

From a presentation by Mario Montessori Junior to the Irish Society, in 1989, in celebration of AMI's 60th birthday

... Today, I shall highlight particularly the relevance of AMI for those of us who have understood the originality and profundity of Montessori's contribution to a better understanding of the human being, and who wish to continue her work, developing it further in concordance with the very clear directives given by her to guide us.

It is true that Maria Montessori gained her world fame as a pedagogue. Nevertheless, that does not explain why her initiative, based on the observation of the behaviour of small children



from working classes, has started a movement so vital that it has survived two world wars, the persecution of totalitarian regimes and the sharp criticism of the academic world.

Nonetheless, this movement spread over all continents, forming stable roots among people of different languages, cultures and religions and what is more, bringing us together today (...) — not to discuss its past history only, but in particular, its topicality

with regard to what it has to offer to our children.

To my knowledge, there is no other educational approach showing a similar universality and permanence in our turbulent times. Dr Montessori's plea on behalf of the child reached the hearts of many people, because it contained a truth that was so evident that no matter what their own profession or social standing was they took steps to put her ideas into practice. Once started on that road (the children are everywhere and a concern of us all), they remained friends of her cause.

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