



17 October 2020

### ***Building a human rights bridge out of poverty***

On the **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**, [Just Fair](#), [Amnesty International UK](#), [ATD Fourth World](#), the [Human Rights Centre of the University of Essex](#) and friends and partners renew our commitment to put human rights at the forefront of the anti-poverty movement in the four nations of the UK.

Ending poverty is about having access to services and goods, but it is also about being listened to. That is why we are working together to build and re-establish connections between campaigners and advocates across the four nations, including colleagues with lived experience of poverty.

*“I have lived with disability and poverty my whole life. Poverty is an act of violence against the poor and a denial of human rights. Many people just don’t understand that. But people in poverty are treated as less than human, which fuels a cycle of fury, anger, and rejection. Today, we have a new opportunity to build the human connections that are so necessary for our society to defend human rights and to overcome the violence of poverty.”* [Moraene Roberts \(ATD Fourth World\)](#)

We are determined to increase confidence in the ability of individuals and grassroots groups to champion human rights against poverty. To that end, we are developing skills on evidence-gathering, strategic communications and effective advocacy, among other issues.

Human rights must be at the forefront of any public policy to address the root causes of poverty.

In 2019, the [UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Philip Alston](#), documented that in the whole of the UK “fourteen million people live in poverty, one and a half million of them are in destitution, four in ten children are poor, food banks proliferate, homelessness and rough sleeping are on the rise and life expectancy is falling for women born in deprived areas.”

The UK should do much better than this. The world’s sixth largest economy should not tolerate these levels of poverty.

*“We are all affected to Covid-19 but we are not equally impacted. Unless effective measures are put in place to rebuild societies on the basis of fairness and justice, this pandemic will result in increasing inequalities in our society and around the world. It is essential that the right policies are put in place to ensure that nobody is left behind. Amnesty UK is proud to be working with key partners on making the links between poverty and human rights.”* Kate Allen, Director of Amnesty International UK

*“A vast and growing number of people in the UK live in conditions of severe poverty. As such, a country with a proud tradition of social justice may also be legitimately condemned as a systematic violator of human rights. The UK human rights community hasn’t always responded as robustly as it should have done to human rights violations ‘at home’. It is time to remedy our relative neglect of some of the most impoverished [communities](#) in our midst.”* Dr Andrew Fagan, Director of Essex Human Rights Centre of the University of Essex.

In the next eight months, the Human Rights Centre of the University of Essex, Amnesty International UK, ATD Fourth World and Just Fair will hold a series of events to build bridges between people with lived

and learned experience of poverty in the UK. The events will include talks, webinars, and training sessions for and by people who experience or have experienced poverty in their lives. Face to face events in London, Glasgow and other locations will hopefully take place in mid-2021.

*“This series of events will create a platform for people with lived experiences of inequality and discrimination to come together and develop knowledge, skills and collective power from a rights-based perspective to further push for their voices to be heard in public policy making.”* Jess McQuail, Director of Just Fair.