty) for collective action to raise awareness, provide training and informa-

tion on workers' rights, and how to lodge a complaint if companies fail to respect these rights.

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, under the theme "Decent work and social protection, putting dignity in practice for all", the Association of Young Entrepreneurs of Bonassama organised a discussion with stakeholders to share experiences and testimonies on working conditions and social protection with young people and other people living in poverty. It was an opportunity to encourage the most disadvantaged people to express their views on the awful working conditions and highlight their resistance and their daily struggles.

The meeting also provided a space to discuss and formulate strategies for stepping up lobbying of locally elected representatives and decentralised government departments responsible for employment issues. These translated to advocacy strategies that address and ensure respect

for social protection for young people and their access to decent jobs.

A young student told us: I was recruited in a supermarket in Douala. The working conditions were very difficult. We worked for eight hours a day, standing up with a strict ban on sitting down [...]. Without an employment contract, and as women, we were increasingly exposed to harassment from customers, to psychological pressure from our employer, who shouted at us to make sales, sometimes using unconventional methods like dressing in skimpy clothes to attract more male customers.

At the end of the day, the participants set up a unit to monitor and raise awareness of violations of the rights of young people who have had difficult experiences in the workplace. Its mission will be to train and inform young people living in poverty-stricken neighbourhoods about their rights in the workplace, both nationally and internationally, so that they can become agents of change.

Participants in the People's University



Indian Ocean Region • Mauritius

In the Indian Ocean region, ATD Fourth World is present in Madagascar, the Republic of Mauritius, and Reunion Island. Two major projects in this region are detailed in this 2023 report.

An initiative that welcomes other partners

For Mauritius, the year 2023 was marked by the return of the **Fourth World Mauritius People's University** (LKM).^{*} In 2022, Volunteer Corps members David and Audrey Antonique met up with new families on the outskirts of Port Louis, the capital, supporting them in their effort to be rehoused. Little by little, as the visits went on, they gained the families' trust and better discerned the challenges they faced in making a living from decent work. These visits also became important for the families, who could talk about their daily struggles and even their despair, knowing they were listened to and understood. Finding out that their voice was important in making it possible for the dignity of all people to be recognised one day, they were also willing to join Audrey in the People's University preparation groups.

The LKM steering group wanted to open up the meetings to other people also involved with families living in extreme poverty. Audrey was familiar with social action in Mauritius and was asked to support the people who came to reinforce this new People's University and who learned about ATD Fourth World's approach and how the preparatory groups were facilitated.

Many of the new participants contributed to the 17 October World Day for Overcoming Poverty. Their statements were all the more powerful because the person who had paved the way for them had suddenly died from an illness. One person said, "Audrey was like a Mother Teresa for us." Following are accounts from families on 17 October:

Dignity is when we walk with our heads held high so that other people can't belittle us, crush us, or walk over us. But sometimes, even though we try our best, we can't do it because other people make our lives so difficult.

The day I told him I was quitting this job, he threw the money at me like you would throw it at a dog. I cried all the way home.

Dignity should not be taken for granted.

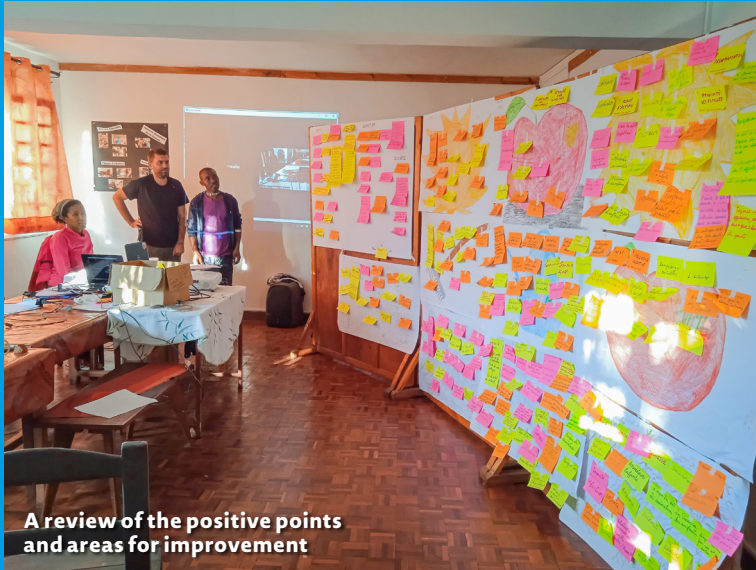
Encourage people to know their rights so they won't be exploited anymore.

Everyone in the same situation should get together and be in solidarity with one another.

When I need to talk, I talk.

Now I am more aware of what dignity is, and I want to talk about it as much as possible.

^{*} A Fourth World People's University is a forum where people from different social backgrounds come together to discuss and exchange ideas. They all come to learn from one another and contribute their own experiences and knowledge.



A review of the positive points and areas for improvement



Presentation of New Objectives for MMM



The whole team videoconferencing with the International Leadership Team at the start of the evaluation and planning process



Session participants

Indian Ocean Region • Madagascar

Evaluation and planning is critically important for the work of ATD Fourth World, both for each local team and member and for the organisation internationally. Programme evaluations provide an opportunity to assess accomplishments, consider priorities, and strategise for future initiatives.

Evaluation and planning process in Madagascar

Four years after the last evaluation and planning session, Volunteer Corps team members in Madagascar felt they were trying to carry out too many projects, leaving them too little time to establish new links with families living in poverty. In June of 2023, they began an evaluation and planning process to analyse their successes and identify shortcomings. Their review primarily covered the following issues:

- The types of injustices experienced by the families and individuals they know, along with their hopes and aspirations;
- The extent to which ATD Fourth World's efforts have reflected its values as a movement of

relationships, empowerment, and change;

- The strengths and challenges of Malagasy society today — what might help or hinder the commitment to "leave no one behind";
- The possibilities of each person within our movement and among its partners.

Based on this assessment, they worked to agree on an approach with the aim of "doing less in order to do better" in the two neighbourhoods of Antananarivo where they are present.

Noting the changes that have taken place in the neighbourhood of Antohomadinika over the past few decades — such as the consid-

erable increase in the numbers of residents and housing units and the lack of space for children to flourish — they decided to focus their activities around the library.

In Andriamiarana, given the history of exclusion and evictions that most of the families have experienced as well as the neighbourhood's relatively small size (about 450 families), they thought it essential to try to work with everyone who lives there.

After two intense weeks of review and discussion, they decided on the following programme for 2023–2026:

- One priority: working with the most marginalised families so they will be empowered to have full control over their own lives and those of their children.

Two strategies:

- Work on sharing knowledge between the team and the individuals and families living in extreme poverty in order to create partnerships with them and to involve other partners;

➤ Work to enable the children to succeed so they can become active members within Malagasy society, fulfil the families' deepest hopes, and break the cycle of extreme poverty.

