

Editorial

Here is the second issue of the AMI Bulletin, our newsletter that aims to bring our readers news items from around the Montessori world—in the broadest sense.

In this issue we report on the highly successful Annual General Meeting (AGM) we had in April, with an excellent attendance of members who actively participated in the exchange of ideas and dialogue concerning future developments of AMI. You will also find the minutes of the AGM, together with the financial figures for 2005 as a separate publication.

The preparation for the Centenary Celebrations of the first Casa dei Bambini in 2007 was an item that attracted many to come to Amsterdam to the AGM and participate in the Centenary Celebrations meetings and presentations. For an update of the Centenary Plans, please see the article by Louise Livingston on this very same page. The AGM is a particularly busy time for AMI, as around the same time the AMI Board meets, with further biannual meetings with representatives of AMI/USA. The Pedagogical Committee and the Sponsoring Committee also have their spring meetings.

We hope you will enjoy 'number two' and welcome your participation in distributing interesting articles and/or news items and by sending us material. Do let us know what is going on in your world that relates to or contributes to the Montessori Movement. Please send us your news, your letters, articles and photographs. The deadline for copy for no. 3 is October 10. Our newsletter must be a joint effort!



Alexander Henny

Centenary Celebrations & Update

With January 2007 just a few months away, we are sure you are organising and working on your Centenary events — every day we hear something about something new and inspiring — a Centenary calendar to celebrate the 'Spirit of Montessori', a 100 steps for Montessori — a sponsored walk where children can walk all around the world to celebrate the Centenary — children getting together to celebrate peace — exhibitions of children's art inspired by the theme of peace — conferences and seminars planned — a musical concert performed by Montessori children featuring a piece of music composed specially to celebrate children and the Centenary.

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Website

There is much work for everyone to do at this exciting time — but remember the Centenary website [montessoricentenary.org] is a rich source of inspiration and resources.

We recommend coming back to visit the website regularly as new things are added every day: many new events listed, news of the San Francisco event, further information on the Study Tour, a Montessori biography and timeline, update to promotional items, additional resources to download and a media section.

Declaration

The Centenary Declaration can also be used as a focus for people's attention. It can be found on the website translated into 17 languages. However, if it is to have a global impact it is essential that we get at least half a million signatures so this is something that you could focus on as one of your Centenary initiatives.

Conferences

The Centenary year will kick off in Rome with the Montessori Centenary conference. The programme has been finalised and online registration is well underway. If you are also



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➤ Centenary Celebrations & Update

hoping to put on a Centenary conference, remember that a special conference is being written which will be available to any affiliated society or training centre. The conference is going to be pitched broadly so that it will be of interest to the public, parents, people in education and Montessorians. The purpose of the day is to enrol people in the Montessori movement and it is intended to end with a call to action to *Champion the Cause of all Children*. Three Centenary DVD's are being produced, which could also be used to enhance your Centenary conference.

Media Kits

One of our aims is to enrol people in the Montessori Movement and raise awareness, and one of the best ways of doing this is by getting media attention for your events. To help you with this we have put together four sample media releases that can be downloaded from the Centenary website. The media releases are aimed at local print media and can be used by schools and Montessori organisations. All the media releases include concise statements about the scope and overall aim of the Montessori Movement. We have also developed guidelines on how to work with the media and prepare and issue media releases. Please send copies of any newspaper article or media coverage obtained to AMI. These will be posted on the website and will help inform and inspire others to work with the media.

Of course we want to have lots of celebrations and parties during the Centenary year so that by the end of the year the

word Montessori is on everyone's lips but we also want to make a concrete difference in the lives of children and to raise public awareness of issues affecting children. We talk about a 'call to action' — what we mean by this is that we need to provide people with something that they can do that will make a difference to children and not just those children who are



Centenary Meeting 20 April 2006



lucky enough to be in a Montessori school. To this end a Parent Awareness Campaign is being developed that will be launched in 2007.

These are just a few of the Centenary initiatives going on all around the world. There is a lot of work being done and still a lot to be done — if we are to be successful we must enlist the help of all those who are involved in the lives of children.

Louise Livingston
Montessori Centenary Steering Committee

The Montessori Centenary Initiative has been made possible by the generous support of AMI, NAMTA and AMI/USA. All three AMI-approved material manufacturers, Nienhuis Montessori, Gonzagarredi and Matsumoto Kagaku, Japan have joined as official Centenary Partners.

Meet the New AMI Board Members

At the Annual General Meeting of April 2006 nine (out of twenty-one) board positions had to be filled: seven board members had come up for rotation, and there were two vacancies, due to the early retirement of two members. (Also see minutes of the AGM) There were two fresh additions: Salma Imtiaz and Molly O'Shaughnessy.

Salma Imtiaz

Salma Imtiaz (Pakistan, 1948) is an AMI graduate, having taken the AMI primary diploma course in 1975 in Karachi, Pakistan. Since then she worked as a Primary Directress at the model school of the training Centre.



She did the Assistance to Infancy Course at the Maria Montessori Training Organisation (London) in 1997-98.

She participated in the First Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières in Italy, in 1999. She is currently following the Training of Trainers programme and achieved the status of Auxiliary Trainer in 2004.

Salma is at present working at the Montessori Teachers Training Centre in Karachi and assists in a great variety of activities related to the teacher training programme. She is in charge of the model House for Children, which includes a small Infant Community as well.

Salma has joined the Board Communications Committee.

Molly O'Shaughnessy

Molly O'Shaughnessy (USA) is an AMI trainer, lecturer, and consultant. She is Director of Training at the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota, where she earned her Primary (3-6) diploma in 1976. She holds a Master's degree in education



from Loyola College in Maryland. Ms O'Shaughnessy was a founding board member of the Minnesota's Children's Museum and serves on a number of school and community boards. She serves on the NAMTA board and is currently an observer at the meetings of the AMI Sponsoring Committee.

She has a special interest in fund development and has chaired many capital campaigns, as well as serving on development committees for non-profit organisations. She is currently leading a major expansion effort in Minnesota to expand teacher training, open a school for at-risk children, increase community outreach, and house a permanent exhibit depicting the life and work of Dr Montessori.

Molly has joined the Board Finance Committee.

Board Committees

To give you a clearer idea of how the board functions and operates, we have created a graphic impression that shows the board's five working committees and their make-up. We have included a condensed brief for each committee, whilst giving you some professional background on all board members.

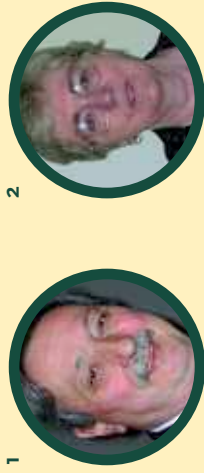
Given the wider scope of the involvement and responsibilities of André Roberfroid and Mary Hayes, in their capacities as International President and General Secretary, they do not sit on one particular committee. They, together with the chairs of the five working committees, form AMI's Executive Committee.

