

WORLD ATD FOURTH

Stick figures holding letters W, E, and L.

WORLD

Stick figures with a heart, a person in a wheelchair, and a flower.

ANNUAL

Stick figures with a book and a flower.

REVIEW 2023

Stick figures with a hammock, a stroller, and a flower.

ALL TOGETHER IN DIGNITY TO OVERCOME POVERTY

Well-Being in Action

This year, our well-being work has gained momentum, a testament to the power of collective effort and solidarity.

"At first, I wasn't used to peacefulness. After spending time in Frimhurst, [...] I was healed."

These words, from a mother whose family took part in one of our residential well-being breaks, encapsulate our purpose.

In our work, we see the steep toll taken on people by the harsh and unremitting daily grind of poverty. Disempowering systems, financial insecurity, stigma, and lack of control over choices can all damage health and well-being. Providing opportunities for rest, recreation, and self-care is not a luxury but a necessity of profound importance. By prioritizing well-being, we empower people to face their challenges with renewed energy and hope, fostering a more resilient community.

This year, we have increased the robustness of this cornerstone which is the **'Together in Dignity'** side of our work. Our current community partnerships continue to help us reach some of those who are struggling the most at the moment. By offering crisis support, particularly for young families, our team encourages parents to have the confidence needed to stand up for their rights. Through our **'Getting Away From It'** project, designed to help people recharge and regain their strength, this year we provided 384 hours of respite directly benefiting dozens of children and their families, some of whom are currently seeking asylum.

Well-being is also becoming a priority in our **'Giving Poverty a Voice'** programme, where activists living in poverty take on responsibility for our public-facing work. They are invited to bring their experience as public speakers in a host of venues. They facilitate anti-poverty practice workshops and help analyse the findings of our study groups on poverty, social work, and the right to family life. Because we firmly believe

that those who have lived experience of poverty are best positioned to inform and guide anti-poverty efforts, these activists are also part of inclusive leadership, both within ATD and as members or trustees for national networks that we set up and that are led by people with lived experience of poverty. Their insights are invaluable in shaping advocacy, ensuring messages that resonate with authenticity and urgency.

But throughout all this work, the chaos and injustice of poverty continues to weigh down these activists and their loved ones. This is why we have been developing new approaches to integrating well-being into our **'Understanding Poverty'** project. This may range from visiting a spa together to peer-to-peer support during a residential working session, activities that foster a sense of belonging and enhance the resistance and strength of the communities we serve.

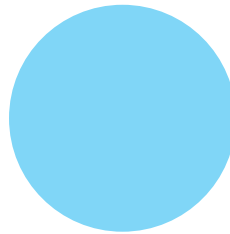
As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission with renewed vigour. The challenges are significant, but so is our resolve. We will continue to

listen, learn, and adapt, guided by the wisdom and experience of those we serve and aiming to provide a pathway to stability and hope. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters, volunteers, partners, and community members. Your dedication and generosity fuel our work and inspire us every day. Together, we are making a difference, one step at a time.

In solidarity,

Thomas Croft and Diana Skelton
National Coordination Team





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 broaden their skills, confidence, and knowledge in order to pursue their goals and aspirations.

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 to speak out and shape their own narrative, while offering policy makers invaluable insights 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.

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

We take people seriously by recognising the strength, determination, and resourcefulness it takes to just get by. We are committed to accompanying people at their own pace, over the long term. We believe every voice matters, particularly the voices of people who are ignored or rarely heard. We work inclusively with our full-time core team members, families in persistent poverty, allies, and volunteers, who are all involved in every aspect of what we do. These are **our values**.

We are part of an international movement of solidarity and collaboration. Find out more about the International Movement ATD Fourth World by pointing your camera at the QR code and tapping the banner that appears on your screen.





Community Partnerships

ATD Fourth World is committed to reaching the most isolated families and individuals, recognising the roles they play in their communities, supporting them through crises, and strengthening peer support networks. This is the central aim of the **'Together in Dignity'** programme.