To achieve their goals, they formed groups around three projects:

- A Library—Tapori—Street Library project in Antohomadinika with activities taking place in the library, which will become a cultural centre;
- Childhood, Adolescence, and Young Adults projects in Andriamiarana;
- "Miasa Mianatra Miaraka" (MMM) *Working and Learning Together* also in Andriamiarana, where they aim to work with all people in the neighbourhood.

These projects aim to create spaces for learning and for personal and group development so that children have access to a good education, and adolescents, young adults, and adult women have access to career guidance and decent work.

People's University
plenary session
with activists, allies,
and ATD Fourth
World Volunteer
Corps members



North American Region • USA

For the North American region, projects in Canada and the United States are described here.

Fourth World People's University in New York City

In April and May 2023, ATD Fourth World in New York City celebrated the return of [the Fourth World People's University](#) after a break due to the pandemic. The theme was [Dignified Work for All](#).

Earlier in the year, the [UN Commission for Social Development](#) had focused on this same topic as its priority theme. The New York team therefore decided to continue exploring the topic in the Fourth World People's University sessions, given ATD Fourth World's experience of developing work opportunities for communities affected by systemic discrimination.

The sessions mainly began with small group discussions using dynamic tools such as forum theatre,* inspired by the [Theatre of the Oppressed](#). Situations of injustice and discrimination in the workplace were highlighted, particularly when looking for work or keeping a job.

Bringing together young people struggling to find decent jobs, healthcare professionals, and practitioners in the field of recruitment and human resources allowed participants to explore obstacles faced by young people and adults with firsthand experience of poverty and discrimination.

Situations of injustice were then presented in a plenary session to guests who reacted to what they had seen and heard. These were followed by a group discussion in which everyone worked together to find possible solutions.

The following statements were made at the session:

We've implemented what we call "targeted opening" in our hiring process. So that means we are reaching out to those individuals who seem most excluded in communities that are the most marginalised based on several criteria. And we don't do background checks. **Plenary session participant**

The problem is so much deeper because it also has to do with education, training, and what you're perceived as having to offer a job, besides all the other stuff. And it makes me think of WALTER [the eco-social business co-launched by ATD in Brownsville]. I think that for a lot of employers, there are obviously the requirements of the job itself. But they are not necessarily looking for you to have big previous training and experience. Some of them take the responsibility of training you yourselves. **Plenary session participant**

One thing we can do is to catch up with the rest of the world and have childcare that is affordable — universal childcare that helps people to get into work. And I think we really need to organise some policy around this issue. **Guest at plenary session**

In 2024 the Fourth World People's University sessions will continue in New York City for Fourth World activists, practitioners, and academics to come together to share their knowledge and experience on the theme of housing.

*One of the techniques within Theatre of the Oppressed that invites the audience to collaborate in the performance by becoming spect-ACTORS rather than simply spectators.

Forum theatre presentation at a People's University session on social discrimination in March 2023



North American Region • Canada

A Year of forum theatre

Several activists from ATD Fourth World in Montreal collaborated to set up a forum theatre group. Thanks to funding, an interactive theatre company* — La Collective — partnered closely with them on their first project. They wrote two short pieces inspired by their own experiences and concerns. “Work” was at the heart of both these scenes: one on employment discrimination and the other on bullying in the workplace.

The first forum theatre performance took place during a Fourth World People’s University session on the theme the misconception that people living in poverty don’t want to work. The second performance was held in Montreal after the street march that took place on the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#). In this forum theatre, the members of the audience went on stage to react to the injustices portrayed in the performance.

When asked what message they hoped the audience would take from the performance, one participant said: *To respect people — those who don’t go so fast, just as much as those who go faster. To have a wage for those who work faster and one for those who work slower, that would be nice. Then everyone could work instead of going on benefits. If you can’t earn a wage because you don’t work fast enough, you still have to live. It would be good if the system was fairer.*

Someone else replied: *That employers should trust employees as soon as they enter the job market, especially after a long period. They should have trust in their abilities and spend time training them.*

It has been a fruitful year, especially for the six members of the forum theatre group. Taking inspiration from their own experience in order to denounce injustices meant reopening old wounds and remembering the humiliations they had endured.

However, by doing so, they freed others to speak of their own experiences, which gave rise to several discussions, extending beyond the theatre group’s activities.

The insights and knowledge produced during the People’s University made a valuable contribution to the document: “These riches that we deny ourselves” (*Ces richesses dont on se priver*). The team submitted this paper as part of the Quebec government’s consultation for its plan to combat poverty, including an entire chapter devoted to the theme of work.

With its submission, members of ATD Fourth World Canada had an opportunity to meet with several politicians and officials from the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity.

**Interactive theatre centred on diverse themes which encourages audience participation with the aim of informing and raising awareness.*



Amnesty
International

giving poverty a voice

On 17 October 2023, ATD activists engaged in a dialogue about art and poverty on the stage at Amnesty's London centre. From left: Summer Mayes, Tammy Mayes, Ruth Knibbs, Guendouz Bensidhoum, and Elsa Houghton

ATD
TH WORLD

European Region • United Kingdom

In Europe, ATD Fourth World is present in twelve countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. In this report, three projects from the region are featured: ATD Fourth World UK's collaboration with Amnesty International; "What is revealed by the Merging of Knowledge among professionals, social scientists, and people with a lived experience of poverty?" in Switzerland; and the growth of the Zero Long-Term Employment Zones initiative in France.

Collaborating with Amnesty UK to protest poverty as a violation of human rights

ATD has been working closely with Amnesty UK since 2019. In 2022, this led to founding the Growing Rights Instead of Poverty Partnership. GRIPP is led by activists with lived experience of poverty from ATD and three other non-profits, one of which was founded by [asylum seekers and refugees](#). Support is offered to GRIPP by Amnesty, Just Fair, and the University of Essex, who all have "learned experience". GRIPP's main work in 2023 focussed on the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which states that: "[t]he widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family" [Article

10(1)] and that "[s]pecial measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination" [Article 10(3)].

The United Nations is currently reviewing the UK's compliance with ICESCR. Based on a series of study group sessions and focus groups that included 150 participants, ATD submitted three pieces of evidence to the UN:

- A group statement written with other members of [GRIPP](#);
- A [statement in the name of ATD Fourth World UK](#);
- A "[Youth Voices](#)" statement prepared by young people.

These same study group sessions and focus groups also contributed to the University of Essex Human Rights Centre's new report: 'I have walked this journey alone; my soul is tired': Poverty, Child Protection, and the Right to Protection and Assistance to the Family in England. It calls for transformative change to family and children's social services.

In March, ATD supported both [parents](#) and [young people](#) to make oral statements about this work to the CESCR via Zoom, some of them connecting from Amnesty's London centre. Although the UN will not conclude its review of the UK until 2025, GRIPP is continuing its dialogue with the CESCR committee.

In June, Amnesty featured GRIPP's work on the cover of its print journal, which is sent to 250,000 subscribers. The eight-page article included a long interview with ATD Fourth World activist Pat Bailey, entitled "Forced Adoptions Are Horrendous".

