



Annual Review 2020
ATD Fourth World UK
All Together in Dignity to Overcome Poverty





The Covid-19 pandemic that swept across the world has had a disproportionate impact on people living in poverty including those lacking secure housing, employed in essential work, or with underlying health conditions.

The pandemic brought many more people to the brink of poverty and highlighted inequalities. Panic buying led to shortages and price hikes. With limitations on gatherings and the suspension of support such as health visitors, special needs groups, and many forms of therapy, people have been more isolated than ever before. The digital divide and cramped housing have made schooling from home particularly difficult for families in poverty.

Despite the challenges facing the ATD Fourth World community, we are proud of our achievements. We have been invited more often than ever before to speak at universities and conferences. Mindful of government guidance, we adapted our projects to social distancing and video-conferencing. This in itself has been a challenge, but it also opened new

- Artwork by Dan Healey

opportunities and forced us to innovate. With distance no obstacle, video-conferencing has created new space to widen and strengthen our networks by thinking and working together with other organisations across the UK and beyond.

It has not been easy to strike a balance between our two programmes. '**Giving Poverty a Voice**', which empowers people in poverty to speak out and shape their own narrative, has been straightforward to transfer online. However, the pandemic was a bigger stumbling block for '**Together in Dignity**', our family support programme. Nevertheless, even in the strictest lock-down conditions, we found ways to reach out to families in our network.

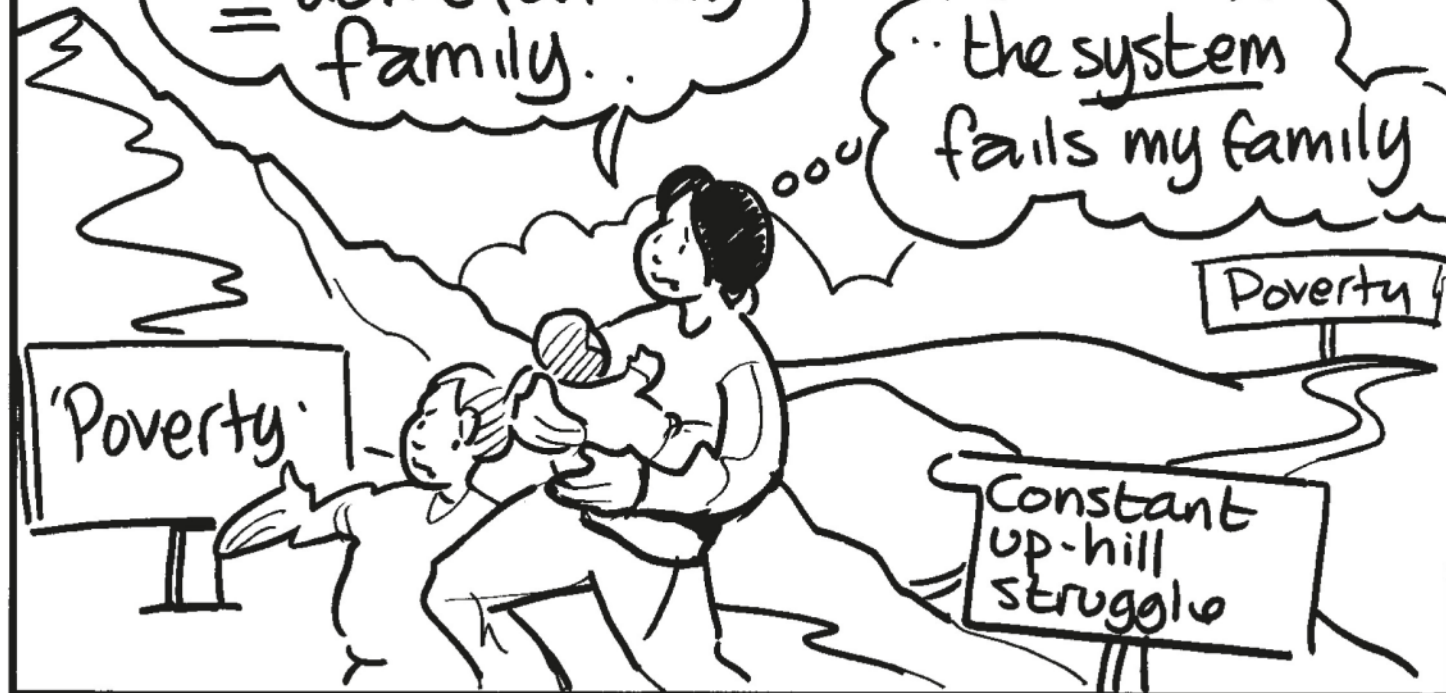
The pandemic has been long and tedious, and it is not over. It is likely to haunt society for the foreseeable future. Our hope is that it is pushing the world to change so that we do not abandon anyone.

