



ATD Fourth World Annual Review 2009



*“Even though poverty may not be as visible in today’s society as it was seventy years ago, the experience of stigma and exclusion remains the same.*

*“When you live in long-term poverty, you have to depend on services that are often delivered with suspicion and disdain, making you feel humiliated. The media and politicians speak about the poor in derogatory terms like lazy, scroungers, feckless parents and the underclass. This stereotyping of all poor people then dehumanises them in the eyes of others...”*

As harsh and as sobering as these words are, they stand testament to the experience of one mother and active grass roots member of ATD Fourth World, and that of many other families that we know with experience of poverty and social exclusion.

# Recognising resilience



All year long, one message has been echoed time and again: we live in a society where the most vulnerable are blamed for their situation, where families living in persistent poverty are confronted by a system that interrogates more than supports them and where the social fabric of local communities is under increasing strain as neighbour is encouraged to turn against neighbour. This is not a lifestyle choice; it is a life sentence.

A life sentence that, added to hardship, disempowerment and raging inequality, pushes the resilience of people to the limit. It is for this reason that ATD Fourth World works alongside families experiencing poverty to support them, to witness their efforts and recognise the contribution that many of them make to their communities and society as a whole.

As we look towards 2010 and the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, it is imperative that we continue to forge new partnerships and challenge current attitudes towards poverty in the UK. Over the course of the next year, ATD Fourth World will be working hard to ensure that our programmes remain inventive and relevant to the challenges faced by the most disadvantaged and excluded families.

We value your ongoing support,

Martin Kalisa, Dann Kenningham and Sarah Kenningham  
The National Co-ordination Team  
ATD Fourth World





Families experiencing persistent poverty in the UK today need more support than ever to ensure their wellbeing and provide a better future for children. The challenges faced by these families, however, are complex and the whole picture must be looked at when seeking durable solutions.

Also, the needs of the family as a unit are rarely considered together, as support services are tailored towards individuals within the same household. This can lead to a lack of co-ordination between the different agencies involved in supporting a vulnerable family and a lack of coherence in the overall approach.

It is for these very reasons that the promotion of a holistic, proactive approach to family support that builds upon the strengths and ambitions of each family

# Support to build on



in the context of their community, and endeavours to work in partnership with other professionals involved in their lives, is at the heart of our work.

Rooted in a relationship of trust and built over the long-term, the results of this approach are tangible. One ATD Fourth World member who supports a vulnerable young woman says, *“Her struggles with housing, homelessness, education, employment, debt, a learning difficulty, negotiating friendships and low self-esteem have, at times, been so immense and multi-layered that we have both felt paralysed by their sheer weight.*

*“But having regular and intensive support from ATD Fourth World to press her key workers to take more responsibility for her circumstances has raised the bar of*

*expectation both for her and myself; she has felt valued, included and important.*

*“She now has ambitions and aims which are realistic, achievable and, most importantly, come from her and not from those around her. It has been very important for both of us to know that action can be taken and that support is there for her to build on.”*

Working in this way informs our efforts with policy makers by reconnecting families with services and professionals so that they can work with each other and learn from one another. It is only by bringing all these elements together that we can combat isolation and exclusion and reinforce those steps people in poverty take to make changes in their own lives.

family support



Frimhurst Family House is a fully-modernised Victorian house set in its own extensive woodland and grounds and is, for many families, a refuge where parents and children can spend quality time together away from the stresses of daily life.

It is also the perfect environment in which parents can learn some of the skills necessary to attain a stable and secure future for themselves and their children. With this aim in mind, the Family Learning project, run in partnership with professionals in the social care sector and Surrey County Council's Family Learning team, encompasses practical workshops run during weekends and school holidays.

Covering themes such as nutrition, health and hygiene, child development, budgeting, behaviour and boundaries and knowing

# A learning environment



one's rights, the workshops emphasise the importance of bringing the whole family together for the learning experience.

The sessions are carefully planned and designed with qualified and experienced professionals in the relevant field. However, of equal importance is the creation of conditions that will allow parents, children and professionals to work together and learn from one another. Building on this positive experience, families then return to their communities and neighbourhoods with confidence and new skills. *"When you go back, you feel stronger and you can tell your social worker where you have been and what you have done."*

Relations within the family and their trust of professionals can also be strengthened by approaching learning in this way. According

to one mother, *"It was important to meet professionals who are themselves mums. We spoke about our children and the problems we face... When we meet professionals at Frimhurst, we are not scared of them; it is very safe."*

In addition, children and parents all benefit from the supportive and relaxed atmosphere fostered during their time at Frimhurst. Time set aside for learning is balanced with opportunities for families to get to know each other and counteract some of the isolation and exclusion they often experience, with many forming strong friendships that endure beyond the duration of the project.



frimhurst





Poverty and social exclusion are, by their very definition, isolating. Bringing people together to share their hopes, concerns and experiences is one way to attempt to counter this loneliness and separation.