In the coming year, GRIPP will be continuing its action-learning method of building knowledge from lived experience. It is also developing a national campaign about poverty and human rights that will begin with participatory research about how to frame this issue most effectively in order to convince the general public of its importance.



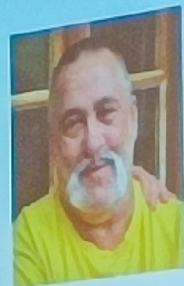
RAPPORTS ENTRE INSTITUTIONS, SOCIÉTÉ ET PERSONNES VIVANT DANS LA PAUVRETÉ EN SUISSE : UNE EXPÉRIENCE DE VIOLENCE QUI CONTINUE

Rapport final du projet de recherche
« Pauvreté – Identité – Société »
2019 – 2023

Ce que révèle le Croisement des savoirs entre
des personnes ayant une expérience vécue de la pauvreté,
des professionnel·le·s et des scientifiques

Merci par :  **ATD**
Suisse romande

Soutenu par :  **Administration fédérale suisse**
Confédération suisse
Confédération suisse
Confédération suisse



Alain Meylan
Aktivist ATD Vierte Welt, Begleitteam Nationale Koordinationsstelle



Activist Alain Meylan speaking at the symposium

European Region • Switzerland

What is revealed by the Merging of Knowledge among professionals, social scientists, and people with a lived experience of poverty?

On 11 April 2013, Federal Councillor and Minister of Justice Simonetta Sommaruga apologised on behalf of the Swiss government to the victims of coercive social measures for the great suffering that was inflicted upon them until 1981 and even beyond. In 2019, the International Movement ATD Fourth World obtained the support of the Federal Office of Justice for a research project contributing to fundamental changes that would prevent the institutional injustice and violence inflicted on people in poverty from being repeated from generation to generation.

This project, “**Poverty-Identity-Society**”, uses the Merging of

Knowledge approach, a first in Switzerland, as the minister for justice acknowledged at the opening of a public symposium when the final report of the research was presented:

This report is a blending of knowledge that has been overlooked, sometimes even rejected, for a long time, and that is now brought together. As far as I am aware, on such a scale, this is a first.

The national symposium, entitled *La pauvreté – une boucle sans fin: quelle responsabilité pour notre société?* (Poverty – an endless cycle: What is the responsibility for our society?), was held on 9 May 2023. In front of more than two hundred people from

the political, scientific, and institutional worlds, the project’s forty co-researchers, united by four years of meetings and research, presented the results they had written together. After the co-researchers had presented their conclusions in a plenary session, participants got the chance to talk with them in same-language groups and to think about what the results mean for their own professional fields and how they could use them for inspiration.

The closing speeches were given by people from different fields — law, politics, education, social work, research, culture — and represented three types of knowledge: lived experience

of poverty, professional practice, and social sciences. They described how the project and the results inspire them in their work and motivate them to work for change. In conclusion, ATD Fourth World’s International Leadership Team said:

We must learn from you, learn how to draw from the painful past so as to question the present, to co-construct solutions without judgement or accusation.

The symposium is not an endpoint, but a new beginning for leaving behind ignorance. It aims to highlight the lessons and the paths for change set out in the report, develop new practices and research, and offer mutual support in taking on personal and collective responsibility so that poverty is no longer an endless cycle.

Round table 14 October 2023:
“Does work still protect
against poverty? The challenge
of developing decent work in
our society”

Left to right: Eugénie Barbezat
(the journalist facilitating),
Thomas Coutrot (economist),
Anne-Marie De Pasquale
(ATD Fourth World national
director, France), Johan Renaud
(company director), Vone
Lancelot (ATD Fourth World
activist)



Public rally in Paris to
support the TZCLD budget,
24 October 2023,
with members of
ATD Fourth World



European Region • France

The rise of Zero Long-Term Unemployment Zones

The Zero Long-Term Unemployment Zones (Territoires zéro chômeur de longue durée — TZCLD) project has been carried out in France since 2016. ATD Fourth World is a main architect of this initiative, which has come to fruition thanks to the local involvement of people who have faced long-term joblessness, elected representatives, craftspeople, and associations who are all convinced of the need to work together.

The principle is to create decent, useful, sustainably local jobs that respect humans and the environment. Hundreds of accessible permanent jobs have been created. After several years out of work, people regained their confidence, as they said themselves:

The way my children and family look at me changed, and We're no longer ashamed to go out.

In 2023, the role of ATD Fourth World in this process was highlighted at the United Nations in the Voluntary National Review of France. The Zero Long-Term Unemployment Zones project was one of the five non-governmental initiatives selected by France to illustrate the efforts made to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in France.

Anne-Marie De Pasquale, ATD Fourth World's national director for France, was part of the French delegation to the United Nations in New York in July to present this initiative and describe our movement at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The delegation's meeting with Maryann Broxton, ATD Fourth World's permanent representative at the United Nations, showed that it was possible to build concrete ini-

tiatives to overcome poverty by combining the knowledge of all stakeholders and by starting with the most marginalised.

In October, the World Day for Overcoming Poverty offered an opportunity to bolster links between local ATD Fourth World groups and employment-oriented companies formed as part of this project. ATD Fourth World has increased the number of initiatives throughout France, calling for dialogue and encouraging meetings.

In Paris, two round tables were organised at the trades union centre on the issue of developing decent work as a means to tackle poverty.

People who had been unemployed for several years spoke alongside company directors and academics about their desire to work and contribute to the well-being of

their area, and about the dignity they had regained from having a decent job.

One participant said: *The TZCLD project sought us out when nobody else did. I went from being a person on public assistance to a person having agency.*

In 2023, the initiative went up from forty-seven to sixty zones; it inspires beyond borders, with similar initiatives in other European countries and beyond.

In the current context, where the reduction in extreme poverty in the world is slowing down, this initiative is a hope for real change for everyone who lives in unfit conditions because of poverty. It brings another perspective on work, on people who have been jobless for a long time, and on our capacity to build a society where everyone can find their place.

Videos in French: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Fkc9TJNwxw&t=13s> / <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE7WDpPDvUo>

Participants at a commemoration in Manila on 17 October (the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty)



The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

On 17 October, the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, people experiencing extreme poverty around the world speak up alongside their allies to proclaim their dignity to the people around them and to the international community as a whole. It is a day of commemoration, recalling the hardships caused by extreme poverty, sometimes throughout generations. It also honours the courage of the people struggling against poverty every day, makes known their hopes for a better future, and promotes the goal of ending persistent poverty for everyone, everywhere, forever. In 2023, the day was observed in at least thirty-eight countries.

Philippines

Synergy when partners collaborate with ATD Fourth World

The synergy produced by the collaboration among members of the ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps, [the Voices From the Community forum](#) (which promotes discussion among people experiencing poverty and other representatives of civil society), and [the National Anti-Poverty Commission](#) (NAPC) led to an extensive campaign of interviews about decent work and social protection.