Financial Resources Committee

brief: to ensure the financial stability and continuity of AMI, to report on the financial position and results to the members. To oversee and monitor the budgets and expenses of the five board committees; to initiate and coordinate fundraising activities.

Scientific Pedagogy Committee

brief: to provide pedagogical leadership and ensure a continued high quality of its pedagogy and teacher training; to stimulate and encourage scientific research into the pedagogy of Maria Montessori and to act as a resource in this connection; to find new and innovative ways to disseminate the Montessori idea in new geographical regions in order to actualise education as an instrument of peace.



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1 André Roberfroid International President (Belgium, 1942) Has a long history with Unicef. His last held position, before retirement, was that of Deputy Executive Director for programme and strategic planning, in charge of developing the overall Unicef strategies in the field of child health, education, nutrition and child protection.

2 Mary P. Hayes General Secretary (Ireland, 1944) holds both the 3-6 AMI diploma and 6-12 AMI diploma. Before her present position, she was the director of training for the AMI Elementary Course at the Montessori College in Dublin, Ireland; She was also, for some years, the acting director of training for the AMI Primary Course at the same college.



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3 Sally Connellan (Australia/USA, 1947) is working on EsF initiatives, in particular a project in Bhutan. She promotes Montessori in Australia.

4 Victoria Barres (France/Lebanon), AMI diploma holder, works on education policy issues including girls' education, and intercultural approaches to strengthen community participation. AMI representative to Unesco.

5 Molly O'Shaughnessy (USA) is director of training at the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota. She is also a lecturer, and consultant.
6 Pieter van der Linden (chair) (Netherlands, 1933) is treasurer of AMI since 1994, and treasurer of MM75 Fund. He also serves on the board of AMI/USA. Formerly associate partner in Deloitte.



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7 Silvia C. Dubovoy (USA) is director of training of the Montessori Institute of San Diego, lecturer and AMI Examiner.

8 Patricia Spinelli (France, 1952) is director of training of the Institut Supérieur Maria Montessori, Paris. This summer she gave the foundation (preparatory) course for the 6-12 course in Baldegg, Switzerland.

9 Annette Haines (chair) (USA) director of training of the Montessori Institute of St. Louis, coordinator AMI Sponsoring Committee, member of the AMI Pedagogical Committee, and AMI Examiner.

Human Resources Committee

brief: to develop, initiate and maintain the support systems necessary to enable AMI to offer its services to all people and organisations interested in placing all the children in our world at the centre of society; to develop systems and strategies that support AMI training centres and trainers, regional centres and schools, educators, universities, and governmental educational organisations, to join in the activities of AMI in order to realise its vision.



- 10 **Felix Bednarksi** (Canada, 1949) is founder and principal of the Humberside Montessori School (since 1987), a private school for children ages 3 to 12 years old.
- 11 **Eduardo Cuevas** (Puerto Rico, Canada) is director of training at the Montessori Training Centre of British Columbia, in Vancouver, Canada. He is a lecturer and AMI Examiner.
- 12 **Judi Orion** (USA) is director of training at the Assistants to Infancy course at the Montessori Institute Denver, Colorado and the new o-6 course in Toyoma, Japan. She is a lecturer and international AMI Examiner.
- 13 **Ulla Wikfeldt** (Sweden, 1946) is director of training at the Maria Montessori Institute, Sweden. She is a lecturer and AMI Examiner.
- 14 **Lynne Lawrence (chair)** (United Kingdom, 1954) director of training at the Maria Montessori Institute, London, lecturer and international AMI Examiner.

Membership & Partnership Committee

brief: to promote AMI membership, develop membership initiatives, encourage cross-link communications; to maintain and further relevant partnerships with organisations that share AMI's ideals and work for the benefit of the child.



- 15 **Sue Birdsall** (Australia) has a Master's degree in Education and is principal of the Montessori East School.
- 16 **Takako Fukatsu** (Japan, 1954), is a primary Montessori teacher, and works as translator for both the o-6 course in Toyoma and the 3-6 course in Tokyo. She is a board member of NPO Caring for Young Refugees.
- 17 **Rinze Hoekstra (chair)** (Netherlands, 1959) owns and runs together with his wife a bilingual international Montessori school in Brussels, Belgium. He also teaches and is responsible for the older children.

Communications Committee

brief: to design and implement the communication strategy and guarantee the integrity of AMI's image; to manage a broad line of activities such as developing and producing newsletters, videos and other publications (like Communications), publish books and brochures, and manage AMI's online activities.



- 18 **Salma Imtiaz** (Pakistan, 1948) auxiliary trainer at the primary course in Karachi.
- 19 **Monte Kenison** (USA) is co-director of training at the Montessori Teacher Training Center of Northern California and an AMI Examiner.
- 20 **Harald Ludwig** (Germany, 1940) is professor emeritus of the Montessori Centre at Münster University, Germany. He is involved in Montessori research and is presently preparing special Montessori editions for the German speaking market.
- 21 **Alexander Henny (chair)** (Netherlands, 1947) holds an MA in Business Administration, and is currently the Chief Financial Officer at a local real estate company in the Amsterdam area.
- 22 **Megan Tyne** (Australia) co-opted member, is AMI's web designer and electronic media specialist. She is also chair of the Centenary Committee Steering Committee.

AGM: Presentation & Discussion Points

At the April Annual General Meeting (AGM) on April 22, Dr Annette Haines spoke on the theme “Montessori, Now More than Ever”. Her presentation will be published in full in the next issue of our journal *Communications*, due out in the autumn.

Her talk focused on psychological and emotional development and the many obstacles the child encounters in the world, thwarting a natural, unhindered, development. She observed that this manifested itself in our day and age in the ‘modern and fashionable’ labels *Learning Disorder* (e.g. ADHD and dyslexia, and *Disruptive Behaviour Disorder* (e.g. eating disorders). She pleaded for reform in education, as necessary today as it was in Dr Montessori’s time, whom she quoted ‘If [education] is to prepare man for the present, to our own time and the immediate future...the real purpose of education (must be) to prepare the orientation for the future man who will be on a

new plane’. Annette Haines stressed the great importance of the environment, whether at home or at school. She recognised that Montessori’s outreach is still limited in the world and urged Montessorians to renew and spread their commitment.

André Roberfroid, AMI’s President, shared Annette’s concerns and reiterated her plea and message. He invited the meeting to think out aloud about what challenges AMI faces and to voice their expectations. We are including some points that were raised in the lively discussion that followed.

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The tragedy of the Montessori movement is that it has been hijacked by the school system. Renilde Montessori when interviewed in Dublin on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the AMI diploma ceremony (1934-1984) pointed out that the application of Montessori outside the school system had not been tried and found wanting; it had not even been tried.

