We will be exploring the history of Montessori in India in two sections. I will first provide you with an overview of the Montessori movement in India, from the first schools that were operating as early as 1915 through the time of Dr. Montessori’s stay in India, to the present day. Kalpana will then give you a very personal view through the stories shared with her by one of the pioneers of the Montessori movement in India, Ms. Khursheed Taraporewalla who attended the first course given by Dr. Montessori in 1939.
India in the early 20th Century was an agglomeration of British principalities and princely states. The East India Company had ruled the country for over 250 years before the British crown took over in 1857.

Until the 19th Century, Primary education was the provided in each village and was offered in the local language. The issues of caste and gender affected equity in access to education.

Secondary education was offered mainly in Sanskrit and Persian. Such education was accessible primarily to the upper classes and castes. Jesuit missionaries also set up schools in different parts of India.

The roots of education as we know it today in India can be traced back to Lord Thomas Macaulay. As a member of the Governor-General’s council, he wrote the Macaulay Minute on Indian Education in 1835. Urging the reform of education in India, the Macaulay Minute was instrumental in introducing English and Western educational concepts to India.

Once India came under the British Crown in 1857, there was a concerted effort to reform education along the lines suggested by Macaulay.

Between 1881 - 1882 and 1946 - 1947, the number of English primary schools grew from 82,916 to 134,866 and the number of students in English Schools grew from 2,061,541 to
10,525,943 (Wikipedia). Literacy rates in accordance to British in India rose from 3.2% in 1881 to 7.2% in 1931 and 12.2% in 1947 (Wikipedia).

However, education was still the privilege of upper class males. The middle class started thinking of the country in a different way. Until then, it was regional. Now they have incubators for a national movement. The independent struggle developed from there. This was only available to the upper class and the men. There was very limited access to women.

Universities were established in the major centers of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay and engineering schools in different regions. These new universities created a new class of educated Indians who manned the local bureaucracy and courts. These new institutions also created for the first time a common ground for communication and integrated diverse elements of Indian society. It was this intellectual elite that led the national movement for independence.

The more affluent families sent their sons to study in England – Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, and Jawaharlal Nehru among them. These educated affluent families quickly learned about Dr. Montessori’s work in San Lorenzo and her success in other schools thereafter. In the first International Course that Dr. Montessori offered in Rome, there was a representative from the princely state of Mysore. Every training thereafter is reported to have had students from India. Gandhiji writes about visiting Montessori schools in Gujarat as early as 1915.

Affluent families wanted their children to have access to Montessori education. In 1912, Sarladevi Sarabhai, wife of Ambalal Sarabhai, the textile barons from Ahmedabad, came across Dr. Montessori’s writings on a trip to England. She resolved to provide such an education to her children and soon employed E.M. Standing to home school her children. One of these children, Leenaben Sarabhai later attended Dr. Montessori’s training in Adyar in 1939.

In 1900, India had a population of about 280 million people, a diversity of language, culture and religion. Education was still the privy of the upper classes. Only about 4% of the population was literate. Among the newly conscious educated youth with their commitment to an independent India, there was a growing awareness of the need to educate the
masses. In towns and villages across India, local leaders took the initiative to set up schools that were not just for the upper classes. My grandfather opened one such school in a village in Kerala that is operational until today.

One such person was Gijubhai Bhadeka. A lawyer by profession, Gijubhai established a school in Bhavnagar, Gujarat. As a young father, he came across the work of Dr. Montessori and he started a pre-school for young children based on Montessori principles. He did not have any materials. All he had were her books. When Dr. Montessori finally visited one of his schools in the 1940’s, she is reported to have dismissed them for not following the method! This was recounted to me by one of Gijubhai’s sons on a visit to Connecticut a few years ago. But what Gijubhai did succeed in doing was to bring about an awareness of the importance of educating children from an early age. This awareness has been present in Indian education policy from the first years of independence.

Born in 1861, Rabindranath Tagore, poet, writer, and philosopher was the son of a privileged landed family. He was sent to London to study law. From as early as 1892, his writings reflect a growing awareness that lack of education was a significant factor in the development of India. The colonial system of education, he felt, was impeding awareness of the country’s cultural heritage and did not promote the learning of local languages.

