



Annual Review 2019
ATD Fourth World UK
All Together In Dignity To Overcome Poverty



“Poverty takes away ownership of our own lives. We’re often so battered down by the situation that we accept it. But when you see others suffering, you feel indignant. You begin looking for people to support. Realising that you’re with others gives you courage. All of us need some place where we can feel normal, without anyone chipping away at our dignity. We are not the problem; not the victims; we are part of the solution. It’s like I can go with a banner made of silk, whereas before I had one made of heavy wood.”

- Moraene Roberts

In photo, standing: Amanda Button and Thomas Mayes. Seated: Moraene Roberts. All three are people with lived experience of poverty who were named to formal responsibilities in the governance of ATD Fourth World UK.



ATD Fourth World UK has always put the participation of people with lived experience of poverty at the heart of efforts to overcome poverty. Together with other organisations, we contribute to an emerging national movement to put lived experience front and centre. In 2019, we took new steps forward in ensuring that this lived experience would drive our governance.

In March, a new National Coordination Team was named. The process of choosing this team involved extensive consultation within our community of activists, friends, and supporters. A nominating group took time to consider the guiding ethos behind ATD Fourth World and the strategic ambitions that underlie our future plans.

Moraene Roberts, whose lived experience of poverty and disability informed her unique voice, was first named to our National Coordination Team in 2014. In March 2019, she began a second term in this role. Sadly, this was her last year with us because of her untimely death on 12 January 2020.

Moraene was introduced to ATD Fourth World in 1990 and quickly became a key figure. She was instrumental in developing the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty in 1997 and in ensuring that it broke precedent by allowing people with lived experience to speak before Members of Parliament. She also helped pioneer a tradition at Royal Holloway, University of London, where for fifteen years now parents with lived experience of poverty have contributed to a module of social work training.

Moraene was guided in all her endeavours by her great sense of humour and her deep empathy for everyone she met. She was a cherished mentor to successive generations of ATD Fourth World activists, allies and Volunteer Corps members. Over her many years shaping the vision of ATD Fourth World UK, she made an indelible impression on people of all walks of life.

- Thomas Croft and Diana Skelton,
National Coordination Team



 **ATD**
FOURTH WORLD

2017 JUNE
2017 SEPTEMBER
2018 JANUARY
2018 MARCH
2018 JULY
2019 OCTOBER
2019 JUNE

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS

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FOURTH WORLD

Understanding Poverty in All its Forms:
A participatory research study in the UK

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Adding Understanding

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About ATD Fourth World



ATD Fourth World has worked in partnership with people affected by poverty since 1968 to tackle inequality and promote social justice. Those with the most difficult lives hold the key to understanding and overcoming persistent poverty and are thus at the heart of everything we do.

'Together in Dignity', our family support programme, offers vulnerable families resources to get through times of crisis, build upon their strengths, develop support networks, and develop their skills, confidence and knowledge in order to pursue their goals and aspirations. Our advocacy work with these families fosters conditions allowing them and professionals to better understand one another and collaborate.

Our **'Giving Poverty a Voice'** programme aims to raise awareness of persistent poverty, counter prejudice and discrimination, and improve policy and practice. To this end, we empower people in poverty to speak out and shape their own narrative,

while offering policy makers invaluable insight into overcoming poverty from the bottom up.

OUR VISION is a world without persistent poverty where all people are valued and can participate fully in society and fulfil their potential.

OUR MISSION is to build a network of people, groups and organisations committed to overcoming persistent poverty.

OUR VALUES include: taking people seriously by recognising the strength, determination and resourcefulness it takes to just get by; a long-term commitment to accompanying people at their own pace; the belief that every voice matters, particularly from people who are rarely heard; working collaboratively among our full-time core workers, families living in persistent poverty, allies and volunteers, who are all involved in every aspect of what we do.



Parents say:

"Despite all our troubles, we have to concentrate on our children. They are the ones we live for. And having friends really helps us parents to get through the hard times with our children."

"I felt appreciated and welcome, and my grandson made new friends. It is important for them to mix with different children."

Community Outreach and Peer Support



Social service interventions experienced as heavy handed; a benefits system that feels punitive; limited employment opportunities, and loneliness — these are just some of the many issues surrounding persistent poverty and social exclusion that our '**Community Outreach and Peer Support**' project tackles.

