

THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY – INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH



A TOOLKIT TO CONDUCTING PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGY



OVERVIEW OF THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

“Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere” (United Nations, 2015) the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — reflects a growing consensus on the need to consider other dimensions, beyond monetary ones, when thinking about poverty.

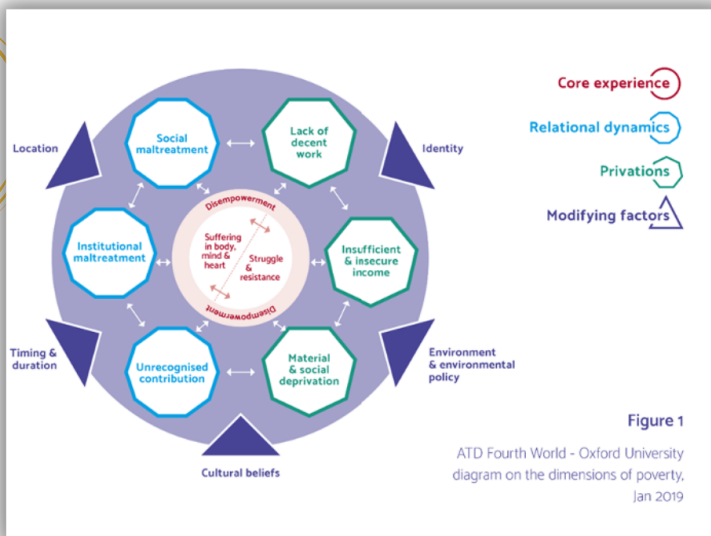
To improve the global understanding of multidimensional poverty, the International Movement ATD Fourth World, together with researchers from Oxford University, launched in 2016 an international research project in six countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, France, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States) to identify the key dimensions of poverty and their relationships.

The project is based on a **Merging of Knowledge methodology**, in which practitioners, academics, and people facing poverty are co-researchers. In this methodology, the different types of knowledge resulting from action, academic research, and life experiences are built first in an independent way through meetings with peer groups, then merged to enrich one another, resulting in new insights about the reality of poverty.



THE GLOBAL GOALS





This process has led to the identification of nine key poverty dimensions that, despite differences in the daily lives of people in poverty across countries, are surprisingly similar. Six of these dimensions were previously hidden or rarely considered in policy discussions.

Existing alongside the more familiar privations relating to lack of decent work, insufficient and insecure income and material and social deprivation, three dimensions are relational.

These draw attention to the way that people who are not confronting poverty affect the lives of those who are: social maltreatment; institutional maltreatment and unrecognised contributions.

The three dimensions that constitute the core experience of poverty place the anguish and agency of people at the centre of the conceptualisation of poverty: suffering in body, mind, and heart; disempowerment; and struggle and resistance.

These dimensions remind us why poverty must be eradicated. They also drive home that everyone, living in poverty or not, is dehumanised by the continued existence of poverty.

All nine dimensions of poverty are closely interdependent and typically, experienced together, cumulatively in varying degrees rather than each independently, in isolation.



While every dimension is evident in all countries and most contexts, each varies in form and degree according to: location, urban, peri-urban, rural; timing and duration, short spells differing from long spells, childhood poverty varying from that experienced in old age – our tentative findings suggest strong similarities between these two ends of the age spectrum owing to dependency and power relations; cultural beliefs, concerning for example, whether poverty is generally thought to be caused by structural factors or by personal failings; identity with discrimination on grounds such as ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation adding to that associated The hidden dimensions of poverty with poverty; and environment and environmental policy, from climate change, soil degradation, pollution and associated policies, to urban deprivation and inadequate public infrastructure.

The findings also demonstrate that true participation of people living in poverty with others is both possible in international research and moreover generates new insights.

The findings warrant careful consideration. Not only do they have great face validity, shaped as they are by direct experience but mediated through exchange and negotiation with academics and practitioners on equal footing, they offer new insights into the meaning of poverty. Moreover, for people with direct experiences of poverty, academics and practitioners alike, the experience of participating in the study proved transformative (Bray et.al., 2020, p.7).



FOREWORD

With this toolkit, All Together in Dignity (ATD) Ireland have produced something valuable and, moreover, important.