Selected interviews were published daily on [the ATD Fourth World Philippines Facebook](#) page during the week before 17 October. The campaign reached about five thousand people.

Every year since 2004, the Philippines has celebrated the National Week for Overcoming Extreme Poverty from 17

to 23 October. Approximately eleven hundred people participated in a ceremony on 17 October 2023 that was held in Rizal Park in Manila around the commemorative stone honouring the victims of extreme poverty. Commemorations were also held in the six other places in the Philippines where stones have been placed. Romeo Lagahit, a member of the International Committee for October 17, helped the NAPC organise a ceremony in Davao.

Participants from the North Cemetery community gathered at the Rizal Park Open-Air Auditorium.

ATD Fourth World members led a workshop for children and teens called "When I grow up, I want to be ..."



**CADF members participate in the training
with their personal equipment**

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Training for Decent Work: Dignity in Action

As part of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, from 24 to 29 October 2023, the not-for-profit association Compagnons d'actions pour le développement familial (CADF) held three theoretical and practical training sessions for twenty of its members at its headquarters in Kinshasa. These sessions included learning to make juice from local plants (ginger, hibiscus, and sorrel flowers), sweet and savoury cakes and waffles, and soaps and other detergents.

The goal of the training is to give the association's members the means to

create decent jobs for themselves without a large capital investment. Generose Mwavita, a member of CADF was the primary trainer for these three sessions.

Each training session lasted one day. The morning was devoted to theory and a discussion of the participants' experience, and the afternoon was devoted to practice. Participation was voluntary and open to all of the association's members. One participant, Josée Nzolani, spoke about how important this training was:

These skills will help me enlarge my waffle-making business. This business has enabled me to raise my two

sons and provide work for five young people in my neighbourhood, to whom I pay a salary [...]. I operate during the period when we sell our brown rice, which we grow ourselves

The expertise acquired by participants through this training has broadened the skill set of the association's members. Most of them grow rice and vegetables in and around the Congo River or resell various items, while the youngest among them cut and sew fabrics.

At the end of the training, the participants expressed their gratitude and their hope that it would lead to greater team cohesion and more diversified income sources.



Participants at the Tapori training session

Training to live up to the Taporí children's hopes and expectations

From 10 to 14 May 2023, the first in-person training session for Taporí facilitators was held at the ATD Fourth World International Centre. Forty participants from eighteen countries across various regions attended, uniting a rich diversity of cultures, life experiences, and commitments to social justice. This training is part of a process that began in 2021 with the campaign called "In Search of Our Human Treasures", which was followed in 2022 by the "Taporí as Actors of Change" campaign.

The purpose is to maintain Taporí as a place where children can become agents of change in their environment in order to

create a fairer world. This conviction is based on the idea that children, just like adults, gain knowledge through experience and that that knowledge can be used to overcome the injustice around them. The title "Living Up to the Taporí Children's Hopes and Expectations" reflects this new momentum. Despite their youth, children's ideas deserve special attention. This means providing resources to meet their expectations.

"Adults need to be trained," said Jireh, a Taporí facilitator in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She explained:

To play a role in children's lives, you must learn to live up to their expectations. Living up to chil-

dren's hopes and expectations does not mean doing things for them, but doing things with them. The ideal facilitator is there beside them, supporting them when they do things.

One important topic addressed during the training session was increasing the ability of children to act on their environment in their own way, without waiting for adults to change things. As Olga, a Taporí facilitator in the Central African Republic, explained:

I learned something I really liked. We sometimes say that children are the future. But through this training, I understood that children have the power to do things today.

For most of the participants, this training was the first time they

had come to the International Centre, and for many of them, it was the first time they had left their country. Their diversity reflected the type of relationships people are looking for in ATD Fourth World — "relationships between equals" as Annie, a facilitator from Côte d'Ivoire, put it.

Following the training, participants are tasked with training other individuals involved in facilitating their local Taporí activities. Several teams have organised training sessions in their neighbourhoods or cities. In Switzerland for example, the facilitators attending the training say they left with new goals:

I'm going to try to develop closer ties with the families to get to know them better.



↑
Participants at the Family
Advocacy Project session
in Pierrelaye
←

The Family Advocacy Project

In 2019, some parents who are members of ATD Fourth World asked, "What are we doing wrong? Despite all our efforts, our children are experiencing the same poverty as we are." To respond to this appeal, from 2019 to 2023, young parents living in poverty in Belgium, France, the Netherlands¹, Poland, Spain², Switzerland, and the United Kingdom formed groups with academics from several disciplines (philosophy, law, economy, and social work). They all worked together to develop a knowledge base about what would have to change in order to "build a future without poverty for children". The parents were clear about the price of their participation: creating change in their own lives as well as in the lives of other parents.

The research, the **Family Advocacy Project**, focused on child protection and resulted in proposals for change in two main areas. On 20 November 2023, **proposals were presented to guests from different countries** with different responsibilities, including

lawyers, social workers, researchers, mediators, shelter directors, and associations.

The first proposals emphasised the need to make poverty visible. This involves highlighting the consequences of the invisibilisation of poverty: the institutional maltreatment, the disempowerment, and the pain of people living in unsafe situations. Concrete proposals were put forth: changing the name of "child-protection" services following an in-depth evaluation of the services, and redesigning child-protection training to include input from people living in extreme poverty. This approach aims to provide non-intrusive assistance that encourages the development of everyone's full potential.

The second set of proposals concerns the legal system. Current laws and institutions weaken the essential bonds between children, their parents, and their family. Parents are calling for changes that would thoroughly transform this system culturally. In particular, they suggest making court hearings fairer, involving parents in the writing of social workers' reports, and reorganising supervised visits to preserve

family ties and thus ease the return of children to the family home.

The proposals for change are already being acted on. The parents presented the research group's proposals to their children's social workers. Local ATD Fourth World groups from the participating countries are working to implement the proposals, taking steps locally and talking with their national teams to organise political action. A webinar with members of European NGOs will be held in connection with the thirtieth anniversary of the International Day of Families. A group of academics from several European countries who were present on 20 November 2023 will be meeting to mobilise the research community.

1. The Netherlands group did not take part in the whole process because they were working on a book on the right to protection of the family, "Recht op bescherming van het gezin: Schrijnende armoede en uithuisplaatsing van kinderen."

2. Since 2023, the group in Spain has been conducting research using the Merging of Knowledge approach and has continued this work independently. They presented it on 14 March 2023.

Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Special Representative to the UN and Director of the ILO Office for the United Nations (speaking at podium). Rio Hada, Chief, Equality, Development and Rule of Law Section, New York Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (at left as the host)



International Advocacy

Advocating for dignified work: International relations with the International Labour Organization

Dignified work and social protection are two important themes in the area of advocacy for ATD Fourth World. For this reason, ATD representative teams at the United Nations, in both New York and Geneva, sought to strengthen the relationship with the International Labour Organization (ILO).