He felt the educational system did not reflect the developments in education that were happening in the outside world. It succeeded in creating two distinct groups of Indians, he
felt: the affluent, educated English-speaking class that lived in the urban areas, and the vast number of uneducated, illiterate, rural population.

He established Shantinkikut in 1901 – it was primarily a land-based school that focused on the holistic development of the individual. The idea was to learn in an open space with the nature, and learn the crafts of the times, so that their culture and knowledge was not being lost. The idea was that education was an integral development of the whole person, including their spiritual development. The work of the hand was greatly emphasized. I am not sure how much of Tagore’s work influenced Dr. Montessori’s idea of the Erdkinder. We do know that they were in correspondence and met in 1929 in Denmark. We also know that some Tagore-Montessori schools for young children were established in Bengal.

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi arrived in South Africa from a background of privilege in India and fresh from his education in London. It did not occur to him that his color could be a basis for discrimination. When he boarded a train in Johannesburg, he was unaware of the laws that banned colored people from traveling in first class. When he was thrown out of the train for his refusal to move out of the compartment, it brought to him an awareness of the plight of the many Indians in South Africa. So began Gandhi’s long road to growing social and moral awareness and his first exploration of the concept of Satyagraha as a way to fight against powerful oppressors.

On his return to India, he was invited to attend the gathering of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. All the attendees were from the intellectual elite; they did not know what the other classes needed. The independence struggle was not a grassroots national movement.

Gandhi was shocked at how the leadership was cut off from the masses of India. He set out on a journey to get to know India from Indians, traveling by train in 3rd class across the country and getting to know the people of India at very close quarters.

From the beginning, he was aware of the need for education and the challenges of bringing mass education that would be accessible to all. He visited Montessori schools, and read about her work. His initial focus; however, was primary education and he evolved the concept of Basic Education.
In 1931, when he was in London for a Round Table Conference focused on Self-rule, he visited a Montessori school in Birmingham and then in London. It was then that he visited the training center in London and spoke to Dr. Montessori and the students.

It was in 1915 when I reached India, that I first became acquainted with your activities. It was in a place called Amreli that I found that there was a little school being conducted after the Montessori system. Your name had preceded that first acquaintance. I found no difficulty in finding out at once that this school was not carrying out the spirit of your teaching: the letter was there, but whilst there was an honest – more or less honest – effort being made. I saw too that there was a great deal of tinsel about it. I came in touch then with more such schools, and the more I came in touch, the more I began to understand that the foundation was good and splendid, if the children could be taught through the laws of nature – nature, consistent with human dignity, not nature that governs the beast. I felt instinctively from the way in which the children were being taught that, whilst they were being indifferently taught, the original teaching was conceived in obedience to this fundamental law.

I was looking forward to meeting the children here and you all and it was a great pleasure to me to see these children.

I had taken care to learn something about these little children. I had a foretaste of what I saw here, in Birmingham, where there is a school between which and this there is a difference. But I also saw that there also human nature was struggling to express itself. I see the same thing here and it was a matter of inexpressible joy to me the virtue of silence, and how, in response to the whisper from their teacher, the children came forward one after another in that pin-drop silence.
It gave great joy to see all those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching those movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children, “Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children?”

We are conducting an experiment amongst the poorest of the children in India. I do not know how far the experiment will go. We have the problem of giving real vital education to these children of India’s hovels, and we have no material means. We have to fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its own honor.

Gandhi set up his own school, which was originally for 3 to 6 year olds. When he set up his own school, the premise was for children to have dignity of work; dignity of work that helped the community, and developed local crafts. He believed that the evolution of education was closely related to the freedom struggle.

Gandhi’s thoughts kept growing. In tracing the history of Early Childhood Education in India, Professor Jyotsna Pattnaik writes, “The conscious and systematic attempt to educate children from all sections of the society began in 1937 with the educational philosophy of Gandhi. Gandhi’s basic education scheme was designed to set up free and compulsory education at the national level. Maria Montessori’s 1939 visit to India implanted the foundations of preschool education in India and teachers were trained in Montessori’s method of education.”