Do not sit back and leave the implementation of Montessori to the teacher training centres. Each and everyone of us can realise Montessori in situations with children and parents.

Montessori is a social movement; it should not only reach rich and privileged children. Through projects supported by the Red Cross, the SOS Children’s Villages and organisations and foundations for children all over the world we can reach the other children.

New graduates need support and mentoring. In our courses they get a glimpse of Montessori but they need guidance and continued professional education. In addition they should be empowered to talk to society. Quite often they cannot verbalise what they know to parents, and they should be provided with the right vocabulary.

A psychiatrist from the USA regretted that in his country children with physical and psychological problems are often medicated. In his experience Montessori had much to offer, especially in these instances and he found Montessori the best educational approach. He recounted that he had made a presentation to a gathering of psychiatrists and politicians, who had concluded that Montessori is the most misunderstood system.

AMI was also asked for specific guidance, to provide ideas and energise the members, who can go out into the world and gain renewed inspiration to do their work.

The meeting recognised that it may not always be easy to leave our comfort zone, and face different audiences, some of them sceptical and critical.

We should learn from other organisations how they motivate and activate people. We should help teachers to understand that Montessori is international, and reach out to people outside the Montessori world, including those who do not feel that Montessori has much to offer.

At the world fair in San Francisco (1915) the glass classroom was seen by millions of people. Our website is today's instrument in raising our profile and making ourselves visible.

More concretely we could consider linking up with organisations such as: AERA (research in education). It was also suggested that partnerships with other NGO's in Unesco be forged.

Dr Montessori greatly used the press in advocating her ideas and explaining her principles. She often wrote letters to the editors, and AMI was asked to consider publishing those letters.

The Montessori movement has a strong foundation and strong goals, going back one hundred years. Now is the time to finish building our marvellous cathedral by bringing to our efforts the necessary bricks and mortar.

The shortage of training centres remains a point of concern (e.g. in Norway). In Switzerland one needs to conform to the university module in order to be recognised. A Montessori University, therefore, would be a solution in this regard.

The experience gained with the people living in a refugee camp in Cambodia had made it clear that it is possible to relate to other groups. For instance, the concept of a sponge had been used to explain to illiterate parents the idea of the absorbent mind, and the exercises of practical life were linked up to improving village sanitation.

André Roberfroid thanked everyone for their contributions and reiterated some of the key points:

- 1 The crisis in education has a cure. We have the instruments and the knowledge, and we must grow in numbers.
- 2 Our work also needs research, to which effect we should be more in contact with universities.
- 3 AMI should train more trainers, so that more students can take advantage of our courses.
- 4 Montessori is also a movement for social change.

NEWS FROM THE TRAINING CENTRES

The Good Shepherd Maria Montessori Training Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka are reporting that thanks to the kind generosity of a benefactor they have been able to make a few additions to the centre, such as a much-needed library, an atrium and an extra practice classroom. The centre is especially delighted that it can now provide a proper library to the students.

The atrium will help the students to learn how to give the children a knowledge of the Eucharistic Celebration. The atrium holds all the furniture and the sacred vessels found in the Church in miniature form.

The photograph (taken by Mr Ajith Perera) shows the chief guest the Rev. Joseph Vas cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony. On the left is Sr Stanislaus, the director of training at the centre; on the right is the Mother Superior of St. Bridget's Convent, Sr. Rohini Mendis. Assisting the chief guest is Ms Thilini Fernando from the centre's office. Some members of the staff of the training centre can be seen in the background; they are Sr Magdalene, Mrs Cecilia Fernando and Sr Lourdes Paiva.

Surangani Jayatilaka





The Apollo Montessori School in Amsterdam (photo: Herman Hertzberger)

Montessori Architecture

The Prepared Environment is a concept vital to Montessori's philosophy. In line with that idea, the umbrella environment, the building that houses our prepared environments should ideally follow Montessori principles. In other words, by way of its architecture, the bricks and mortar of the school should offer support and strengthen the development of the children. Many people hope to achieve that when they remodel old schools or engage in new school projects, and some will look to AMI for advice and guidance. We, in turn, can only say that although Maria Montessori had very definite ideas about schools, she did not create an architectural blueprint for the perfect school.

In several of her books Montessori discusses the Prepared Environment, which is the closest she comes to giving guidelines for creating Montessori schools. Building a Montessori school, incorporating Montessori principles, is a tantalising challenge for architects. In this issue we are introducing you to two architects with a distinct and passionate interest in Montessori: Herman Hertzberger, the seasoned and laurelled architect from the Netherlands, an architect who in every one of his designs is led by the concept of relational space, a point he stressed in the interview we had with him. Mamie Harvey is the other Montessori architect. Relatively new to the profession, she is now involved in the ambitious Minnesota project of Molly O'Shaughnessy.

Her knowledge of and feel for of Montessori philosophy goes back a long time, as you'll be able to read in her contribution.

For those whose appetite has been whetted and are of a travelling disposition: the 2007 Montessori Centenary Travelling Exhibit includes an interesting part on Montessori architecture, in the past, present and future. It also includes photos and information on some of Mr Hertzberger's school buildings. For details on the Travelling Exhibit, please check the Centenary website montessoricentenary.org.

We would like to thank our board member Felix Bednarski (with a background in architecture) and Mamie Harvey for 'setting the questions' in Mr Hertzberger's interview. Felix will be contributing an article on the interaction between outdoor environment and child development in one of the future AMI bulletins. Already something to look forward to.

Joke Verheul



(photo: Joop Luimes)

Herman Hertzberger

Herman Hertzberger is a famous Dutch architect, known for his design of schools, and theatres and in our Montessori world particularly for his designs of Montessori schools. Even though only five of the twenty-five schools he built are Montessori schools, he has gained a reputation as a Montessori architect par excellence. He attributes that to the fact that every one of his Montessori schools prepared the way for a new tradition, a different way of handling space. Just around the corner from the bustle of Amsterdam's largest street market, we talked with him in his office, on the top floor of a 1900s traditional school building—now turned into a light and spacious working environment for him and his 30 odd co-workers.

Hertzberger's interest in Montessori goes back to his own school days: he was a Montessori child from age four until age eighteen (from 12-18 he attended the Amsterdam Montessori Lyceum). Add to that the fact that he married a Montessori teacher, and that one of his daughters also took to a professional Montessori career, and all the ingredients are in place for a passionate and enduring interest. It is remarkable that he usually refers to 'people' or 'users'; only occasionally does he say children—it says much about the way he sees children as owners of their school.

Leading principles

Hertzberger stresses that Montessori was a genius, a great innovator. He is tremendously drawn to her ideas about space and room: allowing the child his own private room for development, in a mental and physical environment that supports and stimulates that concept. Especially the idea of 'open' presentations he sees as guiding principles of his own

architecture. Hertzberger: 'these things have inspired me tremendously and have played and continue to play an important role in my work: I do not deliver my buildings 'as a finished or ready-made product. I leave open all sorts of possibilities for the users.'

