

Narrative of Various Programs and Activities

March 2008 to April 2009

(g) Basic US Programs:

Two interdependent program areas encompass the bulk of (ATD) Fourth World Movement's work: *Activities with Families and Children* and *Training and Public Information*. These programs support one another by providing avenues for sharing and bridging among the general public, formal policy makers, and the people most directly affected by anti-poverty policies, opinions, and practices.

Below, we first list our most prominent programs and actions. We then follow with a more in-depth description of the objectives and methods. In conclusion, we provide highlights of the 08-09 year.

Activities with Families and Children include:

- **Street Libraries** (New York City) and **home reading and activity visits** (New Orleans traveling project) to promote and strengthen a love of books and creative discovery among children in low-income neighborhoods and households;
- **Tapori Children's Network** presentations, group facilitations, and assemblies, to connect children from different backgrounds and countries, around concrete actions that express their innate sense of fairness and friendship;
- **Connected and Visible Travel Project** that takes FWM basic programs "on the road" in the US South, to maintain vital links and build knowledge with families and children still displaced from New Orleans after 2005's Hurricane Katrina;
- **Play and Learn Together** (New Orleans) to develop with young parents, actions and relationships which positively shape the development of, and future for their infant and toddler-aged children;
- **After School Programs** and volunteering (Dickenson County, VA) to support local residents in their initiatives to supplement school efforts and broaden the horizons of their children;
- **Appalachian Learning Cooperative** (Dickenson County, VA) to promote the free exchange of knowledge, skills, and culture in a remote area often viewed as only on the receiving end of charity;
- **Fourth World Discussion Forums and Civic Engagement Gatherings**, organizing and attending public events, skills-sharing workshops and classes, celebratory/holiday gatherings, cultural outings and family vacation weekends--all with those in poverty at the center among a diversity of others, to build peace by striving together to end poverty;
- **Youth Service Action Projects** to respond to young people's wish and need to "do something," by offering short and longer-term volunteer opportunities with local Fourth World Movement teams, as well as consultation and training for starting service projects in their own neighborhoods;
- **Accompaniment and Support in Accessing Basic Rights** to ensure that vulnerable families stay connected to, and help shape supportive social networks and services.
- **Evaluation and Planning** opportunities through interviews, surveys, informal chats, virtual/email exchanges, and formal gatherings to ensure that those experiencing poverty are active in shaping, implementing, and evaluating programs. A concerted, organization-wide evaluation/planning process took place from November 2007 – October 2008;

Training and Public Information actions include:

- **Active recruitment** efforts, **flexible internship** opportunities, and a variety of local, national, and international gatherings for on-going promotion and development of the Fourth World Volunteer Corps;
- **Field placements** for students in the social sector, as well as **information sessions** to service-learning volunteer groups;
- **Partnership with Academics** in social policy research (Boston), to promote, and open channels for, the expertise of those in poverty to merge with that of other concerned citizens, including

practitioners, academics and elected or appointed public officials.

- **Compass for Tomorrow: the Wresinski Approach** to elicit, merge, and put forth in a multi-media exchange forum a diversity of today's voices inspired by ATD Fourth World founder Joseph Wresinski.
- **Public presentations and events**—such as panels, conferences, and commemorations of *October 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*--in which those in poverty exchange with others their knowledge, experience, and efforts in struggling to overcome poverty;
- **Study-trips, thematic training sessions**, and accompanying **correspondence and communication** with a national network of part-time volunteers, to reinforce current priorities and plans;
- **Publications** such as books, reports, and newsletters (*The Fourth World Journal* and *Tapori*), bulletins, and other communication material such as videos and CD-Roms;
- **The website** www.4thworldmovement.org with on-going updates, input, and links from members.

Below we provide a more in-depth description of objectives and methods of our major actions and initiatives. Some highlights of the 08-09 year follow at the end of this narrative. Details on projects can also be found on our website where we post *The Fourth World Journal*, as well as our periodic *Letter to Members and Friends*. www.4thworldmovement.org

ACTIVITIES WITH FAMILIES AND CHILDREN – Detailed descriptions

STREET LIBRARIES engage children and parents around books, computers, and art in neglected, under-resourced communities. As the Fourth World Movement's signature project, Street Libraries currently occur in New York City and had been active in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina. (Activities with children from New Orleans still occur, and a dynamic is building for summer Street Library actions to develop again in the city.) The New York City Street Library takes place in the Ocean Hill/Brownsville neighborhood in Brooklyn. Street Libraries developed from the principle of reaching towards a community's aspirations and the aim of sharing knowledge in the heart of the community. The format is simple and authentic: colorful blankets on the ground, a communal time of reading and stories, followed by an activity promoting discovery, highlighting skills, and encouraging creative expression.