This 'peer support', which has the goal of building families' confidence and helping them reach their full potential, is what ATD Fourth World aims to foster through our weekly skill-sharing workshops where new skills can be learned, shared and taken back into the wider community.

Activities have varied widely, ranging from expressive art workshops and fundraising to cooking and building maintenance. In the words of one young participant, *"I feel useful when I can help out with painting and decorating; I learned I could do many different things that I had never done before."*



# Realising potential



In June, a group of young mothers and their children went on an outing to Southend-on-Sea. Made possible by a grant from Community Money, the trip allowed the mums to picnic on the beach, enjoy the seafront arcades and visit the Sea Life Centre where the children were able to get up close to starfish, seahorses, lobsters and an array of marine life.

This year also saw the introduction of a Peer Mentoring programme to support the development of people's roles within both ATD Fourth World and their own communities. The aim is to provide a forum for people to put into their own words the responsibilities they have towards friends and family and the contributions they make in their neighbourhoods. One outcome has been the creation of a photo exhibition, entitled *The Roles We Play*, in conjunction

with London-based artist Eva Sajovic to counteract some of the negative stereotypes currently portrayed of people in poverty.

The *Even Better Together* project, run in partnership with contemporary arts organisation Gasworks with funding from the Big Lottery Fund, also embarked on its second year. Through visits to galleries and a series of workshops taking in performance, sculpture, drawing, photography and film making, families continued to explore buildings, their role in our lives and how built structures can represent and communicate ideas and ideals such as 'the end of racism', 'justice' and 'no more poverty'.



Since its inception, three aims have guided the Doorstep Library project: promoting the enjoyment of books and reading to children of low-income families; befriending families in need of support and helping them re-connect with the local community; and building stronger community ties.

Now in its third year of engagement with a disadvantaged housing estate in West London, the Doorstep Library team, volunteers and local friends continue their weekly visits to read with children, lend books and build links with the most excluded households.

In addition, the team has developed an after-school programme in the local community hall. These activities, which have included drumming, cooking, drama workshops and painting, were a direct response to

# A stronger community



complaints from families that there was little for their children of primary school age to do in the evening.

Such has been the success of the project as a whole that one mother explained, *"Now I often take my children to the library. Thanks to you guys, you have shown me the way. My son loves reading and his teacher even asked me how I did it."*

Boosted by input from the after-school activities, this year's Summer Festival also provided an excellent example of how, with local partnerships to the fore, excluded families can access resources that are not normally available to them in an atmosphere emphasising a sense of cross-community cohesion.

In collaboration with H&F Homes, Play

Association Hammersmith and Fulham, The Flying Gorillas dance group and local artists and residents, the team was able to put on four days of activities, ranging from acrobatics workshops, art and crafts, dress making and street dancing to music, storytelling and community art. A photo project also encouraged children to capture images of their lives and neighbourhood.

In bringing together families from a range of backgrounds, the Doorstep Library and the Summer Festival clearly demonstrate that there is scope for wider community involvement on the estate to take real steps against poverty and exclusion.

doorstep library





The genuine and meaningful participation of the most vulnerable and excluded in discussions that touch upon not only their lives but also society as a whole is a fundamental objective of ATD Fourth World's work.

Through our participatory policy programmes and workshops, people living in poverty are given the opportunity to share with policy makers their experience, knowledge and understanding of their situation.

Empowering people in this way to express their views and offer solutions towards national debates is the ultimate recognition of their worth, their potential and the contribution they can make. In the words of one mother, *"It gives you your self-esteem, self-confidence and self-respect back. It's not*

# Influencing society



*just therapeutic; it also helps other people.”*

This year, delegations from ATD Fourth World have collaborated with a number of organisations and coalitions, not least in attending and speaking at the official launch of the *Need NOT Greed* campaign at the Houses of Parliament. An initiative of Community Links, *Need NOT Greed* aims to eliminate the need for cash-in-hand work by advocating for a modern and flexible welfare system that helps people make the transition into formal paid work and out of poverty. We were also involved in the writing of the evidence paper *Working Alongside* which accompanies the campaign.

Other partners this year have included the National Equality Partnership, for whom we organised a number of workshops to examine and analyse the impact of the

economic downturn on those living in poverty, and the British Institute of Human Rights, who invited ATD Fourth World onto the advisory group of their *Human Rights and Poverty Project* which aims to help organisations use human rights to strengthen their voice and influence with national and local policy makers.

The unifying theme of the year, however, has been the development of our Social Worker Training programme. We have worked with both Royal Holloway, University of London, presenting modules to post-graduate students about the lives of families they will encounter in social work practice, and with King's College London on evaluating a new Government scheme aiming to provide a framework of support for newly-qualified social workers in their first year of practice.

policy development



The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty was first marked on 17 October 1987, when more than one hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadéro in Paris to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger. Since then, people of all backgrounds, beliefs and social origins have come together every year on this day to renew their commitment to fighting poverty and to show their solidarity with those in poverty.