In February 2023, ATD's UN representatives in New York presented two important examples of dignified work during the 62nd session of the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations. The first was the Zero

Long-Term Unemployment Zones (TZCLD) project in France. This project demonstrates it is possible to employ and retain workers who have experienced long-term unemployment by forgoing a for-profit approach and adopting a people-centred approach.* The second was [Working and Learning Together – Environmental Recycling \(WALTER\)](#), an eco-social business. WALTER was purposely established in the Brownsville neighbourhood of Brooklyn, New York, a disinvested area [with a high poverty rate](#), to provide employment, skills, and an

equitable wage to young people facing obstacles obtaining dignified work.

Decent work and social protection was also the theme for the 2023 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) commemoration. Matthieu Cognac, former Senior Multilateral Cooperation Specialist, ILO NY, attended several of the IDEP planning meetings with other UN partners where the focus was the difficulty people in poverty experience finding work in the formal sector, the lack of social protections in the informal sector, and the

need for social protections for people unable to work: older adults, children, and people with disabilities. The ILO was a co-sponsor of IDEP 2023 and Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Director of the ILO at the UN, was a guest speaker at the commemoration.

In Geneva, the ATD UN representative reinforced connections with Pierre Martinot-Lagarde of the ILO Geneva office and longtime ATD Fourth World ally. In June 2023, the Geneva team also took part in a side event as part of the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference. As a result of this work, the ILO recognised ATD Fourth World as a partner in the [Global Coalition for Social Justice](#).

** See [page 29 of this report](#)*

From left:

Mito Tsukamoto, ILO's Employment Policy Department; Aye Aye Win, President of the International Committee for October 17; Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; and Kate Philip, Programme Lead for Presidential Employment Stimulus in South Africa, during the side event at the UN in Geneva



UN_TECH_Ben



Job Guarantee side event at the Human Rights Council

On 30 June 2023, ATD Fourth World and the [UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty](#), Olivier De Schutter, co-organised a side event on “[The Job Guarantee as a tool in the fight against poverty](#)” at the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council. This event was sponsored by the Permanent Missions of the United Nations for Belgium, Luxembourg, and South Africa in Geneva.

The panel discussion delved deeper into the Special Rapporteur’s report to the Council on the Job Guarantee as a transformative public policy for anyone willing and able to work. The panellists described how well-designed Job Guarantee schemes can be instrumental in the fight against poverty. Aye Aye Win, President of the International Committee for October 17, then shared lessons learnt from the WALTER¹ and Zero Long-Term Unemployment Zones²

pilot projects in ensuring that the most marginalised people are included. She affirmed that ATD’s Job Guarantee pilot schemes demonstrate that:

... decent work — work that combats social exclusion and promotes cohesion by inviting excluded individuals and those who have been left behind back into public life — is not only possible in a utopia but can happen in practice.

1. See page 39 of this report

2. See page 29 of this report

Speakers on the podium:
Gabriela Ramos, Assistant
Director General for the
Social and Human Sciences of
UNESCO (centre), and Bruno
Dabout, Director General of the
International Movement ATD
Fourth World (3rd from left).



The
audience
at UNESCO

Round table at UNESCO on 17 October

“Merging Knowledge: a people-centred approach to combating poverty”

On 17 October 2023, as part of UNESCO's [MOST programme \(Management of Social Transformations and Development of the Link between Research and Policy\)](#), ATD Fourth World presented the Merging of Knowledge methodology in a two-hour round table in Paris. The international panel brought together academics from Bolivia, France, and Tanzania; ATD Fourth World members from Belgium, Bolivia, France, Mexico, and Peru, including several with an experience of poverty (some by videoconference); and a political decision-maker from France, convinced of the relevance of the approach.

In her introduction, Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for the Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO, made the link between the Merging of Knowledge approach and the MOST report

[“Inclusive and resilient societies”](#). To combat exclusion, the report recommends involving in the decision-making processes — throughout the policy-making cycle — people who have limited access to services or who are marginalised.

The history of the Merging of Knowledge methodology was then summarised in a slide show. This presentation explained the methodology's place within the context of South American liberation epistemologies and feminist and postcolonial epistemologies. The different steps in the methodology were shaped by the knowledge acquired through a life shared with families living in extreme poverty.

Emma Poma Janco, a Bolivian activist from La Paz, and Marion Carell, a French academic from Lille, then presented the methodology in greater detail — the prerequisites for establishing mutual trust and the alternation of group work

and work with peers. What a feat to have coordinated this presentation between two people from different cultures, thousands of kilometres apart!

Beatriz Monje, a Volunteer Corps member from Mexico City, and Patricia Urquieta Crespo, a Bolivian academic, then explained how a course leading to a diploma in this methodology was organised at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana of Mexico. The course involved planning and implementing a Merging of Knowledge session on [violence against women in situations of extreme poverty in Bolivia](#).

Then, to demonstrate the relevance of the approach, Kitojo Wetengere, a Tanzanian academic, and Alain Pothet, an advisor to the French Minister of Urban Affairs, explained how an experience with the Merging of Knowledge approach had transformed their professional practice. [For a political decision-maker, it involves a loss of power, and that's hard to accept. But](#)

[it's about losing power in order to gain power collectively](#). Kitojo Wetengere, convinced of the approach's validity through the research on the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty carried out by ATD Fourth World and Oxford University, has created [a network of English-speaking African academics](#) interested in using it.

In conclusion, Bruno Dabout, Director General of ATD Fourth World, put forward a number of [policy proposals](#) for moving from purely consultative participation to deliberative participation: long-term support for organisations working in solidarity with people living in extreme poverty, and opening up forums for reflection between committed stakeholders among others.

This round table initiated a partnership between ATD Fourth World and UNESCO's MOST programme with the goal of collaboratively building a MOST school based on the Merging of Knowledge approach.



✎ Claire Hédon



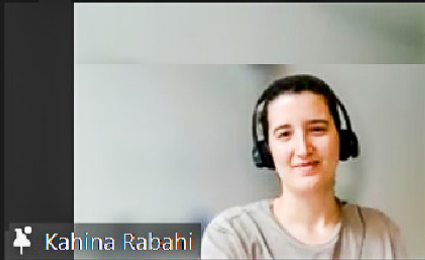
✎ Solal Billon - ATD Fourth World



✎ Olivier De Schutter



✎ Andrew Kelly and Christina Power



✎ Kahina Rabahi



Marie Toussaint

**Thank You!
Stronger
Together
to protect
EU citizens
from Socio-
Economic
Discrimination!**

Participants in the webinar: Claire Hédon (French Human Rights Defender), Solal Billon (ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps member), Olivier De Schutter (United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights), Andrew Kelly and Christina Power (ATD Fourth World Ireland activists), Kahina Rabahi (European Anti-Poverty Network), and Marie Toussaint (Member of the European Parliament with the Green Party)

Webinar on combating socio-economic discrimination

On 28 June 2023, the European Delegation of ATD Fourth World organised a [webinar on socio-economic discrimination](#). In attendance were Andrew Kelly and Christina Power, community activists from ATD Fourth World Ireland; Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights; Claire Hédon, French Defender of Rights; as well as Marie Toussaint, Green Party Member of the European Parliament. The discussion was moderated by Kahina Rabahi from [the European Anti-Poverty Network](#).