Behind the simplicity are rigorous methods that contribute to continuity, commitment, and a sustained sense of community. Street Library volunteers arrive at the same time every week, week after week. They invite all children, but keep a special eye out for those with the most difficulties. They solicit and rely on input and support from parents and other community members. They prepare achievable activities with quality materials. They write observations from their interactions in the community in order to process and learn from them, in turn sharing insights and questions with parents.

The simple actions of Street Library program build a consistent, long-term, and trusted presence in low-income communities and with families struggling with persistent poverty. This relationship leads to consultation on and involvement in further projects and partnerships (such as those described below) that promote positive changes at different levels of society, for everyone.

TAPORI PRESENTATIONS AND GROUP FACILITATION at schools, community centers, and homeless shelters link children from different backgrounds and cultures around the motto, "*We want all children to have the same chances.*" Through the Tapori Children's Network, 7- to 13-year-olds learn from and about one another through a newsletter and website relating true stories of children's acts and expressions of friendship, empathy, and fairness. Hands-on activities invite children to create and add their own ideas, actions, and projects for a world without poverty (www.tapori.org). Tapori groups and presentations occur through our partnerships with local organizations in New York, the Washington, DC area, Appalachia, New Orleans, and on the road as the Fourth World Volunteers from the New Orleans team travel throughout the US South. Schools and group leaders throughout the US use Tapori resources to enhance their curricula.

THE NEW ORLEANS CONNECTED AND VISIBLE TRAVEL PROJECT re-established and maintains a

vital network with families in poverty still displaced after Hurricane Katrina, which has led to their work on a collective publication and other Fourth World Movement projects. It also strengthens our network of partnerships with other anti-poverty groups and activists. After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August 2005, our New Orleans team had to follow the mandatory evacuation as flood waters covered the Crescent City. They volunteered at a Red Cross shelter in nearby Baton Rouge and **immediately started searching for and traveling to reconnect with other Fourth World Movement members from New Orleans.** By October of 2005, Fourth World Volunteers were able to return to New Orleans; by December of that year they had re-established contact with nearly our entire network of members. Some families had returned to the city, but many remained displaced. In New Orleans, members regularly attended community meetings and joined efforts with other small community activist organizations to help in clean-up and rebuilding efforts. They supported one another in the continually difficult search for affordable housing, adequate schools, professional health services, and other basic necessities. Together they made efforts to participate in community meetings to voice their concerns that rebuilding efforts take into consideration the city's most vulnerable citizens who were hit hardest. And members supported Fourth World Volunteers in traveling to maintain links with those still displaced.

Nearly 4 years since Katrina, many of our members are still unable to return home. Thus, Fourth World Volunteers have continued to take to the road to maintain connections with our members in poverty, and to meet others. These visits always include reading and story time, Tapani activities, and exchange of news, photos, and messages from family and friends who are still separated. The visits are vital for families to fight isolation and renew their strength through familiar community ties.

Our organization-wide evaluation and planning process (see below) led members from New Orleans and Diaspora to work collectively on a publication about their struggles and achievements before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina. Interviews started in the summer of 2008; in February 2009, a "Reunion Tour" in New Orleans brought some of the authors and partners together to take stock of the content and plans thus far. Collective editing and design work continues while members mobilize and prepare for a two-day seminar for October 2009 that will use the interviews as a basis for exchange.

A second component of the *Connected and Visible Travel Project* is that of meeting new individuals and organizations working against poverty. This helps build and strengthen a network of anti-poverty activists in the Gulf Coast region and revive, with their voices and experience, the national dialogue on ending persistent poverty. These encounters have led to fruitful dialogue and ideas for collaboration on grassroots actions, training, and public events.