Environment

'My designs are like free presentations, so that people are free to develop their own associations, and by doing that can appropriate their environment, make it their own, so that it becomes part of them, familiar'. He relishes the word familiar, having the same root as the word family. He infinitely prefers that to the word territory. He doesn't like dividing lines that are too clear: these should be unobtrusive and not too precise; there must be areas of transition of shared space.

Areas of Transition

Hertzberger explains that the children can meet each other in the communal space, the areas of transition; these offer room for negotiation: the users negotiate 'who does what where'. The smooth transitions from classroom to a communal space he refuses to label corridor, and more importantly refuses to design as such. He creates transitions, for instance, by using flexible dividing walls. 'I recently completed the conversion of an old school building, which had four classrooms opening out into the corridor, running down the middle. I immediately transformed one classroom into a communal space to be used by all the children, creating an area where people can work together. The absence of thresholds and the continuation of the same floor covering into the other areas contributes to the idea of smoothness. There are no visual boundaries.'

Montessori's idea of working with mats he finds essential, and brilliant: it allows people to create a temporary, yet individual workplace, which may not be stepped on. 'The children understand and respect that concept. If I should inadvertently step on their work mat, I am an intruder and will get told off immediately.'

It is almost possible to say that there is a mathematical relationship between the beauty of his surroundings and the activity of the child; he will make discoveries rather more voluntarily in a gracious setting than in an ugly one.

Maria Montessori

'I watch these aspects of territory much in the same manner as a biologist would observe animals. When I was a Montessori child, you still had traditional classrooms. The corridor was used as a space for coats and for naughty children that got sent out of the classroom.' He recently revisited his old school and was happy to see that the corridor is also being used for work, and has become part of the extended classroom.

Cross Relationships

The mix of different age-groups in Montessori he finds revolutionary and revelatory, although he thinks today it is often being imitated by mainstream education. He is all the more impressed by Montessori's idea, realising it was developed some hundred years ago. His architecture wants to build on that idea and further the feeling that the children see themselves as a community, as one family, which means sharing the activities of different age groups. He always aspires to create cross-relationships, where contact can easily be made, both visually and by connecting space. 'The idea that as a younger child you can have a look at what the older children are doing is a concept that should be facilitated everywhere in the school, to be supported and enhanced by the environment.' (Scheme of staircase with caption, demonstrating the above ideas).

Delft

'With my first Montessori school, in Delft, I tried to create an interrelationship between the classrooms: by having the architectural features support the idea of articulation. This also allows people to pursue their own individual work: some may wish to work quietly in a corner, whereas others want to move and walk about. The articulated lay-out of the classroom provides for all these different activities and needs.'

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'Brown Stairs'

In the Apollo Montessori School in Amsterdam the central staircase is literally the focal point. The brown wooden steps invite children to engage in all sorts of spontaneous or organised activities. Hertzberger shows a photo where children lie on the steps, working, playing a game of chess. This communal space allows for cross links, it is a meeting place for all. He has provided several points of suspension: 'hang up a few curtains and you create a theatre, hang up a net with butterflies, and the environment changes again.'

We must, therefore, quit our roles as jailers and instead take care to prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction.

Maria Montessori

He points out that the choice of a warm material, wood, combined with the very shape and form of steps invite the children to use them actively, to lie on them. 'See they've taken off their shoes. They lie on their tummies, with crossed legs. It flows from the idea that it feels like lying on a table. My shapes and objects try to call up feelings and possibilities: similar to Montessori's idea of presenting materials.'

Smooth transitions from classroom to a communal space (photo: Herman Hertzberger)





“Brown Stairs” in the Apollo Montessori School in Amsterdam (photo: Herman Hertzberger)

Hertzberger loves the open material cabinets so that children can see all the things that are *on offer*. He compares this idea to the supermarket, where the shopper can make his own independent choices. Unlike in the supermarket, in a Montessori school ‘you can never buy products that are useless’. In traditional schools the children have to work through a set curriculum of math, language, etc. Montessori has a universal approach: you provide everything to enable the child to make his own choices.

The fine balance in Montessori between offering structure combined with a certain kind of freedom he finds quite inspirational. Total freedom is an illusion, he thinks. ‘In our daily lives we limit ourselves, and we put restrictions on our freedom as soon as we make a choice — and that is what we have to do out of necessity all the time. I use a spatial definition of freedom: freedom is inundation, an overflowing; space (also personal space) I see as a river, with a clear bed or channel, without which the river will flood the land. One needs a framework and to agree on certain principles. Freedom is too vast a word.’

Windows

He regrets that the relationship between indoors and outdoors is mostly left unexplored. He blames this on the cool and wet Dutch climate and the strictness of the schools inspectorate in the Netherlands (now defunct). ‘They simply did not allow open access from inside to outside and vice versa. They were afraid that the children might bring back dirt on their shoes, and that was not considered hygienic. In the Apollo school I built windows with broad seats: a little step in front allows the children to step outside through the window. A small adaptation that fooled the inspectors.’

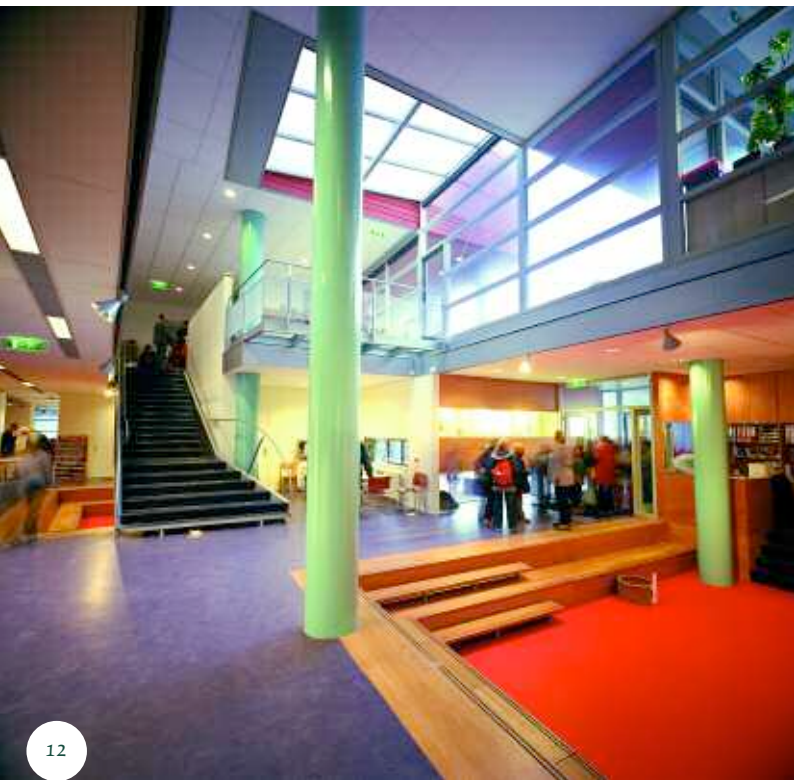
Montessori architecture

Although Hertzberger is envious of the generous budgets that in the past were available to build schools in the Netherlands, he feels that too few designs breathed a true Montessori spirit. An observation he sadly extends to the present day. He acknowledges that some interesting and beautiful Montessori schools have been built, in and outside of the Netherlands, but in most designs he has failed to detect leading Montessori principles. His main regret is that no one architect has found a decent solution to avoid classrooms. There is a current trend of creating open floor plan buildings, without classrooms, which he thinks also holds many disadvantages. The children feel disoriented. He has to hold his ground at the moment, since everybody is keenly following the new trend.