At the core of our family-led approach is the aim to instill in the most vulnerable families the confidence to break through isolation and engage in community life. To achieve this, we are committed to the hardest-to-reach families. We recognise the roles they play in their communities, while helping them strengthen their support networks to resist crises.

We encourage professional agencies to better engage with the concerns of parents and children, while increasing families' access to local support services, as well as to social and cultural activities.

The families in ATD Fourth World's network often

find solidarity, advice, and understanding from peers who have faced many of the same struggles.

"With support from ATD Fourth World, you're in a relationship with a whole bunch of other people. It lasts because ATD believes you have huge potential. You might not have had chances or opportunities before but, given those, things can happen."

This year we developed three new projects: an **adult well-being group** in Feltham; a **Tapori children's group** in Southwark; and **family activity days** at our national centre during half-terms. Children learn new skills and design seasonal arts and crafts ranging from making suncatchers to leaf painting.

"I loved making the suncatcher. I'll put it in my room."

"What I liked most today was playing with new people."



Getting Away From It



Living in poverty can feel like fighting a constant battle. Our '**Getting Away From It**' project offers a break from day-to-day stresses and worries, as well as an opportunity to spend quality time together, strengthen relationships and form new friendships.

Set on nine acres of wooded parkland, Frimhurst Family House is a modernised Victorian manor house boasting a library, an art studio, a games room, a nursery, a computer suite and four purpose-built family apartments. **Well being breaks** are organised either for adults only or for entire families. In the words of one child,

"I played more with my whole family. I like spending time with them, because then I get to love them more."

The workshops proposed include soap making, bike riding, painting, sewing, wood carving, and cooking. Outdoor games, strolls, and outings are also on offer to take advantage of the magnificent grounds and local amenities. Beyond the enjoyable activities, this

project fosters the support and understanding needed for friendships to flourish. One participant said:

"I really enjoyed spending time with all the team members, catching up with old friends, and getting to meet new ones."

The '**Getting Away From It**' project aims to create pockets of happiness and as much breathing space as possible. Larger scale events feature an annual Family Fun Day in Frimhurst and a Christmas Party in London. In link with other aspects of our Family Support Programme, these positive experiences form a foundation for the long-term relationships necessary to tackle formidable challenges.

"This is the first time I have left London not for family duties but to enjoy a peaceful, beautiful environment. I have been shown kindness and value — not something I experience in my usual environment. A very big thank you."



"I got up and I did something", said a young adult about two days of skill sharing in Addington Square. After feeling stuck in his family's flat, he was glad to have a reason to get out the front door and to ride his bike over to get involved in our project. His words represent the beginning of something.

When young adults are not in education, employment or training, they are left out of society. No one should be left behind. By learning skills, people rebuild their confidence. By volunteering alongside others, everyone grows in human qualities. Involving these young people is a priority because everyone is needed and can be useful somewhere.

Skill Sharing and Access to Volunteering



Redecorating a meeting room, filling holes in a drive, moving furniture into a guest bedroom, planting flowers, learning how to use a mini-digger... ATD Fourth World's '**Skill Sharing and Access to Volunteering**' project offers a plethora of opportunities for young people and adults to demonstrate their existing skills and learn new ones.

Through **volunteering**, people gain confidence as their contribution is valued. The project encourages them to explore their potential by broadening their horizons and developing skills recognised by employers. These volunteering opportunities connect people and help recognise the contributions made by people in poverty to society.

One father knows this project well, having participated in remodelling the attic in our national centre. This year, worried about his teenage son, he encouraged the boy to take part. The son's interest in bicycles led him to get very involved in checking all the bikes at Frimhurst Family House, fixing gears and

brakes, changing pedals and inner tubes, and making sure all bikes were safe to use. A core team member observed, *"He's really good with bikes. He knew exactly how to do an excellent job."*

A young mother learned to paint during a **skill-sharing workshop**. Later she told the team that she had begun painting her own flat. A little nudge of encouragement, a lot of untapped talent, and a positive experience with others gave her the confidence that she could do this on her own.

During workshops in September and November, participants also took time to imagine and plan future projects together. One woman suggested that a future skill-sharing workshop should repair the mosaic on the outside wall of our national centre. Finding a qualified artisan to lead this workshop is now planned for next year.