Local networking and partnership efforts back in the Crescent City led to consistent work with the Greater New Orleans Organizers' Roundtable, a network of community activist groups working for justice for the Gulf Coast generally and New Orleans in particular. It also led to Fourth World Volunteer Corps members rendering service and doing Tapani activities with the local Children's Defense Fund Freedom School, as well as collaboration in 2008 with CDF's Children's Sabbath on October 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Members who are back and living in New Orleans expressed the importance of "getting back to the streets." They analyzed the essential elements of the former Street Library, considered the changed context of the city and people's lives, and started designing a new project with young parents and their infant and toddler children, called *Play and Learn Together*. They also started "Stoop Talks," informal discussions around founder Joseph Wresinski's message and its relevance to our experiences and joint projects today.

PLAY AND LEARN TOGETHER supports young, low-income parents in creating positive play times and spaces with their infant and preschool-aged children. With their parents and other adult volunteers, infants and toddlers look at books, hear stories and songs, use puzzles and toys, and discover the world outside their immediate community. Parents' aspirations are to learn themselves more about habits, activities, books, and games that develop their children's cognitive skills and coordination, and better prepare them for school. As one parent said in helping design the program, *Play and Learn Together* activities strive to "set our children on the right track, from the start."

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS IN APPALACHIA respond to the expressed desires of a rural community to highlight local skills and broaden children's exposure to, and interactions with the wider world. At the particularly isolated Centennial Heights housing development, a Fourth World Volunteer conducts after school activities once a week. The format is similar to the Street Library program, inviting all children to participate in reading, games, craft projects, campaigns of the Taporí Children's Network (see below), and other activities. As with the Street Library program, the adults in the communities are active in planning and carrying out activities with the children, and we continue to work to involve those who are most excluded.

At Ervinton Elementary School, Fourth World Movement members created "Expanding Our Horizons." Applying the principle of "free exchange of knowledge and skills," these parents and grandparents partnered with the school and volunteered their resources, time, and talents in traditional music, artisanal crafts, art, foreign language, and academic help. Fourth World Volunteers (our "staff") helped the group incorporate as a non profit to secure grants and support the program through volunteering.

The APPALACHIAN LEARNING COOPERATIVE is a place for the free exchange of knowledge, skills, and culture. A 12-year presence by Fourth World Volunteer Corps members formed local partnerships which led to the communal, mostly-volunteer effort of building this center. "The Learning Co-op" officially opened its doors to the public in September 2006. Local residents lead and benefit from computer and IT courses, language classes, stress relief exercises, music workshops, quilting circles, weaving projects, and various other traditional or artisanal crafts. The Learning Co-op also serves as a place for student and church groups to volunteer their manual work skills, while learning about anti-poverty efforts and community development initiatives in the area. Members and friends come together at the Learning Co-op for formal and informational Fourth World Gatherings, as well. (See Sept. 2007 *Fourth World Journal* article: http://www.4thworldmovement.org/pubjournals.php_p.4 and highlights annexed to this section).

FOURTH WORLD GATHERINGS are forums for adults of different social backgrounds to share their knowledge and skills in the fight to overcome poverty. In New York and New Orleans members and friends have built a tradition of gathering in mutual respect and dignity. They share their struggles, as well as successful efforts in areas of education, housing, family cohesion, employment, etc. Such meetings incorporate creative means of facilitation (interviews, hands-on artistic workshops, role-plays, small-group interaction) to allow for people with different learning styles to express themselves. For those who have experienced poverty and exclusion, Fourth World Gatherings are an arena to gain confidence in their ability to teach others, as well as get practice in public speaking and representation. Participants from more secure backgrounds start to experience how such encounters can lead to changes on the personal, professional, and institutional levels.

Importantly, some Fourth World Gatherings are informal and less structured. **Cultural outings and family vacation weekends are non-threatening ways for members from different social backgrounds to come together, share a common experience, and build trust.** They also provide a chance for discovery and experiential learning outside one's neighborhood, for both children and adults, and a break from the daily grind of the city. **Celebrating holidays, birthdays, and other festive occasions allow people to reinforce their common humanity,** highlight talents, manifest friendship, and experience a sense of community. As one member put it, they allow people to "live peace together." These moments are important touchstones--as much for those from non-poor backgrounds, as for those who know poverty and exclusion.

