

The Montessorian

110 years since the first Casa Dei Bambini opened on 6th Jan 1907



Remembering San Lorenzo

Maria Montessori opened her first Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) in one of the very poorest areas in Rome, the then notorious Quartiere di San Lorenzo.

"It was January 6th (1907), when the first school was opened for small, normal children of between three and six years of age. I cannot say on my methods, for these did not yet exist. But in the school that was opened my method was shortly to come into being. On that day there was nothing to be seen but about fifty wretchedly poor children, rough and shy in manner, many of them crying, almost all the children of illiterate parents, who had been entrusted to my care"... "They were tearful, frightened children, so shy that it was impossible to get them to speak; their faces were expressionless, with bewildered eyes as though they had never seen anything in their lives."... "It would be interesting to know the original circumstances that enabled these children to undergo such an extraordinary transformation, or rather, that brought about the appearance of new children, whose souls revealed themselves with such radiance as to spread a light through the whole world."

Indeed it was as though this radiance had been caught in a stream of consciousness, for a mere six months after the opening of the Casa dei Bambini, people from all walks of life, from every continent came to see Maria Montessori's miracle children.

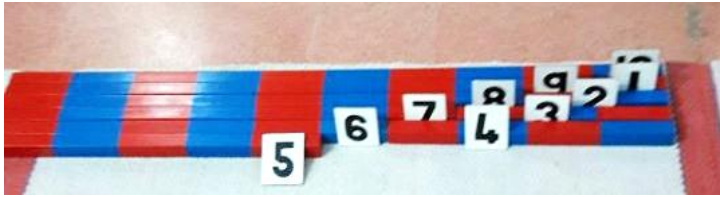
"My experience of forty years with children of all races, of different religions belonging to the most divergent social strata from Royal families to the worse slums has shown that the child obeys in his development natural laws which are alike for all".

Maria Montessori

Workshop on the numbers 1-10



Counting the number rods



Making tens with rods and cards



Three period lesson with the sandpaper numbers



The Spindle Boxes



Making odd and even numbers with counters and cards

Two sessions of the numbers 1 – 10 were held in January and February by Tayyaba Saleem, when she presented the exercises in detail, after giving an introduction to Mathematics and the number group. It was well attended in both sessions where Diploma holders refreshed their memories and non diploma holders were given an introduction to the Montessori material.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION by Anisa Moin

A two day National Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education in Pakistan was held under the banner of the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training in collaboration with its partners, The Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and the Early Childhood Development Network. Other collaborating Members were UNICEF, UNESCO, Rupani International, Japan International Corporation Association (JICA), Power 99 Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Parwaan and Plan Foundation.

The venue for the Conference, held in Pakistan for the first time, was the Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.

The Joint Educational Adviser, Mr. Rafique Tahir, highlighted the 3 main objectives of the Conference: 1) to bring all stakeholders under one forum and networking for collaboration at the National level. 2) review status of ECCE and chart its growth 3) create forum, fix practices and instil and disseminate research. All this would help give direction to all stakeholders already working in this field and Allama Iqbal Open University has committed to holding such Conferences annually and also publishing a journal each year on its findings and recommendations.

Other speakers were Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, CEO of ECDN, Ms. Christine Lorena, Deputy Representative of UNICEF.

They all stressed that there is now much more awareness of the importance of the first 6-8 years of a child's life especially the first 1000 days, which are essential for brain development as a lot of research has been done internationally now and it tells us that the brain develops fastest during these years than at any other time and that it effects the whole of life. If these years are not taken care of the child becomes a drain on society. The Global Agenda lays stress on ECD, which is essential to ensure the well- being of children worldwide. Investment in ECE contributes to economic growth. All aspects of a child's life need to be interlinked if we wish for a productive and progressive society. Each of us has a stake, a role and accountability towards ECD. We need to share experiences to learn together.

Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, Vice Chancellor of the AIOU, spoke a little about the University and its Distance Learning Programmes. The AIOU has a Special Education Department as well and has plans to offer a 4 year BS degree for ECCE and plans on setting up a National Centre for ECCE as a hub for all collaborators. The University has started Postgraduate Diploma Courses in ECE and is working with Parwaan Foundation – a Resource Centre – to provide hands on experience; as the students of the Course are sent to the 70 Centres of Parwaan Foundation for ECD. It is also starting a 3 months course in Urdu as a trial on Inclusive Education.