Andrew Kelly and Christina Power gave powerful testimonies of lived experiences which bore witness to the systemic nature of socio-economic discrimination. The stigma and shame accompanying the daily life experiences of people living

in poverty underline the need to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and expand our knowledge of this complex concept. As well as giving rise to psychological suffering, socio-economic discrimination can be the cause of numerous violations or deprivations of fundamental rights, including, among others, the right to housing, employment, and education.

The reality of those violations was then expanded upon by Claire Hédon during her presentation on the “Particulière Vulnérabilité Économique” (vulnerability resulting from one’s economic situation)* statute which was introduced into French Law in 2016. She went on to highlight the obstacles faced by people living in poverty in using the statute as an efficient tool with which to assert their fundamental rights.

Olivier De Schutter then discussed the concept of socio-economic discrimination in international law. Following up on [his 2022 report](#), he called on governments to take action against such discrimination, insisting that regulations and public policies must not discriminate directly or indirectly against people living in poverty, and should prevent the development and persistence of povertyism.

While the reality of violence resulting from socio-economic discrimination has already been recognised by several European Union Member States, a binding legislative act has yet to be adopted at the European level. Elaborating on this topic, Marie Toussaint stated that socio-economic discrimination sometimes takes place at the highest levels of the state, allowing the system to become justified and legitimising

the fact that minimum welfare benefits and public services are being cut to promote other priorities.

In order to move beyond judicial solutions, a cultural and political battle must be waged and discrimination tackled at its roots. Socio-economic discrimination is more than just a judicial matter: it is a systemic issue. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the experiences and ideas of people living in poverty are taken fully into account and that researchers work with them to continue to deepen our knowledge and demonstrate the reality of socio-economic discrimination.

** In 2016, discrimination on the basis of “the special vulnerability resulting from one’s economic situation, obvious or known to the party engaging in discriminatory conduct” was recognised as the 21st grounds for unlawful discrimination within French legislation.*



European youth gathering at the Council of Europe

In April 2023, some thirty delegates from ATD Fourth World youth groups in Europe (from Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom) gathered at the Council of Europe's Youth Centre in Strasbourg. The gathering marked the conclusion of a European mobilisation campaign lasting from June 2021 to April 2023. It aimed to reflect on the following question and develop an advocacy campaign around the response. The question was: *What does it mean to be a young person facing adversity in Europe today?*

Throughout the week, the young people worked in small groups on three themes: harassment and discrimination, isolation, and choice. They felt that *the isolation they experience, in all its various forms, is caused by negative experiences with others*. They emphasised the need for professionals to be trained to take into account the long-term consequences of discrimination and

harassment. Along the same lines, they expressed the desire to be able to make their own choices and have a say in the important decisions in their lives — they would like to have genuine support from the professionals who work with them every day that takes into account the reality of each individual.

On Friday 21 April, the last day of the session, the young people presented their conclusions and recommendations to members of the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum. Each of the fourteen invitees then had an opportunity for more personal small-group discussions with two or three young people from ATD Fourth World.

Throughout the campaign, the young people clearly expressed the need for the world to understand the reality of their lives in social exclusion and poverty. One young person from Normandy said:

This demands a lot of concentration, but it also does me good to be able to talk about my problems and to speak up for other young people who weren't able to be here. I hope that this will not be simply filed away in the archives but listened to.

At the end of these two-plus years of work, a **public advocacy statement** summarising the campaign's conclusions was produced and distributed starting in March 2024. The twenty-page document presents thirteen proposals drawn from the young people's discussions promoting a European society that truly leaves no young person behind. The document will be put forward at the local level by the young people themselves. Their demands will also be disseminated at the European level within the institutions where ATD Fourth World is represented (the European Union, the European Youth Forum, and others), especially through training sessions.



On 28 September the Burkina Faso Ambassador to UNESCO and ATD Members listened as Sophie Razanakoto from the centre's outreach team explained the Joseph Wresinski Fund



Plaque unveiled on 28 September



A time of celebration, with Agnès Magnien, President of the French Memory of the World Committee, speaking

The Joseph Wresinski Archives and Research Centre

People directly impacted by poverty make a mark on history

In 2023, UNESCO added the [archives of ATD Fourth World](#) to the "Memory of the World" international register as part of humanity's documentary heritage.

Poverty in all of its forms is forgotten and even at times denied. The accounts of people with lived experience of poverty disappear or are erased. To keep a record of these accounts and of the role they play in the history of humanity, ATD Fourth World created the Joseph Wresinski Archives and Research Centre in the greater Paris region. The centre houses approximately three kilometres of physical archives and 130 terabytes of digital archives, including six million photos, thousands of hours of audio and video recordings, writings, oral histories, research studies, publications, and a range of artistic creations — a rare, precious collection that tells the stories of people living in extreme poverty around the world, gathered day after day for almost sixty-eight years.

The archives added to the "Memory of the World" register cover the period from the founding of ATD Fourth World in 1957 in an emergency housing camp in Noisy-le-Grand, to the recognition by the United Nations of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty in 1992. The archives, which comprise materials in over twenty languages from twenty-six countries, represent an invaluable source of knowledge that can be used to envisage and build peaceful societies where no one is left behind. This collection reflects the desire of ATD Fourth World's founder to document the life and struggles of people in poverty, often left out of individual and collective archives.

For the people most marginalised by poverty, whose history is often untold, this recognition is of the utmost importance. They say:

This recognition by UNESCO is an honour for us. It brings us back to life.

The Joseph Wresinski Centre, and in particular the archives, are the proof of our existence. Sometimes we don't have any identity papers, and children grow up without having been registered at birth; they don't exist for anyone except for us, members of ATD Fourth World.

The centre also tells how we have been ignored, how people are indifferent towards us.

These archives are a memorial to our history. They are precious and unique because they tell of the struggle and resistance of the most excluded people. The recognition of these archives as a part of the "Memory of the World" makes us proud, mainly because it reminds the world of our existence. Everyone has a right to know. The world has the right to know its history, and that history needs to be complete.

**POUR UNE NOUVELLE
PHILOSOPHIE SOCIALE**

**TRANSFORMER
LA SOCIÉTÉ
À PARTIR
DES PLUS PAUVRES**

COORDONNÉ PAR
FRANÇOIS JOMINI,
DAVID JOUSSET,
FRED POCHÉ
& BRUNO TARDIEU

**LE BORD
DE L'EAU**
documents

Book cover:
*Pour une nouvelle
philosophie sociale*

For a new social philosophy

Pour une nouvelle philosophie sociale (For a New Social Philosophy) is a book resulting from collaborative research in the field of social philosophy and incorporating the Merging of Knowledge approach. It was edited by François Jomini, David Jousset, Fred Poché, and Bruno Tardieu and was published by Le Bord de l'eau in November 2023. The thirty-one co-authors of this book present the results of their collective research and propose a new approach to understanding extreme poverty and taking action to overcome it.