All such encounters and gatherings lead to participation in public presentations and events such as poverty-related panel discussions, conferences, seminars, and rallies, on local, state, national, and international levels. (See also "Training and Public Information" section)

YOUTH SERVICE ACTION PROJECTS draw upon the experience, talent, and motivation of Street Library and Taporí "alums" to mobilize and gather with others to undertake projects that

incorporate volunteer service and knowledge exchange. From New York, young people are designing a creative writing project through a series of writing workshops about their experiences, in collaboration with a professional writer and workshop facilitator. In New Orleans, the designers and implementers of *Play and Learn Together* are young people with a history themselves of hardship and struggle. Some young alumni/alumnae have chosen to help facilitate current Street Library and Taporí Children's Network activities. Additionally, Fourth World Movement teams have stepped up volunteer outreach to youth for short-term projects, activities, and events.

COMPUTER CLASSES IN COMMUNITY CENTERS IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA respond to local residents' aspirations for skills-sharing and job-readiness opportunities. They strengthen the capacity and connectedness among people in an isolated, often-exploited region. They provide a means for our Volunteer Corps members to create links among people of different backgrounds dispersed throughout this rural area. Such links lead to other both formal and informal projects and initiatives. (See our 08-09 highlights in which Fourth World Movement's involvement helped residents of the small town of Trammel, VA secure a broadband access project.)

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ANTI-POVERTY ORGANIZATIONS AND EFFORTS serves to build and strengthen commitment and actions against poverty in this country, and internationally. It also opens up channels for families in poverty to link to crucial community resources and advocacy efforts. Partnerships with others occur in all Fourth World Movement locations. They range from joint representation projects at the United Nations to volunteering in local public schools, but also include links with national and community-based organizations, faith-based programs, and policy-centered organizations on a variety of poverty-related issues.

In Boston, collaboration occurs with the McCormack Graduate School Center for Social Policy at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. In New York City, work at the United Nations continually calls for collaboration on events with other organizations such as Amnesty International, Civicus, and the Children's Fund International. The Street Library in Ocean Hill, Brooklyn, relies on continuing partnership with the Biko Transformation Center in the neighborhood, as well as advice and participation from local arts and literacy groups. From our national center in the Washington, DC area, we offer Taporí resources and activities to community groups such as Little Friends for Peace, schools, and national organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund. In southwestern Virginia, Fourth World Movement Volunteer Corps members have continually supported local community development efforts through participation in community center programs, health fairs and clinics (such as the yearly Remote Area Medical and the on-going St. Mary's Health Wagon), housing repair groups, the area Head Start program, and after school initiatives. In an isolated region often viewed only as receiving help, we purposely did not create our "own" project, but instead put our energies into learning from and highlighting Appalachian knowledge and efforts (see above). And from New Orleans, involvement in the network represented by the Greater New Orleans Organizers' Roundtable has strengthened conversation around involving those most often left behind, and led to joint actions such as seminars, cultural events, training workshops, and rallies.

ACCOMPANIMENT AND SUPPORT IN ACCESSING BASIC RIGHTS in housing, education, family unity, and legal issues expose obstacles and reveal injustices families in poverty must face in times of crisis. Trust and partnership develop through Street Libraries, Fourth World Gatherings, and other activities, but crises for families in poverty still occur. When such families have no other networks available, full-time Fourth World Volunteer Corps members, part-time volunteers ("supporters"), and other families who've experienced hardship make time to lend support. This can include accompanying a family to housing court to prevent eviction, attending a school meeting with a timid or frustrated parent, advocating in a child welfare case, linking isolated families to local services and community support, evacuating in a group from a hurricane-besieged city, or supporting a family to bury a loved one, in dignity.

There is reciprocity in such support among Fourth World Movement members. Facing obstacles and

struggles together provides the knowledge and strength to formulate a message and plan of action at an organizational level, geared to change public attitudes and policy. This type of support occurs in all Fourth World Movement locations with special attention to that reciprocity, so that individual crises can serve to strengthen a wider communal struggle.

The EVALUATION AND PLANNING PROCESS 2008 involved members from different backgrounds in taking stock of current actions and participation, exchanging questions and issues with peers internationally, assessing priorities, and formulating project plans for the next four years. Starting in November 2007 members engaged in interviews, surveys, virtual exchanges by e-mail, and formal gatherings. Three people from the United States attended an international planning session in May 2008 at ATD Fourth World's international center in France. There delegates pooled their local experience of this evaluation work and condensed members' input into five broad priorities that will shape the projects of the various branches of the International Movement ATD Fourth World for the next four years. These priorities are:

--**uniting among people of different backgrounds** in order to build peace, reaching first and always to those struggling in persistent poverty;

--**supporting young people in their projects** for their families, their communities, and the world, especially those young people who have the hardest lives;

--**sharing and fostering quality creative and cultural expression** for both personal and community development;

--**building a strong base of merged knowledge** where the knowledge gained by families resisting poverty sits on equal footing with other forms of expertise;

--**nurturing fundraising and budgeting efforts** that are participatory, transparent, ambitious, and a continually an invitation to commit to striving together to end poverty.