Dr. Manzoor said the first important thing to keep in mind is the health and nutrition of the expectant mother and the child when he is born, as the child must first survive. – survival and development cannot be separated and target should be to reduce poverty, hunger, malnutrition, thus creating right conditions for child education and development necessary from conception to 8 years. Of the millions of children that survive lots are under the developmental targets and face a lot of problems over their lifespan which continues into the next generation. ECD is part of the foundation for prosperous and sustainable society and should be reflected in all our policies – health, nutrition, social welfare, education etc.

Dr. Siraj spoke about the Vision and Mission of ECDN of Pakistan. ECD helps improve cognitive abilities, lays the foundation for lifelong learning, makes every outcome more equitable and reduces poverty. The Vision was a Holistic and Inclusive Education for every child in Pakistan. The Mission was to advocate cause for Inclusive ECD programmes and thus raise a happy, healthy new generation.

The participants were told about the Rupani Foundation's AGAH WALIDAIN (Informed Parents) Programme in Gilgit Baltistan. This is unique as it is the first programme in Pakistan which focuses on pre natal to 3 years. It works closely with families and mothers who have registered with the Rupani Foundation and gives them guidance throughout their pregnancy and also afterwards and helps them carry out age appropriate activities with their children.

Engineer Muhammed Baligh ur Rahman in his closing remarks said that the government hoped to open at least one ECCE Centre in each District/ Union Council/ Taluqa etc.

I attended the Second Session in which the speakers spoke about the Effects of Father's absence on Child Growth and Development during Early Years, Peace Building in the minds of young children, parents and teachers, Non Formal Approach to ECCE and Rethinking and Revamping the Concept of Early Childhood Education and Development.

Cont/4

The closing remarks were given by Dr, Siraj Nasri who said that the generations can be targeted through ECD and taught values of humanity, dignity, tolerance, respect for diversity, cohesion, co-existence. We need to learn to live together as a nation and build upon the values of pluralism through interaction of a holistic approach of humanity and faith. He stressed upon the need for involvement of the father and the grandparents and for the need of the social environment in which the child grows up to be a positive, stimulating, nurturing one for the child to be able to realise his God gifted potentials and thus become a more emotionally healthy person.

Day 2- The Plenary Session covered various aspects of Health and Nutrition Care in early childhood which was addressed by Dr. Asad Hafeez, Director General Health, Dr. Assad Ardakani, the WHO Representative in Pakistan and some others. Once again the importance of the first 1000 days was stressed upon and we were told that all of brain development occurs during this time and we live with what we have for the rest of our lives. This means that majority of the development has occurred even before the child enters school; hence sensory experiences are essential for the child. We need a strong commitment to correct health and education sectors as both are interlinked. Importance of Breast Feeding was stressed and the benefits of it were highlighted in terms of physical, mental and emotional development. It was also mentioned that there should be support given by grandmothers, husbands and work place (by establishing crèches). ECD can be implemented easily through the existing system through the Community and the Lady Health Workers, who can advise the expectant mothers from the moment of conception during their regular visits. It is necessary that the SAME message is given through all channels – newspaper, radio, television, doctors, nurses etc. And the need is for joint strategies in nutrition, health and education to address the problem.

The Closing Session was addressed by the President of Pakistan. He said that the recommendations made here would help the government frame proper policies to make children better citizens of tomorrow, because if we take time out of the present to pay attention to the future we can pave the way for success. All sectors- private and government should work together.



Anisa Moin (Centre) with two AMI trained directresses



Government officials and participants at the conference

AGM Amsterdam – AMI Affiliates Meeting 8th April 2017

Salma Imtiaz, life member of Pakistan Montessori Association, attended the AMI affiliates meeting in Amsterdam. The meeting commenced with a welcome address by Lynne Lawrence, AMI Executive Director, followed by an Introduction of New Affiliated Societies. The Congress Organising Committee gave an update on the Congress for affiliated societies. The AMI Russian Affiliated shared experiences in reaching out to more Montessori schools and teachers through their “Ten Steps to AMI Standards” programme by Anna Pugacheva.

Enhancing Membership Services-The AMI China Affiliate gave examples of special touches that can be added to enhance AMI membership services by Joyce Zuo.

Ten Tips for Membership Services-The Montessori Australia Foundation celebrate its first ten years in 2017 and this presentation highlighted ten tips gained over this time to expand and enhance membership services by Megan Tyne.