Of course, knowledge of lived experience as a vital component of informed practice is something that is continually championed by groups like ATD who do incredibly important work on a daily basis to highlight the lived realities and hidden dimensions of poverty. Conversely, while the admission of lived experience as a form of knowledge in policy making is arguably a growing space it remains, as yet, underdeveloped. Taking up and championing lived experience as a form of knowledge and placing it on equal footing with more traditional econometric measures is, therefore, an ongoing task for the research community. Yet a note of caution must also be sounded on the basis that research which aims to be meaningfully participatory constitutes unknown territory and potentially presents ethical dilemmas.

A research practice where practitioners, academics, and people facing poverty are co-researchers appears to be, almost instinctually, positive. However, questions around how to achieve the meaningful implementation of such an approach can provoke uncertainty. Moreover, producing research based on the lived experiences of persons experiencing poverty who are then not involved in the process beyond the acquisition of data by the researcher throws up questions about a type of knowledge appropriation that lacks mutual benefit.

With this booklet, ATD Ireland addresses these issues by drawing on an international knowledge base and by providing evidence-based guidance on how to conduct participatory research that is meaningful, potentially impactful and can go beyond the common privations associated with poverty to uncover its hidden dimensions. This is achieved most notably through the concept of 'merged knowledge' which sees practitioners, researchers and persons with lived experience of poverty coming together to devise, conduct, produce and disseminate research. This is important because it positions those with experiences of poverty as persons with voice, power and agency, as opposed to being passive research participants. In doing so, it presents a challenge to the research community to engage much more deeply with the question of knowledge production based on lived experience.

This booklet will undoubtedly be of benefit and interest to researchers, practitioners, and students of the social sciences broadly and at all levels. Within it they will find food for thought but more importantly measured and considered guidance and for conducting meaningful, participatory, social research.

Dr Joe Whelan,
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Trinity College.





INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is aimed at people interested in carrying out participatory action research, especially on poverty and socioeconomic discrimination. Often researchers (including academic research and action research) try to capture the 'lived experience' to better their findings. However, this is often done in a way in which knowledge from experience remains in the data collection phase and does not move to the analysis, discussion, interpretation and presentation of the data phase. This toolkit argues that those with lived experience should have greater ownership and control over research which is focused on their lives. This toolkit draws on the methodology used in the international Hidden Dimensions of Poverty Research carried out by ATD Fourth World (and partner organisation MATI in Bangladesh).

This document brings together the voices of co-researchers with lived experience of poverty, along with academics and practitioners demonstrating how each group brought a necessary and unique contribution to the research.

However, it is also necessary to acknowledge that to properly carry out a piece of research in this way necessitates a particular set of requirements, strategies and often a change in mindset. This toolkit aims to fill in those gaps and serve as a useful guide.

It is hoped that this document will be useful for academics, researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners alike.

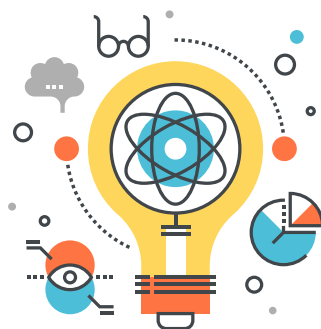




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The impact of the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty in terms of numbers of people it has reached and how it has influenced work taking place internationally today

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The document has also developed a key set of participatory research multimedia resources for further learning and interest.





WHAT IS GENUINE PARTICIPATION

The Hidden Dimensions of Poverty International Research used a methodology called the merging of knowledge, our aim was to work on an equal footing with co-researchers from very different backgrounds, academic, professional practitioners and central to this work were co-researchers with lived experience of poverty. Researchers distinguished between several degrees of participation in research projects.

- The first degree is often consultation
- Then there is collaboration
- At the top of the participation scale; control and ownership. When people who participate have a real control on the design, implementation, discussion and dissemination of the result.

Collaboration- Delegated power: community capacity to play a leadership role in the implementation of decisions is ensured

Control- Community ownership: democratic participation and equity through community-driven decision-making is fostered

Level of participation	Stance towards community	Impact
No participation	Ignore Inform	Marginalisation: access to decision-making process is denied Placation: the community is provided with relevant information
Consultation	Involve	Tokenization: input from the community is gathered Voice: community needs and assets are integrated into the process
Collaboration	Collaborate	Delegated power: community capacity to play a leadership role in the implementation of decisions is ensured
Control	Defer to	Community ownership: democratic participation and equity through community-driven decision-making is fostered

(Godrie 2017 cited Osinski, 2021)