This work describes a new type of human and intellectual adventure — that of bringing together activists with a lived experience of poverty, Volunteer Corps members, and allies to examine philosophy applying the rigorous Merging of Knowledge methodology alongside professional philosophers — all working together towards ending extreme poverty. Philosophy involves questioning concepts and ways of thinking about the world which, without us always realising it, help to perpetuate or even justify poverty.

Social philosophy is at the core of this book. This branch of political philosophy maintains that in order to move towards a fairer society, we must take into account lived injustice and the views of people who experience it.

The introduction to the book, written by the philosophers in the group, sets it as a next step in the long journey of human thought. These philosophers observe that poverty is little thought about, and even less with people who experience it. It was Joseph Wresinski, whose childhood was marked by poverty, who dared to radically criticise the ideas of his time and open new avenues of thought.

The first part of the book looks at resistance. It questions the idea of resisting, an often exaggerated concept, and at the same time asks another question: *Is it fair that we are forced to resist?* The book also highlights a less visible yet essential form of resistance: the daily "resistance–endurance" of the most marginalised people when facing the violence of extreme poverty.

The second part of the book looks at the law and its emancipatory potential while also

describing its limits as shown in ATD Fourth World activists' experience, where the law can be used to exclude rather than to protect. We often heard, *They tell us we are incapable of having rights.*

The third part of the book brings in the new concept of knowledge-related injustice (epistemic injustice), which the authors study in relation to experiencing poverty. Such injustice can take various forms, such as knowing something and not being believed, or having your experience interpreted by other people who have power over you. This part of the book describes both causes and potential solutions.

It is thanks to the experience I gained at ATD Fourth World that I can clearly say where I come from. I used to hide my background, I denied it. At that point, you become a traitor to yourself.

In the postscript to the book, the co-authors describe their writing journey and how they overcame fears and stereotypes to understand each other and create a common language to describe experiences that were hitherto unnamed.



Participants in a Merging of Knowledge process after their work together (Guatemala 2020)



31

REVUE
QUART
MONDE

DOSIERS
Y DOCUMENTOS

¿De quién es el conocimiento?

Emancipación, Cruce de Saberes y lucha contra la pobreza



Participants using the Merging of Knowledge research approach to identify and make visible the violence experienced by women living in poverty (Bolivia, 2023)

"¿De quién es el conocimiento?" (Whose knowledge is it?)

Published in October 2023, *¿De quién es el conocimiento? Emancipación, Cruce de Saberes y lucha contra la pobreza* (Whose Knowledge Is It? Empowerment, the Merging of Knowledge, and the Fight to End Poverty), is ATD Fourth World's first publication using the Merging of Knowledge approach that was entirely conceived and written in Spanish. The book is based on the experience of participatory processes developed since the 1960s in Spanish-speaking countries. It is a continuation of the presence and action of ATD Fourth World teams in Latin America and the Caribbean who work alongside people living in poverty. Together they build

spaces where marginalised people can participate and contribute their life experiences.

The development of the "Merging of Knowledge from Latin America" training programme* enabled people living in poverty, academics, and professionals from social organisations — all co-researchers — to explore the principles and methodologies used in the Merging of Knowledge approach.

Contacts that were established at the regional level and the relationships that developed among all the co-researchers resulted in two virtual meetings. These meetings aimed to respond to Joseph Wresinski's questions

and challenge with regard to the role of universities and their responsibility to develop a knowledge of poverty that incorporates the knowledge of people who actually experience it.

Drawing from these discussions, the book presents a selection of insights and experiences related to participatory research and to the role of people working to end poverty. The participants offer their perspectives and discuss the challenge of recognising and strengthening the knowledge of people who experience poverty — an essential component in shaping an understanding of poverty. The book also examines Latin American contributions to

developing participatory methods and provides a comprehensive exploration of the methodological challenges of the Merging of Knowledge approach.

Bringing together these experiences is a significant step in disseminating the Merging of Knowledge approach in the Spanish-speaking world, paving the way for new initiatives to build truly participatory and transformative processes.

** Training programme developed in collaboration between ATD Fourth World and the Autonomous University of Mexico from 2020 to 2023, with the participation of about thirty people from Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, and Spain.*

International Administration, Ethics, and Finance **PAEFI**

Introduction

Between 2022 and 2023, the budget of the International Movement slightly decreased, with a decline in total costs (from €4,807,492 to €4,598,571, representing a decrease of 4.3 per cent). The total net result is nearly balanced and amounts to €4,009.

The costs of the International Movement cover the following areas:

- ➔ The structural costs of the International Centre's three sites: Baillet-en-France, Méry-sur-Oise, and Pierrelaye;
- ➔ Public representation, international advocacy, and international projects;
- ➔ The work of the International Leadership Team and the support they provide to the members of ATD Fourth World;
- ➔ The four regional coordination teams (Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean) and the follow-up work in the North Africa/Middle East and Indian Ocean regions;
- ➔ The implementation of ATD Fourth World's Common Commitments, including the evaluation of its work;
- ➔ The exchange of information within the Forum on Overcoming Extreme Poverty;
- ➔ Certain projects undertaken at the European level;
- ➔ The welcome and training of members of ATD Fourth World on an international level and hosting at the International Centre;
- ➔ The preservation and dissemination of the history of people living in extreme poverty by the Joseph Wresinski Archives and Research Centre;
- ➔ Cross-cutting functions in communication, international volunteering, administration and finance, etc.;
- ➔ The work of teams in eighteen countries: Asia (two), Africa (seven), the Indian Ocean (two), Latin America (five), the Caribbean (one) and the Middle East (one), for whom the International Movement ATD Fourth World maintains the accounts;
- ➔ Working groups created to exchange experiences and practices on certain projects.

Significant events in 2023

In 2023, many expenditure items decreased compared with the previous year. This reduction was due to the completion of the "Think, Act, and Advocate with People in Poverty" project, co-financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) concluding in December 2022. This resulted in a decline in the number of international sessions, reducing the costs on travel, accommodation, and consumable materials. Nevertheless, 2023 saw several noteworthy events, including a training session held at the International Centre bringing together Taporì facilitators from about eighteen countries.

Despite the overall decrease, some costs increased due to significant inflation — especially energy expenses. ATD also increased the salaries and allowances of International Volunteer Corps members to respond to the high rate of inflation in certain regions of the world, taking into account the cost of living in each country.

International Administration, Ethics, and Finance (continued)

In 2023, efforts to diversify our funding sources continued, and ATD successfully secured new financing for the Family Advocacy Project and "Access to Books for Children in Extreme Poverty: A Window to the World". The latter project focuses on French-speaking countries in Africa where ATD is active. ATD

also received new funding for our European meeting costs and co-financing was obtained from Caritas and the AFD for the project "Justice and Dignity For All" which started on 1 January 2024 in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burkina Faso.