Many families and individuals in extreme poverty are isolated from much of society as a result of the discrimination they have experienced because of their circumstances. Because of this, they often face difficulties accessing the support services and resources they are entitled to. Actively reaching out and getting to know the community helps us make meaningful connections with people most in need of support. One of the ways we meet individuals and families who might be isolated is through our presence within the community. This is made possible through our partnerships with local organisations.

Our partnership with **Parent Action** (formerly PACT)



amplifies our outreach to new families in South East London, especially those with younger children. We now participate in at least two of their activities each week, and our presence helps to deepen our understanding of the community. Through weekly conversations with mothers who attend playgroups, we can better understand the challenges they face and the help they might need. One team member who attends Parent Action playgroups says:

"I have learned about the people living in the area, the challenges they face and the motivations they have to be part of the community in different ways."

This year, we have introduced several families we know to Parent Action activities to break isolation and strengthen community ties, creating opportunities for mothers to meet peers who face similar challenges.

Additionally, our partnership with **Home-Start** continues to grow in Surrey. Team members based at **Frimhurst Family House** offer weekly support to families they meet through Home-Start, which refers

families to ATD Fourth World for additional support. Since the summer of 2023, we have been hosting fortnightly well-being mornings at Frimhurst Family House for people seeking asylum. This has been done in collaboration with Home-Start, **Barnardo's**, and **St. Barbara's Church**, and the goal has been to create positive experiences with people seeking asylum, whose activities are restricted at the hotel where they are placed. In the words of a father who attends these mornings, these spaces are **"important"** and **"precious"**.

A special well-being morning took place this year, where part of the group of asylum seekers cooked 'pupusa', a Latin American dish, for everyone to enjoy. After living at a hotel where they have no opportunities to cook, being able to cook and share a meal with other residents and the Frimhurst team members was a **"magical"** experience.

Community Outreach and Crisis Support

When we reach out to community members, we benefit from the value of their insight. As a result, **community outreach** also happens when families and individuals already involved with ATD Fourth World reach out to other families they know within their communities — families that they think may benefit from the support we provide — and invite them to our events and activities. Through this **peer support** effort, our ATD community grows.

This year, at activities and events run at Addington Square and Frimhurst Family House, individuals and families have continued to meet and spend time with others with lived experience of poverty. Together, they have shared experiences, given advice, supported one another, and created friendships. For example, parents whose children have similar special educational needs are often able to give one another concrete practical advice and support.

We have also continued to offer one-to-one support to families and individuals; this more personal approach is central to our family support programme. This support takes various forms, including phone calls, supportive home visits, practical help with administrative matters, friendly ‘cuppa chat’ mornings, and other well-being activities. We have striven to create welcoming and safe spaces, spending valuable time to build long-lasting relationships with people we support.

A significant part of this programme includes crisis support, where team members accompany individuals and families to overcome the barriers they face to access their rights. This support may involve social care, school, housing, and various other local authority functions. This aspect of our work also informs our understanding of poverty, society, and the systems people interact with, as we witness the challenges people experiencing poverty face in the UK today.

Together in Dignity

When done properly, this accompaniment empowers people to be more confident and better prepared for future challenges. We don't advise on what someone should do — we advocate for people by listening, agreeing on a way forward together, and often acting as a bridge between people and the services they are trying to access. As one mother we have been supporting this past year said:

"ATD [Fourth World] has made a huge difference in my life. I have felt that I am not alone and that I have support. They've instilled back some confidence in me, confidence that sometimes gets knocked down by our crazy system. With ATD, you remember to trust yourself again, and to do the right thing regardless of what's being thrown at you by life."



Scan the QR code to find out more about Frimhurst Family House.



Getting Away From It

Our **'Getting Away From It'** project provides time away from the worries of daily life during **day breaks** at our centre in London, **residential stays** at Frimhurst Family House, and **outings** in the community. Enjoying time to unwind and share moments of well-being with others can bring peace of mind and space to reset. Closely linked to our family support project, it furthers our ambitions of breaking isolation and building long-term relationships among members of the community. This year, we increased the frequency of our activities and outings to keep regular contact with the growing number of families we are engaged with.