He grumbles about today’s lack of funds: he cannot realise everything he would like. He cannot always build a resting room, which he considers so vitally a Montessori principle. And then, there is no money to build fully equipped kitchens. ‘Fortunately, I have found creative solutions, and if I could have a chat with Maria Montessori, I’d ask her why she didn’t introduce proper cooking into school life. Of course, in the exercises of practical life, the children learn how to bake a cake, but cooking is frightfully important: it tests the need for organisation, coordination and cooperation.’

Personal Evolution

All throughout his professional life he can recognise one important guiding principle: he always holds on to a kind of permanent structure or space that can easily be adapted. He has been asked to renovate and adapt some of his own designs, and is grateful for his own leading principle, as it enables him to make changes without compromises. He tries not to opt for solutions that are ‘expedient and overly pragmatic.’ The lay-out of his classrooms can be changed easily, since he

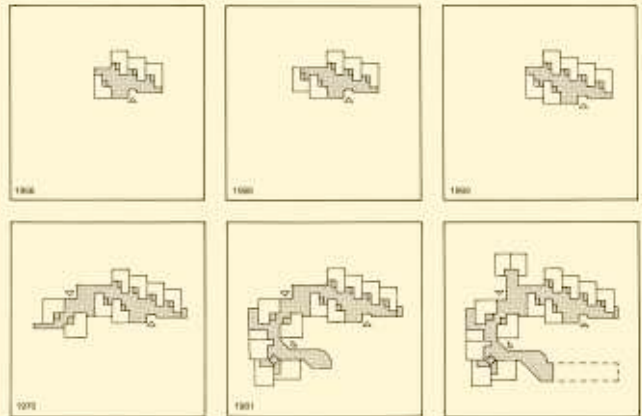


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Use of colours to suggest a certain depth (photo: Kees Rutten)

does not like using heavy partitioning walls — even though he is often urged to build them, being the cheapest solution.

His architectural language has changed a little, sometimes because of outside influences. ‘I used to love working with big building blocks—no longer possible as the Health and Safety Executive has issued a regulation that they are too heavy to carry. But with whatever material I build, I keep on repeating my one major theme (everyone has one major theme) and that has been inspired by Montessori, according to whose philosophy education should open up to and extend into the world.’ He tries to achieve that by activating parts of the available space.



Plan showing how extensions have been added to the original Delft school.

He recalls how the former principal of his Delft school utilised the school to the max, using every nook and cranny. He had attached planets to the ceiling, which the children could move

Montessori College Oost, Amsterdam (secondary education)
(photo: Herman van Doorn)



themselves so as to develop an idea of the cosmos and the dimensions. When Hertzberger built an extension to his school, with a second entrance, he later found that the second door was not at all used. In the principal's words: 'I think it better if everyone comes in via the same door and then walks through the entire school, thereby getting a sniff of all the things that are available and on offer. Montessori indicates that you journey through the world. Unfortunately, this idea is hardly ever reflected in the design of Montessori schools. In my schools I try to capture that sense of journeying for instance by the way the stairwell is created, providing an interconnectedness between the various floors; it is no longer obvious whether you are going up or going down. They do not seem like mere staircases linked, but are added room for the users to meet and work. It becomes a landscape.

Accessibility

One of the key words in his environment is accessibility, an openness that is inviting and welcoming. By providing full accessibility to all rooms you give trust. This principle he also uses for the teachers' room, which should not hold any secrets for the children, but rather be a place where children are always welcome to tell their story, have a sticky plaster put on, have a little cry, be comforted and given a glass of milk.

Only through freedom and environmental experience is it practically possible for human development to occur.

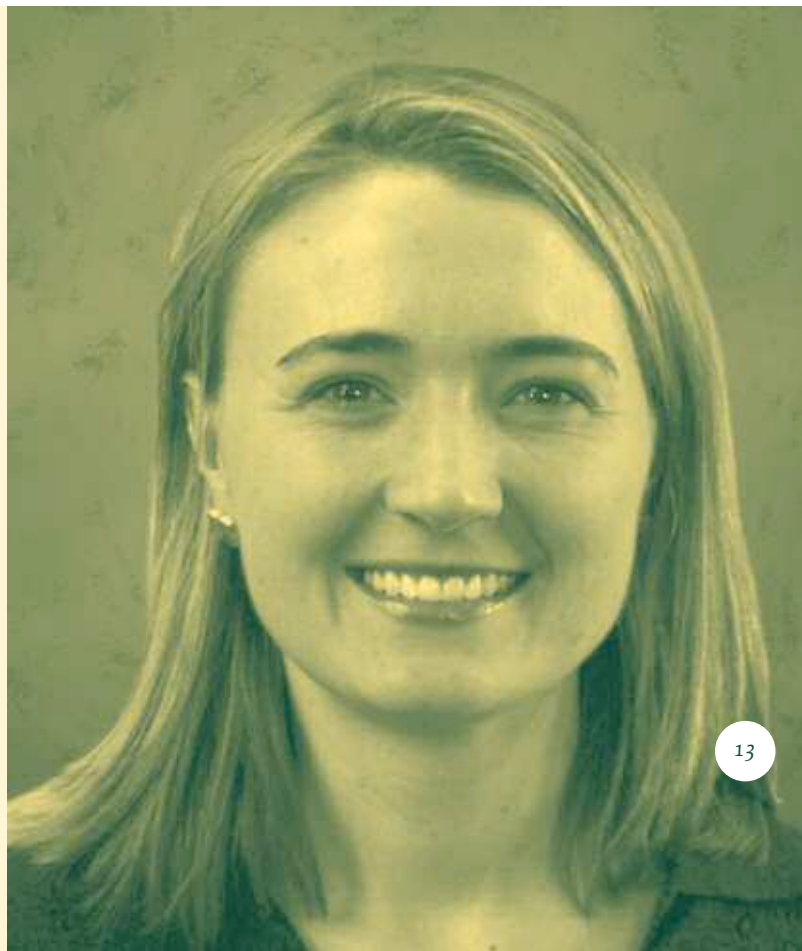
Maria Montessori

Whenever he builds, he is led by two basic principles: views and protection. Views do not only travel from inside to outside, but also within, seeing the others at work, going about their business. A building should clearly show where the user can find protection, for instance by making part of the room a little lower. He abhors the idea of conveying the idea that a building should keep one prisoner, and will always avoid corridors, and most of all dead-end corridors.