The AMI Strategic Communications Project Ben Davis, AMI Headquarters new Communications Strategy specialist presented on the importance of an internal and external communication strategy to support membership . The meeting ended with closing remarks by Philip O’Brien, AMI President.

Sustainable Agriculture

PMA April meeting enjoyed a most interesting and beneficial talk on organic farming by Muzzamil Niazi of Sungold Organic. He was accompanied by his wife, Rabia Khan. The following points were discussed in detail: Sustainable Agriculture implies an organic approach to producing food products while improving or at least maintaining the ecological balance.

Input required for Organic Agriculture are: Seed, Water, Nutrients

Seed – Should be genetically modified. Hybrid and should have open pollination. **Water** – should be potable water from natural sources such as rivers, lakes, canals, dams, rainwater storage tanks or underground aquifers.

Nutrients – Minerals mined from natural sources such as mountain ranges, seas etc

Compost produced from vegetation natural products such as fibre, paper and waste of non-coniferous animals, sea weed, kitchen or municipal waste not including any mat or meat by-products and green composting.

Conservation Practices include: Water saving and re-cycling.

Re-cycling of paper, metals, plastics, wood and clothing, tree plantation and renewable energy.

Our Future Our Children - How can we make them the moving force and improve our environment?

Re-cycling - Drain the air conditioner condensate into a closed bottle and have the children to use it to wash their hands or water their flower pots.

Re-cycling waste: Have the children bring a bag of kitchen waste from their homes and start a compost bin. Once it is ready, have them use it for growing their own vegetables.

Self-reliance:- Facilitate the children to grow vegetables in a pot.

Re-cycling Paper: Recycle paper as the carbon component in the compost bin. Make sure you know the ratio.

Each Montessori school can progressively build up a comprehensive programme to raise the level of awareness of the children about sustainable living through practice as growing of flowers and vegetables and harvesting their fruits of labour builds their self-confidence.

An enlightening morning which ended with Q and A time. The high price of organic food and safe milk and water were discussed. At the moment in Pakistan there is no pure organic market but they are working towards it.

For more information contact: sungoldorganic@gmail.com



First row: Mr Humayun, Mrs Humayun, Zohra Gaya
Second row: Nilufer Ahmed, Rabia Khan, Muzzamil Niazi, Kishwar Allawala



Rabia Khan, Muzzamil Niazi, Zohra Gaya

Montessorians in The White House

The Montessori philosophy and method of education has been around since 1907, when founder Maria Montessori opened the first Children's House in a low-income area of Rome. Her philosophy struck a chord and soon spread worldwide among educators and eventually Montessori schools opened in Europe, North and South America, and every other continent except Antarctica. Fast forward to present day, and former President Obama had vocalized his support of Montessori Programs during the recent White House Summit on Early Education.

During the most recent White House Summit on Early Education, Obama confirmed his commitment to ECE and announced \$750 million in public support and \$330 million in private funding for ECE. Included in the \$330 million is a \$15 million commitment from Trust For Learning, a collaborative fund that supports Montessori Education.

The \$15 million funds a five year commitment to programs supported by a variety of organizations and foundations that align with the Trust For Learning strategy of bringing high quality public Montessori to more children.

Not only does our current president support what Montessori schools are doing and what they stand for, but past presidents and their families have been closely associated with the Montessori philosophy as well. President Woodrow Wilson's daughter trained as a Montessori teacher and during Wilson's presidency there was reported to be a Montessori classroom set up in the basement of the White House. Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former President William "Bill" Clinton and Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, attended Montessori School as did Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, Former First Lady.

In addition to the presidential links to the Montessori philosophy, many other notable individuals have attended Montessori schools or supported the Montessori philosophy. Inventor Alexander Graham Bell and his wife Mabel founded the Montessori Education Association in 1913 and provided financial support directly to Maria Montessori. Another inventor, Thomas Edison, helped found a Montessori school. Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, was head of the Swiss Montessori Society for many years, and also made some of his first observations of children in a Montessori school. And our good friend, Fred Rogers of "Mister Roger's Neighbourhood" was a supporter of Montessori Education.

Other notable attendees include:

Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Co-founders of Google, Jeffrey Bezos. Founder of Amazon.com. Julia Child, Chef and author. Katherine Graham, Owner/Editor of the Washington Post. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Nobel Prize winner for literature. Anne Frank, Famous Diarist from WWII. Prince William, Prince Harry and Prince George, English Royal Family. George Clooney, Actor. Helen Hunt, Actress. Sean Combs, Music mogul and fashion designer.