Achieving genuine participation is not easy. It is more than consultation, requiring active engagement from the start as well as both sufficient time and consideration of possible power imbalances which may prevent involvement (Roberts, 2020)



This Participation Tool-kit is dedicated to Moraene Roberts Co - researcher and longstanding Community Activist ATD Fourth World (1953 - 2020)

“We know that these people are living in poverty, we know they’re struggling and having difficulties but we can come up with solutions to that. But when they come up with solutions that don’t involve asking the people themselves who are suffering, those solutions hardly ever work. Often, they cost a lot of money and the idea begins with ‘how can we help people?’ and ends up with a complete oppression on them, because everything that is set up to help them comes with conditions”. – (Roberts, 2020 - co - researcher)



WHY AIM TO DEVELOP A RESEARCH PROJECT IN WHICH PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES ARE CO-RESEARCHERS AND WORKING ALONGSIDE ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONALS ?

This research focuses on the experience of poverty in all its forms. This report on poverty is different. There are others but our approach offered unique insights. This research involved those experiencing poverty throughout the process, instead of being led by policy makers or academic experts. People with experience of poverty have led, shaped and written up the research and were not simply objects of the research. The research was planned and carried out by a group of co-researchers, half of whom had direct lived experience of poverty and half of whom had experience of poverty through their work, in research, journalism or public services.

The starting point was to put the knowledge of people with direct experience of poverty at the front of efforts to understand the poverty. We are not alone in including the knowledge of people with direct experience of poverty in our work. There is growing recognition of the need to include the insights of service users when designing public services. There is also growing recognition of this imperative in research; but this remains rare in research on poverty.

People who live in poverty have been excluded from the debate by power structures that privilege certain sorts of expertise and exclude non-technical ways of understanding problems. The voices of people with direct experience of life in poverty must be heard for two reasons. It is ethical to hear from those most affected. Moreover, failing to listen to these voices means missing vital information and dialogue that could make social policy work better for everyone. Our findings should be taken seriously precisely because of how they were produced. **Some examples of learning:**

Better Policy-Making

More representative conclusions will ultimately result in more person - centred policies and solutions to help tackle poverty if and when research such as this is taken on board.

"In the 'Hidden Dimensions of Poverty', the objective was to refine the understanding and measurement of poverty, in order for the research to contribute to more sensitive policy design at national and international level and thereby to the eradication of poverty". - (Bray et al., 2019, p.6)



Transformative Findings



The approach taken has created “synergistic knowledge” (Shemer, 2022), which arguably may not have been discovered had knowledge from different sources been combined in this way. The participatory design of this research has allowed two areas to stand out: Negative judgement, stigma and blame were emphasised by participants. While these are recognised within debates about poverty, they are seldom given this degree of prominence.

– People in poverty are not passive victims. The research highlights how many people in poverty were making contributions and working hard in the face of difficulty. Ignoring their contributions fuels negative stereotypes. (Roberts, OECD, 2019)

Realisation of Rights



These methods help to support the rights of people living in poverty to understand the contexts of their lives, to have their voice heard, to participate and have greater influence. The merging of knowledge approach can lead to empowerment and confidence building of co- researchers.

“Peer support is really important. I learnt from others how to conduct myself in public, not to be ashamed by what I say and the experiences I share”. – (Button, 2019, co- researcher)

Critical perception of professionalism and governance



Often only academic and professional knowledge is seen as valid and legitimate. Changing the power relations through greater democratisation allows for some criticism of the status quo and opens up the possibility of changing it.

“The entry of other people into the organizational arena (for example of people with life experience for research in academia) may expose the organisation in its weaknesses and not only in its virtues, undermine its fundamental assumptions and even affect its goals and methods”. – Shemer (2022)



KEY STEPS IN THE HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research utilised a novel concept, the Merging of Knowledge. The aim of this was to work on equal footing with co-researchers from very different backgrounds. It involved a variety of steps to ensure equality, organisation and cooperation.

The merging of knowledge and practices approach is a continuous search for the very specific conditions which will enable people living in poverty to truly be partners and actors with others in creating a more just society.

(Guidelines for the Merging of Knowledge and Practices when working with people living in situations of poverty and social exclusion, 2022)

STEPS INVOLVED

1. National Research Teams formed

This consisted of academics, practitioners and those with lived experiences of poverty, making active efforts to include those struggling the most

2. Prior events in an informal setting took place to build rapport among the co-researchers

3. Methodology was co-designed and tested by the national research teams. The research made use of a variety of methodological techniques.