- Gertraud Trivedi,
for the National Coordination and its support team

'Poverty' does not mean 'neglect'..

.. I don't fail my family..

.. the system fails my family



About ATD Fourth World



ATD Fourth World - *All Together in Dignity* - 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 with our full-time core workers, families living in persistent poverty, allies and volunteers, who are all involved in every aspect of what we do.



Together in Dignity



Community Outreach & Peer Support

It has been a very challenging time for those involved in *Community Outreach and Peer Support*. The year of lockdowns, social distancing, and uncertainty was hard for everyone but particularly for the most vulnerable families. Despite the COVID-19 restrictions however, ATD Fourth World team members involved in outreach were motivated to work harder than ever to stay in touch with and support individuals and families who were already isolated from society before the pandemic. We also developed new approaches in order to adapt to the ever-changing government guidance on how best to prevent contagion.

In early 2020, the adult well-being group in Feltham that was established in 2019 was still meeting regularly and the outreach team was hard at work in helping families to broaden their networks of support. Then when harsh lockdowns began in mid-March, our approach shifted to frequent phone calls

and designing craft activity packs to mail to children, an initiative that was connected to the international Tapori Children's Network and supported by the End Child Poverty Coalition.

We also made occasional socially distanced visits to the most isolated members of the community, particularly when they could not be reached by phone or when we had a specific concern for someone's well-being. During every phone call and visit, our core team members listened non-judgmentally to people's experiences of the pandemic. More than once we were told how valuable this friendly presence and attentive support was. One mother said:

'Before, I was in a very dark place because of my daughter's special needs and the lockdown feeling so strange to us. We felt lonely. But the support from ATD is so caring and considerate. With more interactions with others, things have fallen into place.'



Getting Away From It

When restrictions started to loosen between July and October, we organised small outdoor activities such as park outings with a single family at a time in England. In Scotland, 'Relaxation in the Rose Garden' involved gentle movement, stretching and breathing exercises, and self-acupressure to support health and well-being. One participant who lives in a hotel while seeking asylum said about the workshop:

'I felt like I was floating on air. Practising some of these exercises can help me with sleeping.'

In November and early December, some indoor activities were authorised. Knowing that it would not be possible to organise a large Christmas party in London as in the past, we looked for other ways to prepare this festive season. At the suggestion of one mother, Addington Square opened its doors every Tuesday morning and Friday afternoon to welcome individuals in small groups (no more than three

adults or one family with children). Typically, participants could choose between two workshops: one tailored to develop their creative inclinations; and another more suited to practical temperaments, such as cooking or gardening. Thanks to a generous donation of high quality arts and crafts material, beautiful cards and lovely ornaments were designed. The house was filled with the irresistible aroma of home-made mince pies and cupcakes. Participants felt proud of themselves and told us how much they had missed being part of activities with others. A core team member observed:

'To keep things sanitised, we had to carefully hand out material individually. I realised that we don't always need to prepare very elaborate activities. These very simple workshops created a good atmosphere and let people shine.'