Understanding Poverty in All Its Forms



After three years of participatory research, we launched the findings of '*Understanding Poverty in All Its Forms*'. Here and internationally, the study was led by people with lived experience of poverty in collaboration with academics and practitioners. We developed important experience in co-production of research design, data collection and analysis.

The international report 'The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty' was unveiled in May at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris. Researchers in six countries — Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the UK, and the USA — identified nine dimensions common to all.

The UK report 'Understanding Poverty in All Its Forms' shows how material inequalities undermine well-being and personal and social development. Released in October at Amnesty International UK, this report highlights six dimensions: disempowering structures and policies; financial insecurity, financial exclusion and debt; damaged health and well-being; stigma,

judgement and blame; lack of control over choices; and unrecognised struggles, skills and contributions.

The research process was a personal journey. One co-researcher said: *"It woke me up to what was in me: the emotional crushedness inside me, that I was walking about with and I wasn't aware that that was the case. There was a lot of blame, shame, guilt. This came up again and again in the research."*

An academic summed up the value of this research: *"Statistics, important as they are, can obscure the people they count. Counter-narratives can help shift the angle of vision so that the wider society can see people in poverty as fellow human beings 'suffering in body, mind and heart', to quote from the report."*

Policy makers, service providers and funders can learn from our research that putting the voices of people with experience of poverty front and centre should become the norm in research rather than the exception.



The Right to Family Life: Re

Children in poverty are much more likely to be put in care than others. More children are being put in care today than at any time since the 1980s. The rising number of children entering the care system has led to a rising rate of forced closed adoptions. ATD Fourth World supports families who feel that most of these interventions and removals are hostile and unfair.

Our *'Right to Family Life'* project creates dialogues between parents living in poverty and social work academics and practitioners. These dialogues reflect the needs and concerns of families in poverty while exploring proposals for change coming from those working in the child protection system.



In September, the British Association of Social Workers launched an Anti-Poverty Practice Guide for Social Work. This guide draws on focus groups with ATD Fourth World activists and highlights our participatory research on '*Understanding Poverty in All Its Forms*'. The guide encourages practitioners to consider the impact of poverty in their assessments.

During the launch event, an ATD family support worker described the damaging effects of noting words such as “shabby” and “grubby” in social service files where they may deter care leavers from reaching out to their birth parents. An ATD activist gave a positive example of how compassion and respect from one social worker made a difference:

"She put her hand on my shoulder as tears were rolling down my eyes. That contact changed our whole relationship and everything that came after."

Another key moment took place in November at the United Nations in Geneva. To mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a British activist spoke about abuse suffered in care homes and other soul-destroying experiences in the care system that cause long-lasting emotional damage.

We also ran poverty-aware-practice workshops for social workers at: Birmingham University; Royal Holloway, University of London; and the Children's Social Care Safeguarding Service of the Royal Borough of Greenwich.





Challenging Perceptions of Poverty

"They may not like what we say but they've got to respect us. We've got to work together. Without respect and dignity you might as well forget it. It makes a big difference when someone sits and listens to you."

In our '[Poverty Experts](#)' project, activists with lived experience of poverty engage in public debates on poverty as panellists, mediators, and facilitators, building on the 2009-2018 success of '[The Roles We Play](#)'. These activists demonstrate the value of lived experience by increasing public understanding of the issues. The project targets the general public, as well as specific audiences involved in policy, practice or research.

This year, ATD Fourth World activists led **Poverty Experts workshops** at several universities and for around fifty members of staff at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. They were also among

featured speakers at the York Festival of Ideas and a 'Speaking Truth to Power' fireside chat run by Church Action on Poverty. The play 'Faith, Hope, and Charity', written in consultation with several activists, was performed at the National Theatre in October.

Four activists were invited to the University of Sheffield to offer their critical feedback on an analysis carried out by the Artificial Intelligence in Housing, Welfare, and Social Care Network. Three activists received media training as a part of 'Talking About Poverty', a Joseph Rowntree sponsored project run by On Road Media.

ATD Fourth World is a founding member of Poverty2Solutions, which lobbied for the implementation of a socio-economic duty. Seven ATD activists represented this group at the Labour Party conference and met with several MPs.