Fourth World Movement members in the US reviewed and affirmed these priorities during the annual meeting of June 2008. Projects were already renewed or underway as a result of the evaluation and planning process. The International Movement ATD Fourth World published a "Contract of Commitments" entitled *Striving Together to End Poverty* (STEP) on October 17, 2008. (See <http://www.4thworldmovement.org/presentations.php> and www.oct17.org)

TRAINING AND PUBLIC INFORMATION – Detailed Description

ON-GOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR FOURTH WORLD VOLUNTEER CORPS MEMBERS occur through local, national, and international meetings and correspondence with colleagues. Such staff development meetings address various themes relevant to Volunteer Corps members' roles: learning from our projects and interactions with families in poverty; learning from current events and anti-poverty trends in the country; understanding the collective history and culture of our organization, and discussing issues inherent to our specific commitment (simple living stipend, necessary availability, staying long term, living communally, etc.). Volunteer Corps members also take advantage of training opportunities or courses offered by other organizations, colleges, and professionals.

OUR FORMALIZED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM is an intense introduction to the Fourth World Movement's history and approach, and to a long-term commitment in our international Volunteer Corps. Interns live and work, unpaid, alongside Volunteer Corps members for 3 months, taking part in activities with families and children, reading and discussing publications, and helping with the upkeep and improvement of Fourth World Movement centers. At the end of the 3 months, interns make a mutual decision with Volunteer Corps members about their continued involvement: join the Volunteer Corps (thus, the payroll) or remain in link as a supporter. Outreach and recruitment for the internship occurs through listings in college careers offices, publications, and online sites for volunteer opportunities. Attendance at careers fairs is an active part of recruiting, as well as a venue for public information.

As a result of our evaluation and planning process we are renewing our efforts in active recruitment, consulting with young people to design new and more flexible opportunities for service and long-term

commitment.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITIES occurs through Field Placements, Visiting Fellowships, and Project Collaboration. Universities see Fourth World Movement teams as training sites for students whose line of work will have them interaction with people in poverty. For the seventh consecutive year, the New York City team has received students from Columbia's School of Social Work for 9-month, 35-hour/week training placement. Additionally, at the end of the fiscal year New York members—including those who had personal experience of the child welfare system—were preparing to welcome a group of social work students from the University of Connecticut for a day of training. In 2008 Portland State University sponsored a student majoring in community development to intern with us for 10 weeks in Washington, DC.

Since 2008, University of Massachusetts-Boston has welcomed a veteran Fourth World Volunteer as a visiting fellow at the McCormack Center for Social Policy.

http://www.mccormack.umb.edu/centers/csp/staff_susie_devins.php This partnership has so far led to collaboration with CSP staff on public events such as a UN roundtable on participatory practices, an international colloquium on ATD Fourth World founder Joseph Wresinski, and a UMB-sponsored seminar series entitled *Reshaping 21st Century Poverty Policy*. Collaboration continues as CSP partners open their academic rigor and knowledge to merge with the grassroots practices and the expertise of those who learn through a struggle against persistent poverty.

EXCHANGE AROUND AND PROMOTION OF THE WRESINSKI APPROACH occurs through organized public conferences, member input into a publications, and continued screenings of a 2007-issued film entitled *Joseph Wresinski: A 50-year Fight against Poverty*. Two years of preparation engaged world-renowned academics with Fourth World Movement members around founder Joseph Wresinski's thinking and work. Gatherings, reading groups, study days, and other exchanges led to a December 2008 international colloquium entitled *Exclusion, a Challenge to Democracy*. Organized in collaboration with the Association Française de Science Politique and with Sciences Po Paris, the 3-day colloquium served as a springboard for dialogue. <http://www.atd-quartmonde.org/Conference-Exclusion-a-Challenge.html> Fifteen delegates from the US attended the colloquium. The dialogue continues through local seminars and renewed input into a North American, multi-media version of a collection of Wresinski's messages in the work *Compass for Tomorrow*.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS CALL ON FOURTH WORLD MOVEMENT