4. Knowledge generated in separate peer groups

Each peer group was facilitated by 2 coordinators and 1 research assistant

5. Merging occurs

All groups made a report which was then synthesised into one model

6. Provisional list formed



7. Seminar to determine corrected list on an international level

8. 32 delegates came together to determine the 9 key dimensions

9. MOK event took place in which all participants had the opportunity to present the work.

"The distinctions between co- researchers with lived experience of poverty and those with experience from their work were important to balancing different forms of knowledge" (Bray et al, 2019)

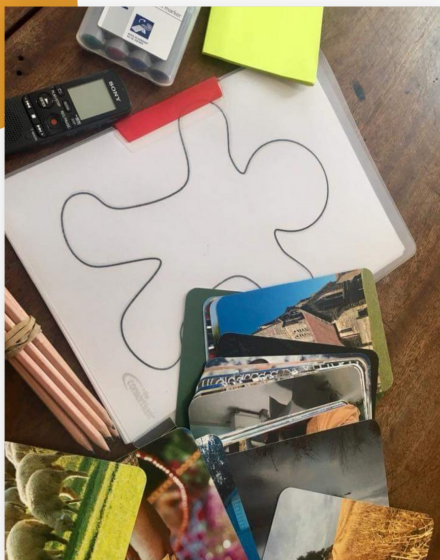
The merging of knowledge occurred when the groups forged a common understanding enriched by the experiences of those who lived in poverty.

EXAMPLES OF TWO METHODOLOGICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The Photo Language -

50 diverse photos were displayed on a table. Participants were asked to select 3 photos that supported the question:

What does poverty mean?



The Body Map -

An outline of a human shape on paper was distributed to all participants. The participants were asked to draw or write on the body map *what poverty feels like*.



Northern Countries

Southern Countries



Provisional list of
dimensions for the
North

Pre-Session Work
with delegates
from each country

Provisional list of
dimensions for the
South

Work during a
seminary in two
groups
North and South

Corrected list of
dimensions for the
North

Merging of the lists
of dimensions from
the North and the
South

Corrected list of
dimensions for the
South

Nine Common Dimensions

Five Modifying Factors



MERGING OF KNOWLEDGE



The Merging of Knowledge is like what happens when two streams merge into a river: "***They can never again be separated. Each stream is mixed with the other, and both rush forward more powerful than before.***" (Roberts, 2020)

Merging of Knowledge is a methodology for projects aimed at eradicating poverty and other issues related to social exclusion. It encompasses fundamental ethical principles and values to ensure equality and inclusion. It stems from the philosophy that people with lived experiences of poverty can enrich the knowledge production process, based on their personal experiences. With this approach, people in different learning situations engage in dialogue with those facing social exclusion and extreme poverty. By creating a safe, respectful environment, MOK is able to bridge gaps between these different walks of life and come to a collective understanding of poverty and build holistic solutions.

Merging of Knowledge shifts the traditional approach to anti-poverty work by including people with experience of poverty from the very beginning: in framing the questions, gathering ideas and data, and producing analyses and solutions with others, as equals. This way of building knowledge is highly inclusive. It brings forth the idea that a person experiencing poverty is not a problem to society but a "social actor ... source of solutions... a contributor" (Lasida, 2022, p.9).

"People have the right to name their own experiences for themselves, to have a say in the policies and a critical review in these policies that affect their lives, yet there are constantly excluded from these processes, this reflects the power imbalance"
– USA Co-researcher

The Merging of Knowledge (MOK) is an inclusive methodological approach. It sets the conditions for different groups to build and share their knowledge on equal footing:





SETTING THE CONDITIONS FOR MERGING OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Providing a safe, respectful environment to foster knowledge-building and meaningful engagement

- Active listening – no cell phone use during discussion, one person speaking at a time
- Disagreement is welcome – cross-analysis and confrontation achieves a collective opinion
- Everyone simultaneously has the role of a teacher and a learner
- Freedom of speech



2. Building trust and support

"Don't ask people to just tell their story, ask them to share what they think of/learn from their life journey"

- Acknowledgement of their previous realities i.e. Systemic racism, discrimination, distrust in institutions or services. This will aid in the understanding of how their personal experience influences opinions and in turn elicit empathy and understanding from others.
- Take the **time** to build trust and meaningful discussions – allow space if needed, analyse the situations.
- It is important to not isolate people throughout the process. Peer support and the security of links to people in the same situation as themselves is a vitally important step.
- Throughout the research it was the designated role of certain people within the research team to reach out and support people to participate

3. Language barriers

"Language alone is a huge factor in how we approach an interact with historically and presently marginalized communities."