Pakistani attendees include:

The following attendees went to the Montessori Children's House when owned by former PMA President Habiba Thobani under the supervision of late Arifa Saifee

Sania Saeed: Television artist **Shazia Hasan:** Journalist – Dawn **Zia Akbar:** Computer Programmer – MSC in Mathematics

Simeen Pasha: Paediatric Endocrinologist

Masooma Hayat: MTTC Faculty: Kattrack Hall School under the supervision of Gool Minwalla, Founder President of Pakistan Montessori Association.

Zehra Akbar: Architect and **Raza Akbar:** Assistant Professor PHD in Physics-attended Montessori Home owned by Farida Fazal (present Vice President).

Tariq Sheikh: BE Electrical Engineer attended Casa Dei Bambini when under late Parvin Cowasjee.

Ayesha Allawala: President-Alumni -Teacher's Resource Centre and **Ibad Ur Rahman:** IS Solutions Delivery Architect attended Montessori Children's Villa under late Gool Rustomjee.

Farhat Kapadia Memood: Managing Director Digital SynergDentsu Brandsynario and **Faiza Kapadia Raffay:** legal Council and Company Secretary- attended formerly Rahi Montessori, now known as Samrahi Montessori owned by Zohra Gaya (present President Pakistan Montessori Association)

The list continues. Kindly send attendees names, professions and Montessori schools attended for future issues.

AMI International Congresses to date. Get ready for Prague from July 27th till 30th.

- 1st 1929 Helsingör Part of the Fifth International Conference of the New Education Fellowship
- 2nd 1931 Nice Part of the Sixth International Conference of the New Education Fellowship
- 3rd 1933 Amsterdam The Spiritual Re-birth of Man
- 4th 1934 Rome Deviation and Normalisation
- 5th 1936 Oxford The Child's Place in Society
- 6th 1937 Copenhagen Educate for Peace
- 7th 1938 Edinburgh Four Levels of Education
- 8th 1949 San Remo Man's Formation in World Reconstruction
- 9th 1951 London Education as an Aid to the Natural Development of the Child from Birth to University
- 10th 1953 Paris How to Help the Child Adapt to Our Times?
- 11th 1957 Rome Maria Montessori and the Contemporary Pedagogical Thought
- 12th 1960 Bad Godesberg Mathematics in the Life of the Child in a Changing World
- 13th 1964 Amsterdam Education for a Peaceful World Community
- 14th 1970 Washington Centennial Celebration of Maria Montessori's Birth
- 15th 1970 Toronto Centennial Celebration of Maria Montessori's Birth
- 16th 1970 Paris Centennial Celebration of Maria Montessori's Birth
- 17th 1972 Palo Alto Cosmic Education
- 18th 1977 Munich The Montessori Method and the Handicapped Child
- 19th 1979 Amsterdam Help the Child to Shape Man's Future
- 20th 1985 Karachi The Contribution of Montessori Education to the Future of Mankind**
- 21st 1991 Nara Human Education Toward a New World
- 22nd 1997 Uppsala The Child and Communication
- 23rd 1999 Cancun Maria Montessori Explicit and Implicit in the 20th Century
- 24th 2001 Paris Education as an Aid to Life
- 25th 2005 Sydney Champion the Cause of All Children
- 26th 2009 Chennai Sādhanā: Reflective Practice, Spontaneous Living
- 27th 2013 Portland Montessori: Guided by Nature
- 28th 2017 Prague Pathway to Peace: Montessori Education for Social Change



Airlines flying to Prague from Karachi are Alitalia, Turkish Airlines, flydubai, KLM, Emirates, British Airways, Air Serbia, Air Berlin, Qatar Airways, Gulf Air. These airlines are either non stop or one stop. Bon Voyage!

28th International Montessori Congress
You are invited to Prague, July 27 – 30, 2017
<http://www.montessoricongress2017.org>

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Thanks to: Habiba Thobani, Zohra Gaya, Farida Fazal, Kishwar Allawala, Banoo Kijat,
Anisa Moin, Farah Sarfraz, Maheen Pasha, Masooma Alibhai

Published by Pakistan Montessori Association for free distribution to its members.

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