In London, we now offer pampering sessions and massages during well-being events, recognising the benefits of times of self-care for people in poverty. The reactions are unanimous: it really makes a difference. In the words of one participant:

"After I have been pampered, I feel like I can take on the world."

In addition, we ran a wide variety of activities including jewellery and soap-making, painting, colouring, and baking. This gives families and individuals the chance to try their hand at new crafts. As one mother said:

"My children like painting so much. It's something we don't have in our house."

In **Feltham**, we continue to run a monthly well-being group for people to socialise, talk over experiences, and seek advice. We have also started fortnightly **'Cuppa Chat'** mornings in Southwark, where people can come for an informal chat around a cup of tea or coffee. There, they can express their struggles in a more intimate space, spend more time one-to-one with team members, and meet peers.

And throughout the year at Frimhurst Family House, families and adults have enjoyed residential breaks to rest and engage in a wide variety of activities with others: pottery workshops in the art studio, the pool table in the games room, and a raft of bikes for use on the eight acres of forest parkland surrounding the

Together in Dignity

house. Participants may also choose to simply rest in the living room or their purpose-built family flat. In the words of one mother:

"At first I couldn't rest, because I wasn't used to peacefulness. After spending time in Frimhurst, I was back to myself. I was full of energy. I was healed."

In 2023, we organised 48 days of well-being activities in London and Surrey.

This amounted to 384 hours of respite.



Overall, we provided times of well-being to 38 adults, as well as 23 families, including 43 children.

Understanding Poverty

In our **'Understanding Poverty'** project, people in poverty collaborate with one another to reflect on their own lived experience and prepare to speak publicly on issues they care about.

This begins with our monthly 'Understanding Poverty' workshops, where this year activists explored and debated a range of issues — from citizenship and elections, to social work and the right to family life. At a special iteration of these monthly meetings, activists also engaged in discussions about the gendered dimensions of poverty to mark International Women's Day.

Activists who choose to get involved regularly also take part in residential sessions to deepen this work and think together creatively. These sessions focus on building confidence and reinforcing well-being. Their importance can be summarised in the words of one activist who says:

"I [love] seeing everyone in person after so many Zoom meetings, and even more the importance given to well-being. We work on such heavy topics that I feel like we need to pay attention to everyone's mental health and well-being."

This described a residential session in Bolton, organised by the **Growing Rights Instead of Poverty Partnership** (GRIPP). While preparing a public campaign, time and space was also given for the well-being of the participants, who had access to a beautiful spa.

Within GRIPP, ATD Fourth World activists also participated in an ongoing **Action Learning Set** — a space created for people with lived experience of poverty from grassroots organisations (ATD Fourth World, **Intisaar**, **RAPAR**, and **Thrive Teesside**) to come together to reflect on challenges and questions. One participant remarked:

"I had the privilege of being a part of an amazing group of individuals in an Action Learning set. It follows the

Giving Poverty a Voice

principle of 'a problem shared is a problem halved.' Action Learning sets bring together people who have encountered similar problems, allowing them to explore potential solutions, test them out, and further develop their ideas. [For me] as a refugee, this experience has brought about much-needed self-awareness. It has allowed me to regain the power I had lost during the asylum process. My eyes have been opened, and I am now able to reflect on the changes I would like to see implemented."

With the **Addressing Poverty with Lived Experience** (APLE) **Collective**, a residential session took place in Cornwall this year, with the venue chosen specifically to be more accessible for a member who has a disability. He spoke about how important this was:

"The low number of people with learning disabilities in work is depressing and has far-reaching consequences. It opens up people to serious neglect... On a human level, it prevents people from having that daily human contact."



From our 'Understanding Poverty' project comes research like 'The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty', which was published in 2019. If you have a camera phone, scan the QR code for more information.