MEMBERS to inform volunteer groups involved in their programs. In southwestern Virginia church groups, college students, and professionals come to the Appalachian region to help repair homes and volunteer at health fairs. Discussion on poverty issues is part of the program. Local coordinators there call upon Fourth World Movement members at the Learning Cooperative to present our approach and share our knowledge.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND EVENTS create more formal opportunities for the voice and experience of those in poverty to influence public opinion and policy. Fourth World Movement members prepare and train one another through interviews, research, and Fourth World Gatherings to organize and speak at poverty-related panel discussions, conferences, seminars, and rallies, on local, state, national, and international levels.

In New York City, members take on a special responsibility to reinforce our dialogue with the United Nations. One Volunteer Corps member, based in the New York team, assures the International Movement's representation as a non-governmental organization with consultative status at the United Nations. Other New York members support that representation by following certain UN committees. They sometimes speak on behalf of Fourth World members from other countries, and welcome and exchange with those able to come from other countries to UN events.

The PUBLIC COMMEMORATION OF OCTOBER 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is primary among such events. On October 17, 1987, some 100,000 citizens from around the world gathered in Paris on the Plaza of Human Rights. They affirmed Fourth World Movement founder Joseph Wresinski's (1917-1988) declaration: "*Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure these rights be respected in our solemn duty.*" Since then, poor and non-poor around the globe have continued to mark the day as a reaffirmation of their common commitment to end poverty. (www.oct17.org)

Fourth World Movement members in New York, Washington, DC, southwestern Virginia, and New Orleans organize commemorations which revolve around testimonies from people in poverty, and include children's presentations, inspirational songs, marches, communal meals, conferences, and other actions that bring together in partnership people of diverse backgrounds. Whenever possible, commemoration participants arrange audiences with policy and decision makers—from local mayors to the United Nations Secretary General—to reinforce that each gathering is also a call to action.

In link with our International Center, Fourth World Movement members provide mobilization and informational material and support to individuals and organizations around the country that also choose to mark this Day. Our encounters and information campaigns have mobilized grassroots groups in Texas, Michigan, California, and northern Louisiana particularly to organize commemorations on October 17. Other organizations, institutions, and networks also mark this UN-declared day. Our members try to engage in dialogue with such groups to form partnerships and to ensure that the history and spirit of the day--namely that those with a lived experience of poverty are the initiators and be the principal organizers and participants--are not lost.

MAINTAINING LINKS WITH NATIONAL NETWORK OF SUPPORTERS furthers the scope of our public information and training. The National Center team in the Washington, DC area facilitates the involvement of people throughout the country through e-mail and mail correspondence, targeted news bulletins, and opportunities to gather for study trips and thematic training sessions. Plans made in 2008, including the hiring of a part-time administrator and increasing the networking visits of senior Fourth World Volunteers, will lead to renewed efforts and strength in this area.

THE FOURTH WORLD JOURNAL, OUR NATIONAL NEWSLETTER carries the Fourth World Movement's public message to a circulation of 10,000 people. Articles highlight Fourth World Movement programs and events, deliver testimonies by people in poverty, and address from our unique approach issues relevant to the struggle to end poverty. We are re-evaluating the format and production of this public message tool. Plans are to clean up our mailing list, create an e-newsletter, and lean more toward blogs, e-mail forums, and website development.

TAPORI, THE TAPORI CHILDREN'S NETWORK NEWSLETTER, along with the WEBSITE www.tapori.org, help children from different backgrounds learn from one another and express and act on their sense of justice, friendship, and empathy. The bi-monthly newsletter for ages seven to thirteen provides true stories of children in poverty and those who stand beside them. Each issue proposes an activity to solicit children's ideas and tap into their creativity. The website incorporates colorfully illustrated stories, children's messages, and updates on campaigns and events. Individuals or groups who send material to the Tapori Network receive personalized responses and see their contributions mentioned in subsequent newsletters and on the website. With newsletters in 6 different languages and the website that includes 10, the Tapori network reaches thousands of children worldwide. The English version of *Tapori* newsletter currently reaches a **circulation of some 1700 addresses in the US** (including schools, community groups, and individual homes) and another 200 in other countries.