- Accessible language
- Permit time to make sure everyone is clear on the opinions shared.
- Awareness of language as a label and the damaging repercussions of using certain words – "those people", "at risk", "the poor".
- It is also important to recognise and respect cultural differences and other unique contexts



4. Value of all members

"There is a paradox in the invisibility of poverty, poverty is often ignored yet the life of people living in poverty are judged and manipulated constantly." Dann Kenningham – UK researcher coordinator

- Integrate all voices throughout the research process – data collection, analysis, results
- Those experiencing poverty are their own subject, rather than an object in policy discussions



KEY LEARNINGS

Influencing a change in the methodology

In the UK the co-researchers tried out the actual different techniques to use in the field to see which one they felt would be the best. One of the tested exercises asked the participants to share a positive and negative example of Poverty. After taking part in this practice exercise one of the co-researchers with lived experience came back to the team saying: "No, that is not a good technique to use because you need to think about the impact it could have emotionally on people... no I don't think this is a good idea." The exercise was then reviewed and completely changed for a different exercise. It took the co-researcher a whole week to realise that the exercise really did trigger something, strong and powerful and in many ways brought back some trauma. Having the time and confidence to express their thinking on this exercise had a deep positive effect on the group dynamic and methodology, in many ways it opened up and enriched the relationship within the co-researcher group.



Learning points: It was important to test out the techniques and exercises before implementing them in the field. It is then important to be patient and take time to enable the co-researchers to react and authorise them to criticise. Even though we worked a lot together as a co-researcher group, the power dynamics were apparent; taking the time and building the confidence to challenge this was fundamental to develop a genuine working relationship.

Taking a person-centred approach

In the UK meetings were not necessarily held in the ATD Fourth World House in order to be more accessible to people outside of the organisation. Certain people were identified as possible participants and it was decided to present the research in a soup kitchen. The idea was to go somewhere the participants were already familiar with and were comfortable.



Learning Points: Although it was a question as to whether going to a soup kitchen was a dignified way to meet people, it ultimately worked well. Several people from the soup kitchen agreed to be part of the research and the workshops continued upstairs in the same building.

Utilising the assets of people in poverty

The role of the co- researchers was also to help recruit other researchers, in designing questions, conducting the interviews and making final decisions. *"I always seem to put in a question, I would call it a curveball question, that wasn't planned, which potentially was meant to not catch them off guard, but make them quick think"*. A co- researcher in the UK was very open to share after the interview about the quality of the connection, saying it was a very nice connection sometimes and sometimes not. One thing that was not in the design of the interview was about the language. She also openly said after the interview whether the language of the researcher was possible to understand. For one person she said after she did not understand hardly anything he said. It was also necessary for the position of research officer who could also be genuine at a human level. People who have an experience of poverty – as many people who have been rejected, dominated, betrayed – have a 6th sense about sincerity or being genuine in their relationship. With the person we chose, she had the academic background, but clearly a lot of human experience and very nice connection that especially this co- researcher felt.



Learning points: It was a pivotal aspect to have those with lived experience of poverty at the initial design stage of the research. The co- researchers with lived experience were able to bring important points to the table such as the issue of using accessible language. This could have been an immense barrier to participation had it not been addressed at this early stage.

Empowerment of co- researchers to speak out

At a meeting with other countries, a UK co- researcher spoke of a mini protest she initiated when it was suggested by the international operations team that only a small group would work on creating the final results. *"So, I banged my hand on the table and said the word NO. We want to be included in the final say"*(Button, 2019). As a result, they agreed to continue to work on the research all together at each step, and they successfully found ways to do this. For example, through meetings in lots of small groups and in one big group, as well as talking informally over meals and coffee breaks. *"There were a few times where we could agree on a main point, even though a few of us still had other points in mind that were not agreed on. And so, we had to learn to just park it"* (Button, 2019). They felt protective over the research as the peer group participants had entrusted them with this information.



Learning Points: An important takeaway from this is that the research process has the ability to adapt and constantly review to ensure each step is participative and inclusive. Co- researchers should feel that they have the right to speak out when they disagree and feel that they will be listened to and have their opinion taken on board. It is possible within this approach to disagree respectfully without diminishing each other's thoughts or on the other hand being overly paternalistic – Tardieu (2022). Another important learning was to respect the ownership each of the co-researchers had over the project to see it through to the end.



