

ASSOCIATION MONTESSORI INTERNAZIONALE

Dr MARIA MONTESSORI - FOUNDER PRESIDENT 1929-1952

President: A. Roberfroid
Treasurer: P.A. van der Linden
Executive Director: L. Lawrence



Head Office
Koninginneweg 161
1075 CN Amsterdam
The Netherlands

January 28, 2010

Dear Friends,

At the beginning of this new decade our planet appears to be showing signs of hope. Whilst there are places where human beings continue to demonstrate the inability to live together in peace and harmony, the good news is that our world is slowly becoming an entity. We all belong to one group. A flood in one country, an earthquake or humanitarian disaster in another, or an upcoming election is now considered a worldwide event. This in itself—our interest and/or concern—constitutes progress for humanity in this global world we are living in.

Much to our despair, millions of children continue to live in abject poverty with little or no chance to develop their natural talents and master their destinies. Yet here again there are signs of hope, as the development of emerging nations brings with it a better life for many, and increased educational opportunities for millions. It will take time, but eventually more countries will follow. This is something we are not just hoping for, but something we as citizens of the world must help to bring about.

I am convinced that we Montessorians are better equipped than most to cope with, and steer, the changes that are taking place around us. Maria Montessori observed the universal nature of the child. She discovered that, while being fully independent and unique, the child can only develop his talents as a part of humanity. In developing the concept of cosmic education, Maria Montessori insisted that the child must discover his place in the Universe, as a member of the human group. So, Montessori education effectively facilitates the process of uniting our world.

We have known for more than a century that children in a Montessori environment are actually preparing a better future. This is true in our ‘*casa dei bambini*’; in the elementary school, in fact this process already starts in the infant community. Our challenge today is another message of hope, namely to apply what is being done in the Montessori environment to the global environment.

An international association like AMI has as one of its charges communication—in order to bring Montessori to the notice of parents, and future parents; in order to reach out to more and more children around the world. This is what we owe the *universal child*, and this is how we can help new generations of children and young adults to join together and build a truly united world.

Last year we started to implement a strategic plan that is precisely designed to meet this challenge. Results are already visible. Training has started in China and plans for expansion are well advanced. Thailand has become an important new partner and AMI training programmes are spreading in that country. Following the successful AMI Congress in Chennai, a new energy is unleashed in India. AMI has been approached for support in Vietnam. New opportunities are emerging in Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.



Thanks to donations from generous Montessorians, a tremendous amount of work has been devoted to continue the reorganization of Maria Montessori's archives so that they will become accessible.

The seminar format for the training of trainers is progressively increasing our capacity to produce competent trainers in larger numbers than ever before to meet the requests for expansion of Montessori training in existing, and in new territories.

Following many meetings with most of the existing affiliates, we have prepared a new text of the Affiliation Agreement allowing our partners to participate more concretely and creatively in the exciting developments that I have mentioned above. By signing this agreement they will participate in the new challenges that AMI is facing in this New Year.

A new Licence Agreement will guarantee a better protection of the name AMI and the brand AMI. You may consider the word 'brand' a strange one when speaking in terms of an educational organization, but AMI has a reputation for excellence and it is something we wish to share with our like-minded affiliates.

Recently an innovative project has been launched in Kenya where a model of Montessori education is being set up within an internally displaced persons' camp, among the poorest of the poor. The project, which is being funded by a US-based foundation, is designed to be affordable and self-sustainable once it gets going. Moreover, it can be relatively easily replicated in similar environments elsewhere. AMI is honoured to be involved in this work, and will keep you informed of the developments.

New activities put a great burden on our very limited human resources in Amsterdam and limited finances. Not only do we need to increase our financial resources to facilitate our work, but we must also call on the assistance, support and contributions from our members and affiliates around the world in order to carry out our mandate.

Your support and determination to join together with AMI to promote Montessori education is one of the pillars of our existence as we move forward. This time we are not talking about hope, but the only effective way to build a better world for our children.

Thank you for your confidence, without which we would not be able to make things happen.

With my deep respect and gratitude, and my sincere best wishes for a Happy New Year to you, your families and colleagues.

André Roberfroid
President
Association Montessori Internationale