Poverty Experts

"Since 2013, they've been putting all the different benefits into just one, called Universal Credit. When they started, they kept saying it would make sure that 'work always pays' by making sure we didn't lose benefits by working extra hours. But as someone who has always worked, including all the way through the pandemic, I can tell you that Universal Credit is a bloody nightmare!"

This poverty expert was speaking at the Institute for Development Studies in Brighton for a conference on 'Reimagining social protection in a time of global uncertainty'. Academics found great value in the expertise of her lived experience, which is the essence of our **'Poverty Experts'** program. People with lived experience have an expertise that is different to that of professionals; in public-facing work they help illuminate the hidden dimensions of poverty.

A key 'Poverty Experts' achievement this year was spearheaded by ATD Fourth World's **'Youth Voices'** project, which was selected by the **British Institute of Human Rights** to create a **Community Support Solution**. With support from BIHR staff, the young people co-produced a resource to show others their age how to advocate for their own rights. They said:

"As a group, we are most proud of the step-by-step guide to what to do if your rights are being violated. For us, inclusivity was also very important. Resources like this are not often accessible for young people or for people with disabilities. Therefore we tried our very best to make it as accessible as we could, by adding both QR codes and web links to an easy-read version, and by writing everything in plain English with no jargon."

Other important 'Poverty Experts' events this year included: meeting with the **Poverty Strategy Commission**; speaking to officials at the **Council of Europe** in Strasbourg as part of a **European Youth**

Giving Poverty a Voice

Campaign and creating an advocacy document about it; helping **Amnesty International** prepare a 'lived-experience manifesto'; and, with support from the **People's Company**, writing and performing an original play at the Southwark Playhouse entitled '*My Soul Is Tired*'.



From 2021 to 2023, ATD Fourth World organised a European youth campaign to create a statement for public advocacy.



They worked on the question: "What does it mean to be a young person facing adversity in Europe today?"

Scan the QR code to read the full document.



The Right to Family Life

Led by young people and parents in poverty who have experience of social service intervention in their families, the **'Right to Family Life'** project aims to improve the children's social care system through policy, practice, research, and anti-poverty practice training for social workers. ATD Fourth World's series of **study groups** on poverty, social work, and the right to family life continued with sessions focusing on: the use of language, youth voices, family law, and discrimination linked to disabilities and to racism.

In an eight-page cover story featured in the Summer 2023 issue of **Amnesty UK's** magazine for members, an ATD Fourth World activist said:

"Poverty gets confused with neglect. It is shameful that the poorer you are, the more likely you are to have your children forcibly taken from you. You see this around the number of children placed in care or put up for forced adoptions. It's all about what are the risks from the parents, not what are the risks from social

services. Interventions and separation from your family actually [have] an opposite effect on children and families in need of support by causing further trauma."

Amnesty UK is championing our work by challenging its members to consider poverty as a human rights violation and povertyism as a systemic issue. This support is part of **GRIPP** (Growing Rights Instead of Poverty Partnership). It was also to represent GRIPP that one activist from ATD Fourth World was invited to address the United Nations this year as part of its review of the UK's human rights compliance. Three other ATD activists spoke to the same UN committee on behalf of the **Global Coalition to End Child Poverty**.

ATD Fourth World continued to be an active member of the **Parents, Families and Allies Network** (PFAN), which hosted a webinar on parent advocacy and representation. This fed into the government consultation strategy, 'Children's Social Care: Stable

Giving Poverty a Voice

Homes Built on Love', which has promised to draw on PFAN's input to inform the models and approaches to parental representation that are going to be tested.

Lived-experience activists from the UK also made two study trips abroad this year. As part of an **International Family Advocacy Project**, run by the International Movement ATD Fourth World, seminars in Belgium and France were opportunities for dialogue with people in poverty, academics, and practitioners from a dozen countries.



Scan the QR code to read the interview of an ATD activist for Amnesty UK's magazine cover story.



"It's our communities that own this report. People weren't just writing from their minds but from their hearts."

"[People in power] might not always like it, but they've got to hear it."