Inclusion of those most at risk of exclusion

In Bangladesh, among the participants included, co- researchers travelled by boat to meet with the 'Tiger widows' from Gabura Island Shyamnagar, Shatkhira. These tiger widows are women whose husbands have been killed by tigers while gathering to find food and fuel for their families. They have been subsequently left in extreme poverty and are excluded, shamed and stigmatised by the wider society. For those who were willing to take part, it required a 16-hour bus journey. These women made vital contributions to the research despite their difficult situation and the effort it required to enable them to take part, ***"I really loved to take part in this research programme because we got the chance to express my feelings about how the poverty is affecting us"***.

Learning Points: It was a significant step not to make assumptions about who would have the capacity to take part in the research. It was necessary to go beyond who was considered most accessible to the organisation and create the conditions to include people who most frequently experience exclusion in life. Further, it was necessary to create a research project in which participants felt as though being involved was of benefit to them. *"In this programme, we have got the chance to take part in the Hidden Dimensions Research session which was really like a dream for us. I forgot the stress of 16 hours journey after completing this work"*.



Learning to create a common understanding

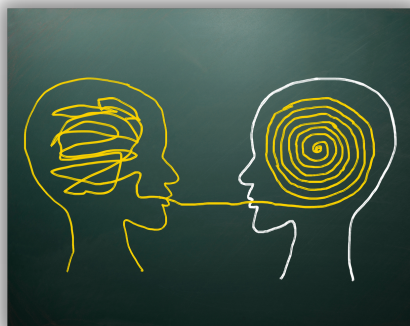
During the research process in France, after the synthesis stage the research team were left with three lists from the three different peer groups. The group moderators discussed how to produce a single list of dimensions and thus reach a common understanding of what poverty entails. While there were similarities between the 3 groups, there were also differences which included differences in the approaches to categorization. They decided to begin the next day by asking the peer groups three questions. On the second day, they met in peer groups to answer the following questions:

1. **How did the syntheses of other peer groups change our own thinking and analysis?**
2. **What are the keys to arriving at a single synthesis and a single list of dimensions?**
3. **Looking at the dimensions of our peer groups, have we not forgotten any important elements?**



Learning Points: By asking these questions initially it provided the opportunity for an 'intersection of knowledge' to occur. The peer groups were less motivated to simply defend their own ideas, instead really listening to what others had said, how they were influenced by it and forcing the groups to re-examine their own points of view. Reframing the thinking in this way allows for a more enriched and comprehensive understanding. "Merging knowledge is not adding knowledge or defending one's point of view. It is about exposing oneself to the knowledge and experience of the other, about letting oneself be moved, and about being able to co-construct a common understanding" (De Laat)

(Stories translated fr to en- Marianne de laat ATD Fourth World)





ACHIEVEMENTS AND FOLLOW ON WORK

In the Africa region:

On 12 and 13 April 2021 a first meeting to create a network of researchers from English-speaking Africa will be held at the University of Tangaza in Kenya on the theme : People Living in Extreme Poverty as Co-researchers for Change in the Narrative of Research in Africa.



In the Latin America and Caribbean region:

Designed by ATD Fourth World and the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) of Mexico, a degree programme in merging of knowledge started in March 2020 in the Latin America and Caribbean region.



In France:

Collaboration with the Institut Catholique de Paris: During the last semester of 2020, a professional training course on the Merging of knowledge and practices developed by ATD Fourth World was developed with the ICP, to be followed jointly with the students of the Master's degree in "Solidarity Economy and Market Logic" in order to obtain the title of "Expert in social and solidarity economy".



In the UK:

Thanks to its admission to the Social Metrics Commission's advisory group in 2019, ATD UK has been able to develop a relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions, with whom it has remained in contact throughout 2020 to ensure that the multidimensional nature of poverty is taken into account in government policies.



Following the presentation of the research on the hidden dimensions of poverty, and in particular the dimension of 'institutional abuse' referred to as 'Disempowering Systems, Structures and Policies' in the ATD UK report, ATD UK was asked by Dr Calum Web of the University of Sheffield to be part of the advisory group for the IPSE (Investment in Prevention and its Systemic Effects) project.

In Tanzania:

Two years after finalising its research report, the national research team has finally obtained approval from the National Statistics Office to publish it. This office has a right of review over the publications.