The WEBSITE www.4thworldmovement.org carries our public message in seconds to the wider, internet-connected public and provides an immediate forum for members to promote and publicize the highlights of actions and events. It provides quick access to our internship process for young people to further their social justice action. It allows people to order quickly our publications and

resources, as well, of course, to support our work financially. We re-vamped our website in 2007 through the coordination of one young staffer working with the donated professional services of two qualified graphic and web designers. One of those designers continued providing updates through 2008. Plans are to move to an easier content management site, to make the site more user-friendly for teams and members to add photo galleries, sound bites and video, blogs, and links to members' actions outside of Fourth World Movement. The goal is that on-going development of the website become both a means and an end, making it an "Activity with Families and Children" that provides "Training and Public Information."

ASSORTED PUBLICATIONS, RESOURCE DOCUMENTS, AND OTHER MEDIA about specific Fourth World Movement projects or poverty-related issues provide tools both for internal and public training and information. They are a channel through which the knowledge and experience of people in poverty and those who stand with them can influence public opinion and policy. As stated above, members with an experience of poverty are vital partners in creating, as well as promoting reports, publications, and other informational material. Public presentations by people in poverty themselves of such material, serve to confirm those members as agents of change involved from development of projects through to the evaluation and dissemination of them.

In 2008 we promoted to selected academics and members last year's publication *The Merging of Knowledge: People in Poverty and Academics Thinking Together*. We finalized the CD-Rom resource in our *Unleashing Hidden Potential* work, gaining donated services of a computer programmer to repair glitches. (See demonstration added to our website: <http://www.4thworldmovement.org/uhp.php>) One long-term staffer continued exchanges with members on the messages of founder Joseph Wresinski collected in *A Compass for Tomorrow*. This exchange will culminate in a multi-voiced publication sometime in the near future.

INSERT: 2008 REVIEW WITH PROJECT LIST 2009

Below, we annex the text of an insert that we sent to members and friends that reviews our highlights of the 2008 year, re-emphasizes our priorities, and gives a preview of projects for 2009. For the full original layout with photos, please see www.4thworldmovement.org.

***Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty,
human rights are violated. To come together
to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.***



–Joseph Wresinski, Founder, Fourth World Movement, October 17, 1987



Striving Together to End Poverty

In **STEP** All Together in Dignity with the Fourth World Movement: www.oct17.org

Dear Friends: Last year, we went through a rich **Evaluation and Planning Process** through interviews, local and national meetings, virtual exchanges with other countries, and an international gathering. From the ground up, with you and other partners, we set 5 major priorities that shaped and will guide our plans and projects for the next three years. Below are some highlights of actions in 2008 and a list of projects for 2009 and beyond.

2008 Highlights

In **New York**, throughout the year we said goodbye to full-time Fourth World Volunteers Nick, Anna, and Steve and Vicki. Though no longer with our Volunteer Corps, they stay in touch and are active members. With enthusiasm and commitment, young supporters took up the partnering with parents in Brooklyn's Ocean Hill community and our friends at the Biko Center to assure the continuation of Street Library activities. So the summer's activities saw no lapse in creative, educational, and healthy fun: with storytellers, community plays, sports tournaments, a neighborhood barbeque, and a talent show! Meanwhile, members from around the city welcomed Fourth World Volunteers Paul Harris and Marta Iglesias Benet and their children into the action: from the Street Library, to Open Fridays at the Fourth World House, to events at the United Nations.

In **southern Virginia**, the Appalachian Learning Cooperative expanded as a gathering place for the free exchange of knowledge, skills, art and craftsmanship. The Co-op quilters, who stitched the stories and memories of local people into *The Quilt of Our Lives*, proudly saw their cultural work travel internationally to France, Thailand, and the Philippines. Computer and web work, video, stress relief, music, weaving, and quilting are among the activities that bring a diversity of people together on Reedy Ridge in Dickenson County, VA. The talent and skills sharing took place outside the Co-op, as well. Fourth World Volunteers partnered with local parents and grandparents in offering creative activities in the "Expanding Our Horizons" after school program they designed. Partnership in the community also helped clinch the award to the town of Trammel as a new site for broadband connection for this rural area! Meanwhile children at Centennial Heights housing development were active in contributing their creativity, ideas, and friendship through the Tapori Children's Network (www.tapori.org) in exchanges with children in New York and elsewhere.