UN International Day for



*"How are we meant to exit our cloud of doom?
Debts and robbing Peter to pay Paul.
Scrimping and scraping to make ends meet."*

*"This is where we find together the solidarity
and courage to challenge the culture around us
by making sure that the voices of people in
poverty are heard."*



These words were among the heartfelt 'Let Me Tell You' messages that rang out at the London observance of the International Day, supported by the London Challenge Poverty Week. The event was held in two locations, both linked by a slice of history that found current resonance. Ada Salter (1866-1942) was a social reformer and anti-poverty campaigner. She and her husband chose to live in the slums of Bermondsey where they dedicated their every effort to supporting their neighbours. Resisting the effects of poverty meant improving conditions on the ground — and also helping to innovate social care in British politics.

The first meeting point was 'Dr. Salter's Dream', a sculpture in Bermondsey Wall Street where Londoners congregated to hear messages from people living in poverty and musical performances. Later that October day, the commemoration continued at ATD Fourth World's national centre in Camberwell where the Journeymen Theatre

performed 'Red Flag Over Bermondsey', inspired by Ada Salter's life.

The day was also marked in Glasgow, where a new commemorative stone was inaugurated in the prominent George Square. This monument honours the courage and dignity of people in poverty and stands as a permanent reminder that:

"Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated.

To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty."

Around the country, the APLE (Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience) Collective marked the international day by 'lighting up the map'. They invited everyone to join their social media takeover featuring local community events led by people in poverty, as well as moments of silence to remember lives lost to poverty.



Friends, Allies and Supporters Network



Throughout the year, many people volunteered their time with ATD Fourth World, providing vital solidarity, support and friendship. Some created opportunities for our activists to speak to their colleagues or at conferences. Others pitched in with meal preparations, facilitating activities, event planning, communications or fundraising.

Several of these **friends and allies** described what they consider unique about ATD Fourth World.

Stacey: *"I appreciate that support is provided without making assumptions. The team sees the individual and is always ready to genuinely listen."*

Paul: *"This is where I see the knowledge, capacity, experience and wisdom to foster the inclusion of people locked out of decision making."*

Dani: *"Public services can be chaotic. But here there's always an amazing platform for people who are silenced. It's a consistency I haven't come across anywhere else."*

Gertraud: *"What draws me is that people in poverty aren't told what to do but are invited to work things out for themselves. When they experience the strength of their own contribution for what might be the first time, it's like a beacon lighting up."*

Fran: *"I'm nourished by the diversity here. The energy of people from different backgrounds coming together for a common goal is one of the things about ATD Fourth World that I treasure."*

Judith: *"The ethos here is rare and wonderful. Instead of a 'mother hen' approach, ATD Fourth World puts time and energy into a two-way process of time and patience to get to know each family or individual and ensure that all have an equal say."*

Rachel: *"I love the way people treat each other here. The communal kitchens are homey and family-like spaces where everyone pitches in. This reflects the notion of tangible accompaniment to create the right context for all people to be equal partners. Here, we're all accompanying each other."*



Board of Directors

Letitia Mason (chair), Caroline Davies, Rev. Nicholas Edwards, Prof. Anna Gupta, Dr. Margaret Guy, Rev. Saju Muthalaly, Thomas Mayes, Isabelle Pypaert-Perrin and Ajanta Sinha.

Company Secretary

Thomas Croft



	2019	2018
INCOME		
Grants	379,419	348,336
Donations and legacies	34,645	36,449
Publications, contributions and fees	34,576	33,766
Interest	990	1,821
	<u>449,630</u>	<u>420,372</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities (unrestricted)	236,140	256,752
<i>All Together in Dignity</i> (restricted)	24,252	21,602
Outreach, Respite and Peer Support Programme		
<i>Giving Poverty a Voice</i> (restricted)	127,165	115,009
Policy, Participation and Training Programme		
Support costs (administration and depreciation)	45,710	46,316
Fundraising	4,933	4,166
	<u>438,200</u>	<u>443,845</u>

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ATD
FOURTH WORLD

48, Addington Square, London SE5 7LB

0207 703 3231

atd@atd-uk.org

Registered Charity N° 209367

www.atd-uk.org

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