United Nations International Day to End Poverty

It was to bear witness to the lives of people in poverty that in 1992 the United Nations gave official recognition to the **International Day to End Poverty**, which was first marked by the International Movement ATD Fourth World on 17 October 1987.

This year, we presented an exhibition and performance to celebrate the day, supported by and in collaboration with **London Challenge Poverty Week**, the **APLE Collective**, and **Amnesty UK**. The focus was on the often unseen creativity of people living in poverty.

It was an immersive and dynamic evening where lived-experience activists explored **the power of creativity** as a tool for self-expression and activism. It reflected the work done during a series of summer workshops by people living in poverty.

The exhibition showcased **photography**, a **flower pot**



Scan the QR code to click through our online exhibit.



International Day to End Poverty

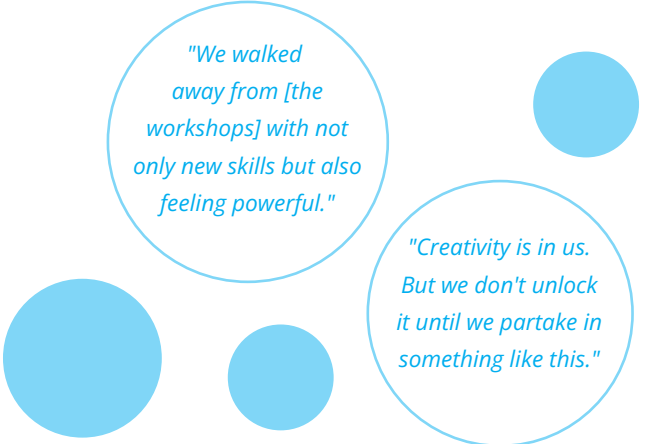
display entitled 'Seeds for the Future', and **resin bookmarks** displaying quotations. It also featured a **theatre performance** by activists, prepared in collaboration with the **People's Company** (an inclusive community-oriented theatre company based at Southwark Playhouse).

"This project gave me a reason, a purpose. I am very passionate about the fight against poverty, so expressing that through photography was inspiring."

The exhibition included **'The Roles We Play: Recognising the Contributions of People in Poverty'**, created by ATD Fourth World in 2016 to challenge widespread negative stereotypes through the use of positive imagery and self-representation. An artist with lived experience of poverty engaged in dialogue with activists about 'The Roles We Play' and a series of murals entitled **'Memories I Can No Longer Silence'**, which portray different aspects of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood on a transit estate.

The same event also featured several special guests:

Just Fair and the **Social Rights Alliance** showcased **'Human Rights: Not a Game!'**; a political artist and activist from Liverpool displayed her collection **'Political Pop'** (2023); the **Poverty Truth Community** and the **University of Manchester** presented their collaborative research project **'Filled to the Brim'**; **Camerados** set up a public living room in Amnesty's auditorium; and singer-songwriter **Miryea Meek** performed her original songs to round out the evening.



"We walked away from [the workshops] with not only new skills but also feeling powerful."

"Creativity is in us. But we don't unlock it until we partake in something like this."

In Conversation with Rosie Payne, an ATD Fourth World Volunteer and Ally

People in poverty make choices every day to look out for one another and defend the inalienable dignity of all. Their efforts also require the support of people from all walks of life. One of these people is Rosie Payne, an ATD Fourth World volunteer and ally. Below, she describes her experience volunteering for ATD Fourth World at Frimhurst Family House.

How did you hear about ATD Fourth World?

I can't quite remember the first time I heard about it, but when I did, it sparked my interest. I had no idea at the time that Frimhurst House was in my locality, or what was offered there. Then, a member of my church, Tish Mason, brought it to my attention. She described some of the activities that were run there by ATD Fourth World, and it sounded amazing.

What initially drew you to volunteer with us?