Together in Dignity



Nurturing well-being online

As the year drew to a close with concern about contagion growing and the probabilities of another lockdown looming, our team decided to experiment with offering well-being workshops online. Some of the impetus came from our collaborations with On Road Media, which moved its peer group well-being activities online in March in ways that deepened a sense of connection among people in poverty scattered throughout England and Scotland.

Through the Parents, Families and Allies Network (PFAN), a research project in September led us to meet many parents whose family court cases were heard remotely after the family courts closed their doors to the public. Knowing that many of these parents had recently lost custody of their children, we supported PFAN to offer three online festive get-togethers, two just before Christmas and the third just before New Year's Eve.

Crowd-funding made it possible to offer vouchers for data top-ups and refreshments so that participants could access Zoom with hot chocolate and mince pies at hand. These were occasions for carol-singing, pub quizzes, origami lessons, and heart-to-heart conversations. The activities that drew the most enthusiasm from participants were those where the group could collaborate together at designing something new: writing a poem together; and creating a playlist of each participant's favourite uplifting songs, seasonal or not.

Despite the obstacle of social distancing, we feel that the Together in Dignity programme managed to have a successful year creating community and support for those who were living in social isolation long before COVID-19.



ATD Fourth World UK



ATD Fourth World

Understanding Poverty

The voices of people with lived experience of poverty should be heard and valued. Their unique knowledge of what stigmatisation feels like can inform and drive lasting change in society. Our *Understanding Poverty* project focuses on participatory approaches for developing our thinking on poverty and providing training and development opportunities for activists with lived experience of poverty in our community.

Poverty2Solutions is a coalition led by activists with lived experience from ATD Fourth World, Dole Animators and Thrive Teesside. In January 2020, *The Big Issue Magazine* recognised Poverty2Solutions as one of the top 100 change-makers of the year. In the spring Poverty2Solutions produced a creative workbook as a tool for people in poverty to engage in reflection on their experiences of the pandemic. ATD used this tool to check in with many activists in our community. Additionally, Poverty2Solutions

Giving Poverty a Voice



advanced with its campaign to put the voices of lived experience of poverty at the heart of decision making, asking the UK government to work collaboratively to ensure that debt deductions from benefits do not drive hardship and destitution.

The APLE (Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience) Collective widened its diversity by recruiting two new members: the Poverty Truth Community in Glasgow and RAPAR (Refugee and Asylum Participatory Action Research) in Manchester. APLE's campaign focus has been on digital exclusion, a theme particularly relevant during lockdown and one on which ATD activists contributed to three blog posts.

Following on from collaboration with Amnesty International and Just Fair in 2019, a coalition was formed also including the University of Essex's Human Rights Centre with the aim of "Making a Human Rights Bridge out of Poverty". With two lived experience activists from ATD at the heart of its steering committee, this coalition is collaborating

with people and grass-roots groups in the four nations of the UK to prepare webinars that will take place in 2021.



#RightsBridge @AmnestyUK @ATDFourthWorld @EssexHRC @JustFairUK www.ogilviedesign.co.uk



Giving Poverty a Voice



Poverty Experts

Our *Poverty Experts* project is where lived experience activists speak to the media, the general public, or in academic and policy debates. Several such events took place in person before the first lockdown: a meeting of the National Union of Journalists; workshops for students at the universities of York and Sheffield; a session on human rights organised by the Advocates for International Development: Lawyers Eradicating Poverty; 'Speaking to Power', a global protest against inequality organised by The Equality Trust that brought together thousands of people in more than 30 countries; and a Financial Inclusion Summit at the London Guildhall launching a report by Tomorrow's Company, which referenced ATD's research findings.

When social distancing began in March, Poverty Experts shifted online for many webinars and online workshops and events, such as a conference on 'Poverty Dimensions of COVID-19 in the UK',

- Photo: Georgina Simmonds during her book launch

organised by the University of Bristol's Poverty Institute. We also launched the publication of *The World Behind My Words*, a book of poems by activist Georgina Simmonds. ATD Fourth World also published articles in *Social Work 2020 under COVID-19 Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *Metro*, Sound Delivery, Turn2Us, and other media outlets.