In the US:

Amelia Mallona wrote an in-depth report (60 pages) to draw lessons from the US research. Decision by the State of Massachusetts to take multidimensional poverty into account in its policy making. Countries that have not participated in the research are also developing activities to make it their own.



In China:

In November and December 2020, Robert Walker, Professor Emeritus of Oxford University who coordinated the research with ATD Fourth World, is invited twice to present the results in interviews broadcast on the official Chinese government website. Robert is currently teaching at Beijing Normal University as a professor of sociology.



In the Mauritius Republic:

A project is being launched to enable people experiencing poverty, professionals and academics from Mauritius to work together in a cross-fertilization of knowledge on the hidden dimensions of poverty.



In Israel:

This research is also taught at the School of Social Work at the Hebrew University, and there is a Merging of Knowledge course that combines people who have knowledge from life experience, academic knowledge and professional knowledge. This course is done in partnership with JDC- Israel which is a large non- profit social organisation and with the Ministry of Welfare.



In Ireland:

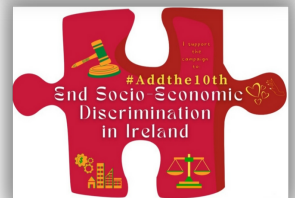
The hidden dimensions of poverty research had an Irish launch on the 29th October 2019 at the offices of The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. This conference brought people with lived experience of poverty together with professionals and researchers working to address poverty.



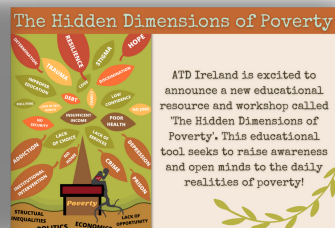
(Godinot, 2021)

Since the national launch of the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty Research ATD Ireland have developed further links with The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. People with direct experience of poverty recently presented to the High Commissioners parts of the research and highlighted the 'Institutional maltreatment' finding linking to a call for a new, 10th ground of 'socio- economic status' to be added to the Irish equality legislation. This would help protect people from socio- economic discrimination.

ATD Ireland are currently leading the **#Addthe10th** campaign along with the #Addthe10th alliance (a group of Irish NGO's community and voluntary organisations). Among other actions, ATD Ireland have launched a social media campaign in which we are asking people to take a photo with a jigsaw piece, the 'missing piece' of equality legislation with a quote on why they believe the campaign is important. We have also launched an online petition. The Irish equality legislation is currently under review by the Irish government.



As a direct result of the Hidden Dimensions research, ATD Ireland, in partnership with educational professionals' and people with a direct lived experience of poverty have developed a new educational resource called 'Understanding the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty'. The resource is an app that uses a range of media such as interviews, clips, visual aids and written statements to inform and to prompt discussion around the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty. Those participating are asked to do a number of tasks, reflections and small group discussion. This New Educational resource and workshop is aimed at educationalists, teachers and curriculum development specialists working at all levels of education in Ireland: – formal, informal and community. It provides wide access to a learning resource on poverty, including presentations by ATD Ireland community activists highlighting the important voice of people with lived experience of poverty.





TRINITY POVERTY AWARE PRACTICE

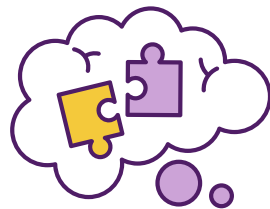
Following on from the development of our Hidden Dimensions of Poverty educational resource app, ATD Ireland have also developed a 'Poverty Aware Practice' module in collaboration with Trinity College Dublin. We have delivered this module to social work students and we hope to bring it to practising social workers and other groups in the future. This module is based on the Hidden dimensions of poverty international research and is led by ATD community activists with lived experience of poverty and socio - economic discrimination. The module is comprised of testimonies based on lived experience, group exercises, a presentation and an interactive discussion and Q&A with the class. The aim of these sessions was to provide trainee social workers with a more dynamic and holistic understanding of the lives and daily experiences of those who are experiencing poverty, people they will be working with in the future. Further these sessions are an important stepping stone in breaking barriers between groups who rarely have the chance to authentically engage with one another in this way.