Colours

Hertzberger generally holds back in his use of colours: a relative absence of colours will enable the users to appropriate their environment, give it their own colour. He will use colours to suggest a certain depth, a place where one can feel protected, away from the crowd, and secluded, a place for deep concentration or contemplation.

He sometimes considers making a wall with different shades of colour, like Montessori's grading exercises, which he, however, would love to extend by asking children to make colour combinations they find attractive, and to think about the emotional value of certain colours. He does not think Montessori had an aesthetically developed sense of colour — as a young child he did not like the colours of the metal insets, and he has always thought the Pink Tower should have a different colour, a sentiment he shares with his wife, who once tried to repaint the Pink Tower, only to be reprimanded by her headmaster.



Mamie Harvey

As I reflect back on my years as a child in a Montessori environment, I recall working with some of my favourite materials over and over again, such as the chequer board, and the trinomial cube. I worked on these materials for months, even years. I felt I had come to a broad and deep understanding of the concepts of these materials — an empowering feeling.

This kind of internalisation of a concept has been a vital tool for me through the years, a way of organising not only information, but my thoughts and feelings as well — it is my way of understanding and conducting life itself. I gather information; listening to others, and my own intuition, before deciding how I feel. Only then do I decide what to say or how to react. It drives my husband crazy! He asks me a seemingly simple question, and it can take much longer than he would like for me to respond.

Herein lies my approach to the design of Montessori environments. I began by reading every book I could find written by or about Maria Montessori. I have also been fortunate to have many expert Montessorians to ask questions (my mother in particular), and I have a child in a wonderful Montessori environment. Having gained an overall understanding of the Montessori pedagogy, architectural and design training, then experience and intuition come into play.

The design of the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota's Training Center and School is essentially an intuitive response (developed by a team of designers) that transforms a found structure and site into a Montessori Environment. The chosen site and structure's affinity with Montessori allows this adaptation. The single story wood framed structure has several

“fingers” which reach out into the landscape, providing many and varying views and access points to the grounds. The existing structure also has a very loose sense of order, allowing the design to impose the type and scale of order appropriate for a Montessori environment.

We have gone through a series of programming workshops with the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota to theorise an “ideal” diagram for each Montessori community, the Montessori Training Center, and the Museum (a resting place for the travelling Montessori exhibit). The diagram focuses, in particular, on the opportunities and challenges shaped by the Minnesota climate.

Planning has been instrumental in integrating this “ideal” Montessori diagram, assigning the existing low spaces, high spaces, and spaces with view and access to the outdoors essential roles. The design of the exterior will allow the structure to become a quiet backdrop that focuses on movement and views out—to the cultivated landscape, the natural landscape, the communal landscape, and beyond.

I have enjoyed learning about Montessori and having the opportunity to reflect on how Montessori has affected my life, my work, and me. It is natural for me to relate this process of understanding and acting to my childhood approach to the Montessori Materials, my current approach to architecture, and my general approach to life. I would love if many more Montessori children had the opportunity to think about Montessori as much as I have. It would be truly moving to hear how the Montessori environment has affected the lives of others.

Plan for Montessori Training Center of Minnesota and School.



The Japanese Translation Project

The project to have a selection of articles from *Communications* translated for the Japanese membership was initiated by AMI Board member Takako Fukatsu. She will here explain something of the background to the project, then Yuko Kawamura Oblander will allow us a glimpse into the process of translating very specialist texts into Japanese.



Takako Fukatsu

Takako kicks off: The idea of translating *Communications* into Japanese came about when I discovered that many Japanese members found it difficult to read English with relative ease, and that this possibly prevented students from renewing their AMI membership upon conclusion of their training course. 'If *Communications* were available in Japanese, would the membership increase?' I wondered.

I brought this topic up at a board meeting and was very moved that people were so supportive of the idea straight from the beginning. (The translation fee plus the costs of copying, paper, and postage were covered by AMI for four issues.)

Now, more than a year has passed since our international tripartite effort; Yuko Kawamura Oblander, the translator in the USA, Joke Verheul at the AMI secretariat in Holland and myself, as proof reader in Tokyo, have undertaken this project, transcending the many miles of ocean between us, utilising the full benefit of e-mail communication.

Has the membership increased in Japan? It is too early to tell. But one very definite change that I can see is that more people are reading *Communications* now and many Japanese members have expressed their appreciation of this service, and reacted most favourably.

Now, I am very excited that the Alumni Association of the Montessori Institute of Tokyo will be funding this project as of the next issue. I hope our trial & error endeavour may encourage other language regions so that we can all share the rich resources that *Communications* has to offer.



Yuko Kawamura Oblander

Yuko took her 3-6 AMI training in Japan with Maria Matsumoto and her 6-12 training in Bergamo with Camillo Grazzini. A resident of Portland, she is married to Patrick, and has two sons, both of whom attended Montessori schools.

Yuko: I was asked by AMI board member Takako Fukatsu in the summer of 2005 to translate into Japanese some articles from the AMI *Communications* for AMI's Japanese members.

I was very honoured to be asked, especially because my maternal grandfather Tsuneyoshi Tsudzumi translated three Montessori books into Japanese about fifty years ago. Through him, my family and I learned about Montessori education, and my parents have been operating a Montessori School (21/2 to 6) for over thirty years in Yokohama, Japan.

Since AMI *Communications* is a very academic journal, you can imagine how difficult it can sometimes be to read some of the articles. However, Takako wanted to make them as readable as possible, so she has been checking my work carefully and giving a lot of helpful feedback. When you translate, you don't want to change the original too much, but in a sense you have to rewrite the text to make it easy to read. As Japanese is so different from European languages, it is not an easy job. On the other hand, I am learning a lot and hopefully my translation work is improving.

It is so nice to be involved in the Montessori movement this way. I'd like to express my appreciation to Takako for giving me a chance to be a part of this project.

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETIES

In the past AMI always included the annual activity reports of the affiliated societies in full in *Communications 2/3*. As of this year, *Communications* is solely devoted to pedagogical articles — all news items now have their appropriate platform in the AMI bulletin. You will understand that the bulletin's number of pages must be limited, and that we can therefore no longer feature all the reports in 'unabridged' form. We have found a new medium to make them available: if you go to our website (montessori-ami.org) and click on the section for the affiliated societies, you can read and/or download the report(s) you'd like to read, in full!