Obituaries were published in *The Guardian* and *The Daily Mirror* following the death of ATD activist Moraene Roberts, a poet, researcher, and human rights campaigner who was also part of ATD's National Coordination Team. Ruth Lister, Member of the House of Lords and Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, Loughborough University, wrote of Moraene:

'She had a special quality, a steely gentleness: steely in that she never gave up fighting for what she believed in; but gentle in the way she related to others. Her activism was informed by a deep wisdom.'



The Right to Family Life

'When you don't see others in person, you feel even less able to understand the decisions being made and you feel traumatised. Remote justice is greatly undermining confidence in the court's ability to support people through the family justice process.'

Our *Right to Family Life* project creates dialogues between parents in poverty and social work academics and practitioners and supports families who feel that the rising number of child protection investigations and forced closed adoptions are hostile and unfair. While examining the impact of poverty on the right to family life, we explore proposals for change coming from social work professionals.

Giving Poverty a Voice



In February, ATD co-organised a conference in Birmingham called Reforming the Child Protection System: Parents and Their Allies Together. This led to the development of the Parents, Families & Allies Network (PFAN), a partnership in which ATD is very active. PFAN has gone from strength to strength, speaking at various events and carrying out research commissioned by the Nuffield Family Justice Observatory (NFJO). This research evidenced the lack of emotional, technical and professional support available for parents engaged in the family court system during the pandemic. When Covid forced all hearings online, the consequences were devastating. The NFJO report featured in an article by the BBC, which led the senior judge in the Family Court to voice concern about virtual hearings creating an obstacle to judicial empathy.

In July, ATD Fourth World contributed to the UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights for its inquiry concerning 'The Government's response to COVID-19: human rights implications'. Our

submission focused on how the injustice of online hearings exacerbated existing systemic problems linked to poverty and family rights.

In addition, activists with lived experience and our core team members contributed to many conferences, workshops and articles, including: the annual Leaders' Forum run by Research in Practice; a seminar on poverty-proofing practice run by the London Borough of Camden; a webinar on 'Poverty Aware and Anti-Poverty Social Work' organised by 'Student Connect', which was attended by 485 people and very well received. We also ran poverty-aware practice workshops for the University of Birmingham; Royal Holloway, University of London; and Brunel University.



United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Due to the pandemic, in-person events were replaced by several online events to mark 17th October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. During this extremely difficult year, the ATD community showed its strength by coming together to speak out. ATD activists engaged in many ways. Three of them were interviewed by the Trust for London for two videos and an article exploring the impact of Covid-19, the digital divide, in-work poverty, and child poverty and making recommendations for a more just society.

Additionally, to explain the importance of 17th October, activists from the APLE Collective produced videos exploring questions such as 'What does it feel like to have a voice?' and 'What does it look like to be heard?' These videos were published on the

Giving Poverty a Voice



'Rethinking Poverty' website, and were part of APLE's Twitter campaign to 'light up the map' with voices of people in poverty.

As part of the London Challenge Poverty Week, ATD Fourth World collaborated with On Road Media to organise an evening of music and verse called 'Poems to Challenge Poverty'. The online format allowed other members of APLE to join in from across England and Scotland. Some performers were based in Ireland. Seventy people attended this event, where 18 people with lived experience of poverty read their original poems or sang.

At Frimhurst Family House,* a tree-planting ceremony took place in remembrance of much loved activists Moreane Roberts and Leanne Hilton, who passed away this year.

**Run by ATD Fourth World and located in South-east England.*

*Oh why, oh why do we feel ashamed,
as if we have committed a crime?
Oh why, oh why do we hide
ourselves from humanity?
Oh why, oh why aren't we heard
with our voices?
We cry aloud but we are not heard.
Oh why, oh why can't we unite
and let our voices be heard?*

- Excerpt from a poem by Seamus Neville



Interview of Camille Jacot and Perry Proellochs

For five months, Camille and Perry lived at Frimhurst with their three children to volunteer with ATD Fourth World, which Camille first got to know in the Central African Republic in 2011.