"It was important to present [the module] at Trinity because it is a well renowned college not only in Ireland but across the world and where better to try and get the message that we are trying to convey across than on such a big platform." - Community activist ATD Ireland





CONCLUSION



The purpose of this toolkit was to provide a thorough insight into the Merging of Knowledge method, using the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty research. It aimed to appeal to people interested in genuine participation in research. The paper first summarised the Hidden Dimensions of Poverty study, reflecting on participation in this research. Next, the importance of inclusion in this type of study was analysed. It laid out the conditions and steps necessary for MOK. The crucial takeaways from the method were investigated, highlighting the impacts of this type of analysis.

As we have reviewed the benefits of MOK, a brief overview of some limitations is warranted. The power relations within the groups must be examined (Osinski, 2021). The unequal distribution of financial and time resources, differences in bargaining power and BATNAs (best alternatives to a negotiated agreement) and different positions in the research process are – to a certain extent – inevitable. It is pivotal to examine if these groups are homogeneous in terms of power distribution.

Another limitation is the time needed to build relationships and trust. As mentioned, the research took over 3 years to complete. This is a venture in that not all research has the means or budget to invest with. It must be acknowledged that mutual learning is not easy and it will take time and patience, especially when merging different groups and knowledge together. In addition to this, only hundreds not thousands of people were involved in the research which was conducted in just six countries. In conclusion, this method has proven it can offer a fundamental theoretical and practical perspective to combining knowledge. The method carves a path for future research, especially those of discourses of such intrinsic nature, i.e. with other marginalised groups. It would be a fruitful area for further work.

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RESOURCE PAGE



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsRl6o8AOoM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQqVJlQuAPo>



https://www.facebook.com/watch/?extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C-GK2C&v=392487748277303

<https://atd-uk.org/2016/11/30/measuring-poverty-in-all-its-forms/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwpHILPd4I>



<https://atd-uk.org/2019/12/02/susans-journey-no-longer-crouched-no-longer-crushed/>

<https://atd-uk.org/2019/05/31/ruth-lister-the-art-of-ignoring-the-poor/>

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



We would like to thank the Agence Française de Développement for funding the publication of this toolkit. Thank you to Dann Kenningham, Tara Doherty, Rebecca Tighe, Ciara Margolis, Sarita Mithal and the ATD Ireland team.

Thank you to Joe Whelan, Maryann Broxton, Rachel Broady, Orna Shemer, Xavier Godinot and Bruno Tardieu for their revisions and contributions to this toolkit.

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"The conditions for participation: building trust on people's terms not your own time table, the language you use, compensation people for their time, knowledge, and input, following people's lead not your own agenda points, considering what you are willing, able, and may need to do upstream, midstream, and downstream in your organization and knowing the difference between them, and making sure that people are also gaining something from their participation with you; that it's not just a one sided or transactional relationship"

- Maryann Broxton

"In this approach, instead of being objects for research and policies designed by others, people in poverty are co- researchers whose intelligence contribute to a common endeavour" - **Xavier Godinot**

"MoK relies on a revolutionary recognition of the value of the types of knowledge and the importance of the interaction between knowledge agents. The understanding that knowledge is the result of connection/engagement between people also includes the understanding that an emotional, unstable and surprising process is expected. Merging knowledge is not a linear process, and may even be frustrating and tiring, but as long as it is navigated with respect and curiosity towards the discovery of the new knowledge, it will bring significant innovative products to society and empower the different people who take part in each of the knowledge groups". - **Orna Shemer**

"Being a co-researcher with ATD Fourth World helped me to further recognise that people with direct, lived experience of poverty are the experts. We understand the financial realities; the psychological impact; the navigation of the welfare system; the burden of stigma; the impact of negative discourse used by media, policymakers, politicians. We can recognise the threat of government talk of changing the welfare system and can interpret the disingenuous talk of welfare dependency. We see the individualising, sentimentalising, and masking of the broader experience and how this can, ultimately, tweak rather than work to eradicate poverty. If treated as equals, as legitimate contributors, people with direct, lived experience can contribute in a non-official authentic way to discussion. That contribution is not additional but essential. Any examination of poverty is weaker without that input". - **Rachel Broady**

"It was a genuine privilege to be involved in this research up close and in a coordination role. It was astounding to see the efforts and bravery in developing a genuine working relationship in which everyone's experience was valued shown by all co-researchers, once the conditions were in place, and a safe space created. We witnessed something truly unique; it was a massive learning curve for all. This way of collaborative working not only resonates in the findings ... it gave us something profound that needs to be reflected in all anti-poverty policy & strategy development. There are lessons to be learnt for society".

- Dann Kenningham