



ATD Fourth World is present in 10 African counties (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, and Tanzania). Thanks to the “Permanent Forum on Extreme Poverty in the World,” partnerships with local associations and national NGOs have been set up in some thirty countries.

Representatives from a number of these countries serve on the Board of Directors the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

Over the years, ATD Fourth World has undertaken a variety of country-specific projects alongside people living in extreme poverty. These actions combine all people, organizations, and structures involved in the fight against poverty. Examples of these actions include:

- promote access to knowledge and culture
- raise awareness about rights and how to defend them
- reconnect youth living in the streets with their family and community
- encourage local citizens to help the poorest people participate in social, cultural, and economic life
- provide peace education for children (Tapori) and adults, especially to help promote reconciliation efforts in areas of conflict
- offer public speaking training to prepare people for participating in local or international discussions, seminars, or in the World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty.

These projects enable members (including those living in poverty) of ATD Fourth World to build relationships with people or families living in extreme poverty. They think and act

together to find ways for people to benefit from the available structures and existing projects (social action, healthcare, education, etc.), to contribute to community development, and to become recognized actors in the fight against poverty.

When many people living in extreme poverty are brought together, they help design and implement socio-economic projects that benefit everyone. Their community involvement gives pride to their children and shows them that poverty is not a one-way street.



October 17, World Day to Overcome Poverty

The day was celebrated in some twenty African countries and included the participation of people living in poverty, civil society representatives, and civil and religious authorities.

In 2007, numerous people from a background of poverty across the continent worked together to obtain signatures for the International Movement's Call to Action campaign, calling on citizens worldwide to request action be taken to eradicate poverty. In

Ivory Coast, the LIDHO (Ivorian Human Rights League) obtained over 10,000 signatures. People from diverse backgrounds answered the call to sign, including the Prime Minister of Burkina Faso.

ATD Fourth World is a member of ANCEFA (African Network Campaign on Education for All), which is presided by Mamadou N'Doye, former Education Minister in Senegal. ATD Fourth World was invited to contribute to ANCEFA's seminar

"Children Excluded from Education" held in November 2006 in Ouagadougou. Seminar participants came from nine different African countries.

ATD Fourth World also participated in some events organized by African civil society, such as the World Social Forum in Bamako in 2005 (with members from Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal) and in Nairobi in 2007 (with members from Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania).

Strengthening inter-African dialogue about the fight on poverty

ATD Fourth World also organizes inter-African meetings for its members. For example, a meeting was held in Burkina Faso in 2006 with people working with people living in extreme poverty (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, and Senegal) on the topic: "How to Reach the Poorest Populations and Encourage them to Participate in Community Life?"

In 2008, delegates from the Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Guatemala and the UK took part in solidarity workshops organized by "Friends of ATD in Rwanda." Their dialogue pulled on everyone's knowledge about how to encourage people to contribute to their community and how to promote reconciliation based on

solidarity among the those experiencing extreme poverty.

In several countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania), video presentation filmed in national languages gave local people living in poverty the opportunity to share their experience and to promote development that really helps all people.



Emergence of an African full-time volunteer corps

In order to implement all its projects, ATD Fourth World relies on numerous friends and full-time volunteers willing to join the poorest people where they live, to take the time to meet them, to share knowledge, and to think and act together.

In each country, volunteers are trained locally for several years. They then continue their commitment by working in other African countries – a Mauritian working in the Ivory Coast and a Burkinabé working with the Madagascar team.

Some African full-time volunteers (from Ivory Coast, Rwanda and Senegal) are now project coordinators in very poor neighborhoods in France, the UK, or hold responsibilities at ATD Fourth World's international centre in France.

Creating the conditions for the poorest people to become actors of change

In June 2007, ATD Fourth World in Senegal organized a series of events on the topic: *“To Reject Poverty is to Build a Future for All.”* Workshops were held over two days during which experiences were exchanged. After the workshops, a public meeting was held in the Dakar City Hall (in the presence of the Imam of Dakar) where people living in extreme poverty – and others working with them – spoke about the initiatives they are taking to fight poverty and to promote peace, dignity, and rights for all.

It took six months of preparation to enable people from a background of poverty to play a central role in these events and to ensure they could dialogue with representatives of civil society organizations, ministries or UNICEF, and teachers or religious authorities.

Meetings were held with ATD Fourth World members living in poverty from six poor neighborhoods in and around Dakar. Each meeting had between 30 and 60 participants (locals, mayor, neighborhood leader, imam, workers, NGO project leaders, and civil

servants). These meetings proved that people living in poverty, often seen as incapable of doing anything at all, are playing active roles in reducing poverty. The actual organization of these meetings was not easy, however. For instance, in one neighbourhood, participants had to change houses three times because of power outages. They even found electric wires and hooked them up themselves so the house had electricity. In another neighbourhood, a mother asked the Mayor to provide chairs for the meeting free of charge.



At the beginning of each meeting, the film “*Unite for the Dignity of All*” was shown in Wolof. This film shows how people face the daily realities of poverty.

This preparatory work helped set the content of workshops, which brought together 70 participants, including some delegates from Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Participants put forward six conditions that encourage people experiencing poverty to get involved:

- aid should not compromise the person’s dignity or creativity
- organize meetings where people living in poverty can sit down

and talk with other citizens committed to fighting poverty.

- ensure people living in the same neighborhood or village can act together on an equal footing.
- unite people around common projects while taking each person’s material resources into account.
- present propositions which come directly from people from a poverty background to decision-makers and authorities.
- teach children and youth about solidarity and respecting others.

Supporting children’s commitment to building peace

Friends of ATD Fourth World are highly involved with children via the Tapori Movement that, based on friendship, encourages children to take an active role wherever they are to ensure that all children have the same opportunities. Tapori children foster this friendship through games, cultural activities, sports, or by reading the *Tapori Letter*.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, over one thousand children from the cities of Bukavu, Goma, and Uvira are part of the Tapori Movement. They offer support and help to each other, especially their peers facing hardship (help rebuilding the hut of a friend’s family, support and help for students forced to leave school due to insufficient supplies or materials, collective learning, mutual help for household tasks). They visit sick children in hospitals, ex-child soldiers, or prisoners. They help improve life in their neighbourhoods (cleaning street water fountains, repairing walkways, etc.).

In 2006-07, more than a thousand children from Burkina Faso, Central Africa Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Tanzania participated in the “silhouette” campaign where children drew their own silhouette and wrote a message about how they can help build a fairer world for everyone. The goal of the campaign was to remind people that you cannot judge someone by appearances but rather must focus on what he/she has on the inside. This international campaign against prejudice strengthened friendship the children share in school and in their neighbourhoods or villages.

In a context marked by crises and violence, all these actions, spearheaded by children, are giving hope to parents. They encourage them to talk and act together to transform children’s ideas into realities. This also helps build peaceful neighborhoods.



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