This year, to mark the day, ATD Fourth World's National Centre in London opened its doors to grassroots organisations, elected officials and members of the local community. Activities were organised for adults and children alike to raise awareness about 17 October and different initiatives to combat poverty both on a local and global level.



# A day for dignity



Participants were given the opportunity to record their own thoughts on poverty in a video booth and, throughout the day, testimonies describing the struggle against poverty were read at seventeen minutes past each hour. For one father, *"Today is a day to reflect on one's own life and that of the many families we know who are experiencing poverty and facing hardships to pay the bills and the rent arrears. Today we remember others who live in poverty and campaign for poverty to be eradicated. Poverty takes away your dignity; fighting for an end to poverty gives you your dignity back."*

Jean Lambert, the Green Party Member of the European Parliament for London, attended and announced that 2010 had been designated the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The day was both informative and moving, bringing

people from diverse backgrounds together with a common purpose.

In Surrey, a Pilgrimage Against Poverty visited Brookwood Cemetery and focused on the many thousands from London's workhouses, infirmaries, prisons and asylums who are buried there in unmarked graves. A short service of remembrance was also held.

A delegation from ATD Fourth World also attended the Trades Union Congress' 2009 Poverty Conference, *An Alternative Vision for the Welfare State*, which outlined the problems faced by those who seek to use welfare services and called for a new benefits system to be designed with the active involvement of people with experience of poverty.

17 october



ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps members make a long-term commitment to working alongside families living in extreme poverty and are involved in projects both in the UK and overseas.

Members of the Volunteer Corps agree to live on the same basic wage and make themselves available to go where their expertise and skills are needed the most. Families, couples and individuals of all ages, from a variety of backgrounds and with an assortment of practical skills and qualifications, make up this diverse group of dedicated, full-time workers.

There are a number of steps to becoming a Volunteer Corps member, the first of which is involvement in ATD Fourth World projects here in the UK. Taking part in our activities and programmes, at either the

# A true inspiration



National Centre in London or Frimhurst Family House, offers a practical introduction to the philosophy, approach and work of ATD Fourth World and is an opportunity to learn from families and children with experience of poverty and social exclusion.

In the words of Danielle McGarvey, who has spent two years working with the UK team, *"I am always learning, especially from the families. For me, that makes ATD Fourth World a very special and unique place."*

*"The key point is that we work alongside the families, not for them. This means building trusting relationships and learning from each other."*

*"Every day there is something different; from the Doorstep Library, where I read to the children, to skill-sharing workshops and*

*policy development meetings.*

*"I find it difficult to accept the injustices that the families face on a daily basis, especially with housing issues. I have seen families go without support, even though services are available for them, I have seen breakdowns in communication and I have seen people who don't know their rights because no one has bothered to tell them or because the people working in these services don't know themselves."*

*"I feel like the families have to fight the system as well as their poverty. But every day they keep going and their strength is a true inspiration to me."*

Further information on the ATD Fourth World Volunteer Corps can be found on our website at [www.atd-uk.org](http://www.atd-uk.org).

volunteer corps



# How can I get involved?

Whether it is working directly with families or supporting those who do, there are many opportunities for volunteering within ATD Fourth World. Tailored according to availability, background, wishes and skills, these opportunities can vary widely. Whether you want to share your talents or support our events, you can get involved.

Being a friend of ATD Fourth World can involve anything from helping out at a Family Learning event or doing a sponsored bike ride to offering new project ideas, writing articles or making the tea! The friends group is currently active in family support, fundraising, partnership initiatives and creating new ways of supporting the team and one another.

Come to an information weekend to find out more or visit [www.atd-uk.org](http://www.atd-uk.org).

The **financial support** we receive enables us to continue ATD Fourth World's vital work with adults and children living in poverty in the UK. There are many different ways in which you can help.

You can **fundraise** through your university, workplace or church, or as an individual, through a sponsored event, selling Christmas cards, organising a raffle etc. A range of materials is available to support your efforts.

Setting up a **standing order** with your bank guarantees us a regular income, allowing us to plan ahead and save both time and money in administration costs.

Last but not least, you can make a real difference to the society of tomorrow by bequeathing ATD Fourth World a **legacy** in your will.



## Summary of accounts

Year to 30 June

2009

2008

### INCOME

Grants	£210,000	£220,000
Donations and legacies	£44,000	£61,000
Publications, contributions and interest	£20,000	£25,000
	<u>£274,000</u>	<u>£306,000</u>

### EXPENDITURE

Family Support	£183,000	£208,000
Policy development and training	£77,000	£85,000
Publications	£5,000	£6,000
Administration, fundraising and depreciation	£7,000	£8,000
	<u>£272,000</u>	<u>£307,000</u>

**Board of Directors** Rev. Nicholas Edwards (chair), Eugen Brand, Margaret Howells, Paul Paroissien, Veronique Reboul-Salze, Ajanta Sinha, Jo Tunnard and Anna Vass

**Company Secretary** Dann Kenningham

finance



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