From **New Orleans**, evaluation of the *Connected and Visible* Travel Project led members still displaced after Hurricane Katrina to express again their wish: "We need to write a book!" With other members who've returned to the city, they began work on a collective publication through interviews and photographs. It will give voice and image to the struggles, hopes, and courage of families in poverty, and the community building they inspired and contributed to before, during, and after Katrina. Continuing the Travel Project is building a dialogue and strong

network with anti-poverty groups and organizations throughout the US South. In Monroe, LA, particularly, diverse citizens--from a day shelter to City Hall—took the text of the Commemorative Stone to heart; they rallied together on October 17th for the third year in a row.

Meanwhile, our members living again in New Orleans wished to “get back out on the streets,” keep their focus on children, and reach out to vulnerable young people. They started *Play and Learn Together*, a project being shaped by young parents around their aspirations for, and involvement with their preschool-aged children. They also began “Stoop Talks,” a familiar space where members from different life experiences can exchange on the message of founder Joseph Wresinski. Through Taporí activities and October 17 commemorations, members have also formed a growing alliance with the local chapter of the Children’s Defense Fund, as well as other organizations that stand with those in poverty.

At our **National Center** in the Washington, DC area, local members and some from around the country supported a small team of Fourth World Volunteers to maintain vital administrative and financial support of all our actions; improve our website www.4thworldmovement.org; welcome interns exploring the Fourth World Volunteer Corps, and complete work on a restored porch at our Landover, MD center. We were excited by the work of young people who organized Taporí activities with local groups and published the *Taporí* children’s newsletter. Most importantly, the national team supported the evaluation and planning process to ensure that the grassroots actions and knowledge of our members shape our overall vision and plans. This included reinforcing a growing dynamic to rediscover, exchange upon, and promote the thinking and life of ATD Fourth World founder Fr. Joseph Wresinski. After preparatory meetings in Boston, New York City, Washington, DC, San Francisco, and New Orleans, some 15 delegates attended the international Joseph Wresinski Colloquium in France, entitled *Exclusion, a Challenge to Democracy*. (See photos and video commentary by Susie Devins at atd-fourthworld.org/Conference-Exclusion-a-Challenge.html.) The dialogue continues with plans for a multi-media publication, day-long seminars, and other follow-up events.

On the **International Relations** front, we made significant progress in shaping the discourse and practice of bringing people in poverty to the discussion table on major issues. One example was the roundtable at the United Nations in New York held on October 17th, entitled, *Turning Rhetoric into Action - Building Effective Partnerships to Combat Poverty and Exclusion*. It included people experiencing poverty from both the “north” and “south” countries, as specialists on participation and reaching the poorest in their communities. Also on the roundtable were government representatives, representatives from civil society, UN officials and human rights specialists. You can ask for a toolkit from the roundtable, or go to: <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Rhetoric-into-Action.html>

2009 and Future Projects

For **the coming three years**, we will continue events that *gather people from different backgrounds* together. These will help *raise funds*; they will demonstrate all *people’s right to art, beauty, and creativity*; they will practice the *merging of knowledge*, making sure those who experience poverty are agents with others in helping answer some of today’s pressing questions. Moreover, we will *respond to the call of young people* to help change their world, proposing short-term volunteer projects and the longer-term commitment of the Fourth World Volunteer Corps. Projects answering to these priorities are already underway. They include:

- **International Seminar on Art and Creativity:** *Local musicians and artisans exchange and create with others from US and abroad (Appalachia)*
- **Play and Learn Together:** *Young parents with infant and toddler children shape their future (Louisiana)*
- **Connected and Visible:** *Collaborative Publication on Katrina’s Impact*
- **Kids’ Meet-Up and Speak-Out:** *Street Library and Taporí children have a message for the President (New York, National and International)*
- **Youth Upstart:** *Creative Writing Workshops and Service Action Projects (National)*

- **Compass for Tomorrow:** Multi-media publication with today's responses to founder Joseph Wresinski's early appeals (National)
- **Reshaping Poverty Policy:** Partnership with academics in dialogue with diverse stakeholders (Massachusetts)
- **Study and Seminar on Violence and Peace:** Discovering together ways of resisting violence (National and International)
- **October 17, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty:** www.oct17.org