- What attracted you to ATD Fourth World?

In Central Africa, Camille was deeply inspired by ATD's approach and the courage and humility its members showed while working together for everyone's dignity. In 2019, while we were considering a sabbatical, we came across a video where Moraene Roberts describes the roles people in poverty play. We were extremely moved by what she said and how she said it. This led us to Frimhurst.

Volunteering



- Can you tell us about your volunteering experience?

We arrived in Frimhurst in March 2020, just before the lockdown. As Frimhurst couldn't welcome people any more, we were offered the opportunity to immerse ourselves in ATD's archives, including poetry by activists, research studies, and Moraene's speeches. We also took part in a reading group devoted to her writings. Thanks to this, to discussions with the core team, activists and allies, and thanks to their generosity, we got a fair glimpse into ATD's action in the UK over past decades.

- What stood out for you?

We were very moved by strong values, such as the trust placed in each person, and the strength of commitment to a common goal that stems from this. The participatory approach also seems so essential: giving a voice to those most affected to find solutions to poverty together. What a beautiful challenge for

an organisation to be based on trust and a common purpose, with such different personalities, life stories and backgrounds!

It was an exceptional experience to have access to so much human richness, so much knowledge about poverty and the people dealing with it. This opened us up for life! For our lives with our relatives, our neighbours, and also for our professional lives. It was also magical to feel welcomed as part of ATD. These five months are a gift we cherish deeply: it will shine for a long time.

Finances

	2020 (£)	2019 (£)
INCOME		
Grants	306,587	379,419
Donations and legacies	35,175	34,645
Charitable activities	58,261	34,576
Interest	919	990
	400,942	449,630
EXPENDITURE		
Charitable activities (unrestricted)	245,080	236,140
<i>All Together in Dignity</i> (restricted)	17,842	24,252
Outreach, Respite and Peer Support Programme		
<i>Giving Poverty a Voice</i> (restricted)	29,968	127,165
Policy, Participation and Training Programme		
Support costs (administration and depreciation)	50,457	45,710
Fundraising	2,415	4,933
	345,762	438,200

We would like to thank the following organisations for their generous support in 2020: The Peter and Teresa Harris Charitable Trust; the Parish of Cove; the King's Head Harvester; Justice au Coeur; and St Paul's Camberley.

Looking Back and Ahead



While the pandemic took centre stage in 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement gained visibility. We all agree that ATD Fourth World stands against racism and all forms of oppression or prejudice. We stand for no lives left behind, which means treating each person with respect, and defending human rights.

We had many conversations with our members about racism, extremism, vandalism, and the heart-breaking acts of violence — both those that inspired the protests and a few that marred otherwise peaceful protests. For all of us — many who live in poverty; some white; some from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds; and some from multiracial families and communities — these events brought up many strong emotions.

This made for meaningful dialogue — which sometimes meant being uncomfortable. At the height of lockdown, when most of our conversations were limited to Zoom, we collaborated on three articles about Black Lives Matter. In 2021, we hope to

Speak face to face so as to listen to one another even more deeply while considering the question of what it might take for society to no longer accept the discrimination, humiliation, and stigmatisation of people in poverty.

As Covid restrictions ease, we also look forward to deepening our approach to shared governance where activists with lived experience of poverty collaborate with our board of directors. Together all of us will work towards long-term sustainability by improving our outreach and our recruitment. We will also plan ways to future-proof our buildings and reinvigorate our skills-sharing project.

Board of Directors: *Letitia Mason (chair), Caroline Davies, Rev. Nicolas Edwards, Prof. Anna Gupta, Dr. Margaret Guy, Rev. Saju Muthalaly, Thomas Mayes, Isabelle Pypaert-Perrin, Ellie Suh and Ian Whitefoot*

Company Secretary: *Thomas Croft*



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