To give you an idea of the societies reports available on the web, here are some snippets:

Australia

Reflecting on the Congress: over 900 delegates from around the world came together in Sydney for four days of friendship, celebration, professional development, and most importantly, to Champion the Cause of all Children. The Congress is having an ongoing impact as our community continues to reflect on the depth and scope of Montessori and becomes more proactive as advocates for all children. We hope that the Congress and its goals continue to reverberate throughout the world for years to come.

Canada

We are also planning for the Centenary and have formed a Centenary Fund that people can give donations to and get a charitable receipt. This will enable us to carry out the projects that we have planned to celebrate 100 years since the formidable secret of childhood was unveiled. Our Centenary Conference will be held in our capital city of Ottawa on November 9, 10 and 11 2007. This is open to all interested people who want to learn of Montessori's legacy.

Germany

Sitz Aachen

The 2005 annual conference was home to seventeen different workshops, where inspiring ways of developing imagination and creativity in Montessori Education were thoroughly explored. The proceedings of the conference will once again be published in book form and appear in the summer of 2006.

DMG

Prompted by the Centenary of the opening of the first Casa dei Bambini in Rome 100 years ago, DAS KIND will be devoted to the first stage of development and its prevailing problems. Fundamental articles, covering for example the significance of early recognition and experience processes, will present the current state of perception through intensive research activities on infant and small child development, showing parallels to Montessori's work.

Great Britain

The Montessori community is committed to a long-term plan to provide the child with the Montessori continuum — an education that starts at birth and takes the child through to maturity. Last year we told you about the first step on this pathway — to develop a widespread Elementary programme. With this in mind the Montessori Society AMI UK organised a seminar on Cosmic Education.

France

The Association participated in the *Forum des Associations*, a type of information market where societies and charities can give out information on their activities. Some of the society's plans are to continue publishing three issues a year of their news bulletin; to offer pedagogical help to schools, by giving professional development workshops; to organise a yearly Study Day, and to prepare a series of events for the Centenary.

Ireland

Thanks to positive feedback received, we again supplied our members with a diary. The diaries also contain useful addresses relating to Montessori and the committee members and their roles. Three newsletters were produced this year to date. The newsletters contain articles written by Montessorians that relate to aspects of the environment, and also update our members on workshops and refresher courses taking place during the year.

Pakistan

Gool Minwalla Montessori Campus: There is good news on the Clifton amenity plot, which was allotted to the PMA by the government and the physical position given in 1997. Now, a contract has been awarded for the construction work, which is in full swing. Plinths as well as the columns are already up. The building will be completed by mid 2006. Hence fund raising will have to be stepped up so that it can be furnished suitably for a school when ready. It was Mrs Gool Minwalla's dream to have a Montessori Complex with its own Children's House and auditorium. PMA is working towards the realisation of her dream.

Sweden

Our ambition is to give our members good qualitative "extended education" by inviting professional international speakers from the AMI movement as well as using our own very competent Swedish AMI speakers. In connection with our AGM a spring seminar is usually held in English with international speakers. This year's was entitled "Montessori Mathematics and Science in a Global Perspective".

Switzerland

The colleagues of the Committees of the German and French section of the Swiss Society are closely working together on various Centenary activities. A working Committee was established, with Mrs Odette Cutullic and Mr Jürg Schüepp as Presidents and Mr André Roberfroid as Honorary President. Possible avenues were explored for the celebration, in line with AMI recommendations. At the same time, the Association Montessori Suisse will celebrate its thirtieth birthday.

U.S.

AMI-EAA

Another new benefit available to our members is an AMI-EAA Internet Discussion Group (EAA-Talk), which offers an avenue for dialogue and mutual support. Subjects have thus far ranged from 'cursive versus manuscript' to where to find interesting paper for making books, a fascinating website about the story of the universe, and Montessori work with Sunshine Children — those with special needs. EAA-Talk also allows us to survey our members in order to respond to their needs.

Alumni

If you received your AMI training in India, for instance from Dr Montessori or Mr Abs Joosten, the AMI training centre in Mumbai would love to hear from you. They are hoping to contact as many Montessorians as possible all over India for the Centenary Celebrations.

Please mail Zarin Malva: zarinmalva41@yahoo.com

Refreshers & Conferences

November 4

London, England

Alumni Study Day at the Maria Montessori Institute

“The Prepared Environment”

This alumni study day will be taking place on Saturday November 4. Patricia Spinelli, AMI director of training from Paris, will speak on “The Prepared Environment”.

This day is part of MMI’s Alumni forum for continuing professional development that takes place once a term. All MMTO/Maria Montessori Institute Alumni are invited, as are AMI Diploma holders from elsewhere. MMI can be contacted at alumni@mariamontessori.org for more details or for inclusion on their mailing list.

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NEWS FROM THE SPONSORING COMMITTEE

Closing Date for Applications - Pilot Project 2007-2009

A last call for those interested in the Pilot Project!

The closing date for receipt of applications is November 1, 2006.

If you wish to apply, please send your curriculum vitae to the

AMI Sponsoring Committee. Address it to Brenda Striegel-Fox at the AMI secretariat:

brenda@montessori-ami.org

or to:

Association Montessori Internationale

Koninginneweg 161

1075 CN Amsterdam

Netherlands

New Trainers

Our congratulations go to:

Amy Kirkham, Australia

Ruby Lau, United Kingdom

and Pamela Nunn, Australia

All three have reached full trainer status for the Primary (3-6) Level. We wish them a continued satisfactory career in Montessori and are delighted that our pool of trainers is growing.



Amy Kirkham



Ruby Lau



Pamela Nunn



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REMEMBERING THEA VAN DIEMEN

Thea van Diemen-Berkhout was a committed Dutch Montessorian, fondly remembered here by Elisabeth Houweling and Fred Kelpin. Fred first met Thea when they both were involved in the setting up of a Dutch Montessori teacher training course. Both went on to study for a degree in pedagogy, to be better equipped to serve their students.

Thea was a long-time editor and contributor to the magazine of the Dutch Montessori Society, and she particularly loved writing about the very young child. Many readers enjoyed her reports on school visits, in the Netherlands as well as abroad. She always managed to stress the positive aspects of her observations. She was a great traveller and participant of Montessori events worldwide

Elisabeth Houweling got to know Thea when both attended AMI's 1987 AGM. Since then they worked closely together, with Thea often visiting Elisabeth's International Montessori School in Neuchâtel, also sharing her knowledge with other Swiss schools.

Thea's most important contribution to AMI's work was when she took up the responsibility for the AMI associated 3-6 course in Berne (Switzerland) in 1993, which was a fine illustration of her attitude: she was always there when you needed her.

One year the AGM in Amsterdam was held on the national holiday when the Dutch celebrate their Queen's birthday. During the lunch break Fred and Thea wandered out for a stroll through a nearby park, which was reserved wholly for children, their activities, making music and peddling old toys. Thea was tremendously interested: this was her, a real Montessori teacher who observed what was going on with great interest, enthusiasm and understanding. Thea died on February 15, 2006, after a short but aggressive illness, which she had borne with great courage.