The International Movement ATD Fourth World's abbreviated statement of income and costs (in K€)

Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total costs	4 599	4 807	4 148	4 042	4 320
Contributions Fondation ATD Quart Monde + International Volunteer Corps *	3 935	3 848	3 421	2 972	3 145
Other products	668	971	758	1 105	1 219
Total income	4 603	4 818	4 179	4 077	4 365
Total net result (rounded to the nearest K)	4	11	30	35	45

*Includes the balancing subsidy + the reimbursement of dedicated donations and funds collected by the Foundation

ATD Fourth World's 2023 Financial Report is available on our website:

<https://www.atd-fourthworld.org/who-we-are/financial-ethics>

In France, ATD Fourth World comprises nine autonomous legal structures under French law, including the International Movement. Additional information on the 2023 Financial Report is available on our website:

<https://www.atd-quartmonde.org/qui-sommes-nous/ethique-et-finances/comptes-combines/>

Outlook for 2024

The projected expenditure budget of ATD Fourth World for the year 2024 foresees an increase to €5,151,267. The main assumptions on which this forecast is based are:

- An increase in the number of international sessions and meetings, particularly within the "Justice and Dignity For All" project;
- An increase in the number of people hosted at the International Centre under the French administrative scheme: "Volontariat International de Solidarité" (International Solidarity Volunteering), managed by the "Fonds Coopératif de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire" (French Cooperative Fund for Youth and Community Education);
- An intense planning schedule and an increase in expenses in certain countries including Madagascar and Haiti.

Perspectives from the International Leadership Team

The International Movement ATD Fourth World is present in several countries in situations of extreme insecurity. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, ATD Fourth World grew from Tapori activities with children in a context of armed conflict. This brought hope to the parents, reassuring them that they could coexist peacefully with their neighbours. Twenty-five years later, the violence is still ongoing, and the news from Goma in the east of the country is alarming. The members of ATD Fourth World came up with ways to continue their work. They organised a group initiative to install sanitation facilities in a camp for displaced families, enabling the participants to unite in solidarity and work together to respond to the families' needs. Here, as elsewhere in the world, ATD Fourth World remains close to families and communities living in destitution and powerlessness.



From left : Martin Kalisa, Chantal Consolini, Bruno Dabout

For 2024, ATD Fourth World has several objectives:

- ➔ Capitalise on the experience gained over the years in the development of ATD Fourth World in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the work with children living on the streets in Burkina Faso;
- ➔ Relaunch internal training for our grassroots teams in writing reports that are crucial for advancing our knowledge of extreme poverty;
- ➔ Publish articles on our [international website](#) to share our knowledge derived from projects that enable access for everyone to quality education that unleashes everyone's potential. These articles will be valuable references for people involved in education;
- ➔ Create projects with young people to provide them with access to training that will lead to employment, such as the *Réussir ensemble* ("Succeed together") project in Villeurbanne, France;
- ➔ Continue the "Gender and Poverty" project to follow up on the webinar presenting the work of a group of activists, practitioners, and academics in Bolivia who discussed violence against women in poverty. The project aims to understand how poverty impacts women and men differently, to provide spaces for expression and reflection, and to produce an in-depth analysis based on encounters, dialogues, writings, and life stories;
- ➔ Start an international project for *one single justice* by creating a community of ideas and projects for social and environmental justice starting with people living in extreme poverty;
- ➔ Launch a new phase in the Family Advocacy Project, with the dissemination across Europe of concrete proposals, the result of research using the Merging of Knowledge approach among parents in several European countries, professionals, and academics;
- ➔ For the World Day for Overcoming Poverty, coordinate with the [International Committee for October 17](#) to organise a planning session in Dakar, Senegal, focusing on an international public event on access to legal identity;
- ➔ Launch an international campaign that will encourage young people around the world to unite as advocates for the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

The International Movement ATD Fourth World

The International Movement ATD Fourth World (All Together in Dignity), is an international non-governmental organisation with no religious or political affiliation. Its aim is to eradicate extreme poverty and social exclusion by recognising the vital role of people living in poverty as agents of change. ATD holds a vision of a world without poverty, a society where each person is respected. Poverty is an affront to human dignity, and people in poverty have unique knowledge and experience that can lower the barriers separating people and communities.

Founded in 1957 by Joseph Wresinski, ATD Fourth World brings together people from all cultures and social classes, and works in thirty-six countries throughout Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia. It partners with organisations in ninety other countries and has a total of over 100,000 members worldwide.

ATD Fourth World also advocates with institutions and public authorities to encourage them, in all their political decisions, to take into account all the dimensions of poverty. It works to have people living in extreme poverty recognised as partners with the right to participate in national and international institutions.

In extreme poverty, people always believe that tomorrow will be better. With them, I believe this too.

Joseph Wresinski

Index

Advocacy

5, 15, 25, 29, 39, 41, 45, 47

Archives

49

ATD Fourth World publications

51, 53

Childhood

7

Dignified work

5, 9, 11, 15, 21, 23, 29, 33, 39, 41

Direct work with families

7, 11, 17, 19

Employment projects

5, 21, 29, 33, 38, 39

Evaluation and planning

19

Families

37

Finances

54, 55

Forum theatre

21, 23

Health

7

Informal sector

11, 15

Institutional violence

27, 37

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

11, 15, 23, 29, 31, 33, 38, 39, 47, 54

International research

37

Legal identity

13, 56

Merging of Knowledge

5, 9, 27, 37, 43, 51, 53

People's University

17, 21, 23

Social protection

7, 11, 15, 31, 39

Socio-economic discrimination

9, 21, 23, 45, 47

Tapori

19, 35, 54, 56

The understanding of extreme poverty

5, 19, 21, 25, 37, 43, 53, 56

Youth

5, 9, 15, 19, 21, 25, 31, 47, 56

This report was produced by ATD Fourth World members under the responsibility of Méлина Marcoux and with the support of Jan Świątek

English edition: Robyn Vogel with Judith Grandi and Moya Amateau

English translation : Marta Garcia De La Paz, Janet Nelson Naomi Norberg, Olena Strzelbicka, Camille Thompson, Jane Vazzotti, and Amanda Wilson

Front cover: ©François Phliponeau et ©Carmen Martos

Back cover: ©François Phliponeau

Layout: Cécile Wintrebert

ISSN : 1626-3839 • ISBN : 978-2-493176-22-6

© International Movement ATD Fourth World 2024



International Movement ATD Fourth World

12, rue Pasteur
95480 Pierrelaye
France
+33 (0) 1 34 30 46 10

[relations.internationales@
atd-quartmonde.org](mailto:relations.internationales@atd-quartmonde.org)

www.atd-quartmonde.org
www.atd-fourthworld.org
www.atd-cuartomundo.org