My parents used to take part in a scheme many years ago, whereby they would give a London child a holiday in our home. I had four siblings, so we already had quite a full house, but I saw how hospitable, kind, and caring my parents were in taking part in the scheme. I have many happy memories of making new friends and witnessing firsthand how much joy it gave to the children who came to stay. The excitement was intense, they always had a very happy time, and we kept in contact with many of these children for years afterwards. I'm guessing this heart for people has always stayed with me, so I offered my help at Frimhurst.

Can you tell us about your volunteering experience with us?

I help the Frimhurst team with craft workshops during well-being breaks. I have a long working background in various jobs, such as nursery care, contact supervision

Volunteering

of families for social services, activity organising for a care home, and GP reception work. I have dealt with many families, and people of all ages, so felt this was something I could offer. I love thinking of a new craft each time, and I try to make sure it is something that participants can take back to their homes and make use of. However, for me, the craft is secondary to working alongside people, having a chat, and making them feel valued as a person. Focusing on a craft at the same time enables this to happen more easily, as the person is much more relaxed.

What has stood out most to you?

I have loved every minute of my time spent with the attendees at the well-being breaks so far, and have enjoyed meeting the team members in their various roles. I love the fact that some of those that have attended have returned at various times, so I am getting to know them a little better and, in return, I think they feel more relaxed with me. I have heard one or two of them refer to Frimhurst as their second home, which is a testament to the work done there for all these families.

What motivates you to continue volunteering?

All of the above! I will continue to volunteer for as long as I am needed and am helping to make a positive difference in the families' lives.

Interested in
volunteering with
us? Scan the QR
code to find out
more!



Our Inclusive Governance and Financial Ethos

ATD is not a traditional service provider, and a collaborative approach is part of our ethos. The ATD Fourth World community includes full-time core workers, families living in persistent poverty, allies, and volunteers. Since our founding, we have worked to build governance structures that allow all our different members to take an active role in the decision-making process, and to contribute their knowledge and experience.

Our organisation depends on the collaboration and dialogue between people of different social, cultural, and generational backgrounds. All are encouraged to get involved in every aspect of what we do, from project planning to evaluation, from fundraising to campaigning, from administration to governance. The way we operate is unique, placing the focus on the experiences and voices of people living in poverty, and giving those voices their rightful credibility.

All ATD core workers receive the same Real Living Wage solidarity salary and reject 'poverty industry' professional salaries. This means that **no wage hierarchy exists at ATD**, regardless of our seniority or level of responsibility. It is an ethical choice which dates back to the founding of ATD, and it is an integral part of our financial ethos.

Board of Directors: Letitia Mason (Chair), Caroline Davies, Rev. Nicholas Edwards, Prof. Anna Gupta, Simon Haworth, Pierre Klein, Thomas Mayes, Ellie Suh, Ian Whitefoot, and Aye Aye Win

Ambassador: the Right Reverend Saju Muthalaly, Bishop of Loughborough

Company Secretary: Thomas Croft

National Coordination Team (NCT): Diana Skelton and Thomas Croft

NCT Support Group: Amanda Button, Murielle Double, Thomas Mayes, and Gertraud Trivedi

Governance and Finance

	2022	2023
	(£)	(£)
Income		
Grants	313,214	453,500
Donations and legacies	29,300	32,138
Charitable activities	44,555	55,984
Interest	768	1,827
Other income	2,970	0
	<u>390,807</u>	<u>543,449</u>

Expenditure

Charitable activities (unrestricted)	302,660	373,647
<i>Together in Dignity</i> (restricted)	24,272	18,293
Outreach, Respite and Peer Support Programme		
<i>Giving Poverty a Voice</i> (restricted)	30,064	57,720
Policy, Participation and Training Programme		
Other (restricted)	1,331	2,058
Support costs (administration and depreciation)	52,661	56,059
Fundraising	3,193	3,744
	<u>414,181</u>	<u>515,521</u>

We spend 0% of our income on advertising or external fundraisers.

86% of our income is spent on directly tackling poverty.

100% of all donations go towards actions that directly tackle poverty.

Only 14% of our income is spent on admin costs and raising funds.

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