Elisabeth Houweling & Fred Kelpin

REMEMBERING KURSHEED TARAPOREWALLA

With the death of Kursheed Taraporewalla on June 2, 2006, the Montessori community has lost a stalwart supporter and advocate of Montessori in India. Mrs Taraporewalla had been a student on the very first course held in India with Dr Montessori, in Madras/Adyar (now Chennai). She went on to establish her own school in Hyderabad, which has been going strong for over sixty years. Her daughter in law Mrs Kalpana is continuing her work of the school.

When Mr Joosten and Mr Swamy ran the Indian courses in Hyderabad her assistance and readiness to help was invaluable.

Her death is also greatly mourned by the Montessori Training and Research Trust of Hyderabad, where she was the Treasurer.

New Publications/Editions

In Italian

Educazione per un mondo nuova

(Education for a New World)

Garzanti, Milan first reprint, March 2006

La mente del bambino

(The Absorbent Mind)

Garzanti Elefanti, Milan second reprint, April 2006

In Norwegian

Barnesinnet

(The Absorbent Mind)

Montessoriforlaget, Bekkestua, first edition, 2006

Unesco

Dialogue—A Worthy Risk?

The UN Decade for Non-Violence and Peace for the Children of the World (2001-2010) is now half over. Many international NGOs and UN agencies, including UNICEF and UNESCO, participated in the Second International Salon for Peace Initiatives, 2-4 June, 2006 at the Museum of Science and Industry in Paris. Children created (theatre, plastic arts) together with adults in joyful activities promoting peace. The French Montessori Society's volunteers collected hundreds of signatures for the Montessori Centenary Declaration to Champion the Cause of All Children.

The International Committee for the UN/NGO Peace Decade includes nine Nobel Peace Prize Laureates (Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, among others). Adolfo P. Esquivel, Argentina, spoke at the opening session. Two young Lebanese women (Muslim, Maronite Catholic) shared their work at the Institute for Islamo-Christian Studies, St. Joseph University to develop curriculum on different religions for elementary age children who now learn about each other's religion. Both Moslem and Christian Lebanese (14 denominations) also felt an urgent need to deepen their comprehension about others' feelings of humiliation when they and their religions are treated disrespectfully or misunderstood. Often the media contribute to exacerbate tensions by portraying stereotypes. Helping children develop empathy, based on fuller knowledge and understanding each others' religions, will lessen the impact of reductionist representations and thereby help construct more solid foundations for peace.

Dialogue always involves a risk, as the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, Provost of New School, NY explained at the UNESCO Colloquium on "Dialogue between Cultures: challenges for the Future?" the following week. Two people (or cultures, religions, communities) who speak together are not necessarily engaged in dialogue but more often two 'monologues'. Dialogue requires an openness to try to understand the other's perspective. Understanding doesn't mean agreement but rather a capacity to put one's self in the other's shoes.

Learning languages is key to understanding different cultures, perspectives, histories of inter-mixture over millennia, such as sea-faring peoples from Africa and Asia to Australia and beyond. UNESCO has promoted the role played by the Silk Route and the Spice Route. Perhaps it will add the Sea-faring routes.

Sigrid Niedermayer, UNESCO Associated Schools Network director, noted ironically that upon arriving at the Museum, she saw a big poster, Star Wars, announcing an exhibit there. After her talk, we discussed proposing that the Third International Peace Salon in 2008 should also sponsor a Star Peace exhibit. Creative ways to promote Peace need to be explored with the same intensity and imagination that others use to promote War. This example reminded me of a programme entitled "Shooting Back" created by professional photographers. At-risk American children learned to take

photographs, develop and show them in galleries. They learned how to "shoot back" in constructive ways, turning negatives into positives. Surely Maria Montessori would have loved seeing these children become excited to learn skills that helped them observe in new ways, explore chemistry and physics in photo labs, social grace and courtesy in the gallery showings.

A new realisation worldwide is that all people, including children, need to more actively create peaceful forms of collaboration, small and large in networks with others. Governments alone cannot guarantee peace, nor can intellectuals, scientists, artists or politicians anywhere. It's everyone's task to help create environments that support peace and children are key players.

One clear conclusion from these two international UN cultural events is that networks promoting peace, sustainable development and cultural understanding need to expand. All UN Decade International Coordinating Committee NGOs will encourage their national committees to join existing National Coalitions and/or start new National Coalitions in more countries (nvpdecade.org). A key goal is to encourage fuller media coverage; this requires building relationships with media from the outset and organizing media events in partnership. The Ribbon Project (ribbonproject.org) is a colourful, creative peace project for everyone. Another project (ballforpeace) involves passing soccer balls worldwide to encourage all players to support peace. Join these efforts and tell us your stories too, so they can contribute to amplify the peace waves elsewhere.

Victoria Barres

At the International Salon for Peace Initiatives



Membership Fees 2007*

As of 2007, our membership fees will go up as follows:

Annual individual membership	Euro 40
Life membership	Euro 1,100
Annual collective membership (for groups of more than 15 in one region)	Euro 30 per person

This is the first increase in many years; AMI felt it was, however, reasonable to raise the fee: not only have our costs gone up keeping pace with inflation, but the number of

publications we send out to the membership has also gone up considerably— thereby taking a big chunk out of our budget.

We count on your understanding, and thank you for your continued support.

* Members whose membership is administered through AMI/USA will be informed separately.

AMI's Aims

Article 3

The objectives of the association are to uphold, propagate and further the pedagogical principles and practice formulated by Dr. Maria Montessori for the full development of the human being.

Article 4

The objectives of article 3 shall be pursued by all lawful means, and specifically by:

- Upholding the rights of the child in society, and making known the child's importance for the progress of civilisation;
- Making known the natural laws of growth in order to help the child to develop naturally in the family, school and society;
- Awakening public opinion with regard to the moral dignity of the child as 'the Father of Man', and to make clear the true nature of adult responsibility toward the child as the worker whose spontaneous activity produces the full-grown man;
- Spreading and upholding the pedagogical principles and practice formulated by Dr. Maria Montessori, which ensure the independence of the child's personality through successive stages of growth until he reaches full normal development by means of his own activity;
- Providing opportunities wherever possible for children to develop normally, thereby helping all adults to enter into a new life of harmony and co-operation with children; and by thus unifying the two fundamental phases of human life, to lead the way to a higher and more peaceable civilisation;

f Functioning as a social movement that will strive to obtain recognition for the rights of the child throughout the world, irrespective of race, religion, political and social beliefs; co-operating with other bodies and organisations which further the development of education, human rights and peace.

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AMI is an:

- NGO represented at the United Nations (since 1985)
- NGO in operational relations with UNESCO (since 1962)

The AMI Bulletin contains information and articles written for and by our members. The contents do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AMI.

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