This was the first time policy was written about education. The problem was how to implement Montessori for the huge number of children in India; how could Montessori education be brought to the masses of children?

The Theosophical Society was closely linked to the independence movement in India. (Dr. Annie Beasant was the President of Indian National Congress in 1917.) They too realized that the critical importance of education for the nation.
In 1938, Dr. George Sydney Arundale, then the President of the Theosophical Society, on a visit to Europe invited Dr. Montessori to come to India, and she accepted on condition that, “...she should have the necessary time to study the Indian educational situation, for ... her methods must adapt themselves to the needs to different types of children throughout the world.” (Dr. Arundale, quoted in 70 Years of Montessori in India, p. 19) Gandhiji felt that her coming would be of “considerable help”.

The idea was for Dr. Montessori to come to India for 6 months and observe and adapt her method to the needs of the children in India.

Tagore was excited about Montessori coming. They were hopeful for the education for the masses.

Dr. Montessori arrived in India in October 1939. She was 69 years old when she left a Europe where her schools had been closed and destroyed by the Nazis and Fascists. Her books and an effigy of her had been burned publicly in a square in Vienna.

India welcomed her in open arms. The Theosophical Society had made great preparations for her arrival. A workshop had been set up for the preparation of the materials. The course
was advertised widely and students arrived from all corners of India. Slated for 50 students, the course grew to host 300 students. A special palm-leaf tent was built on the grounds of the Theosophical Society to house the lectures.

Dr. Montessori was greeted with much fanfare on her arrival. She was flown from Bombay in a plane that was personally piloted by Mr. JRD Tata, head of the Tata Industrial house. In Madras, she was housed in the Olcott Bungalow. There was a school in the lower level and the Montessoris lived in the upper level.

The first course was held in 1939. Ms. Khursheed Taraporewalla, Ms. Gool Minwalla, and Leenaben Sarabhai were among the students in this first course.

With the outbreak of the war, the Montessoris were interned as enemy aliens by the British colonial government. While Mario Montessori was sent to camp, Dr. Montessori was allowed to move to Kodaikanal, away from the heat of Madras. There she lived in the Rose Bungalow. On the occasion of her 70th birthday, she received a telegram from the then Viceroy of India that read, “We have long thought that the best present we could give you was to send you back your son.” They stayed in Kodaikanal until 1945.
In writing about the time in Kodaikanal, Mario Montessori says, “At the time, Dr. Montessori and I certainly felt the inner burden of the situation…. It was only later – after the war was over – when we looked back upon all that had been accomplished during that period, that we began to feel otherwise… because, had we been free, nothing of this would have been realized. In our busy life, we should not have had the time. And the conditions would not have been there.”

Descriptions of the courses in Kodaikanal gives us a picture of training that was more along the lines of the Gurukul tradition of India - the Montessoris and the students lived and worked together exploring and realizing the vision of Cosmic Education. Mr. Vaideswaran, Mr. Pandey, Devyani Akka, and Mr. S. R. Swamy (who later became director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses) studied with Dr. Montessori in Kodaikanal during this time.

They had children, a school, but no materials. They developed more materials and more advanced work. They children had the whole of nature and Mario would take them out and teach them through nature. He would go back after the long exploration with the children and talk to Maria Montessori about what they had done. He began to make timelines.

Mario Montessori wrote:

*We saw purpose in everything that existed; nature’s equilibrium would be maintained… The reality and wonder of creation should be dealt with in such a fashion that the children cannot only see it but absorb it into their sentiment. They will feel that our world is a good place to live in, a place where generosity is expressed with the very breath of life… We had made a new discovery which was special and long lasting, and it came about in hills at Kodaikanal, where practice and ideals met – and a better vision emerged.* (Mario Montessori, NAMTA, Vol. 23, no.2, p.42)

David Kahn writes that, “The beginning of the elementary education (7-12) as we know it today really came from Kodaikanal.” (NAMTA, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 41)

The British soon relaxed the terms of the Montessoris’ internship. They were allowed to travel freely in India so long as they did not go close to a war zone. Between 1940 and 1947, Dr. Montessori held courses in Madras, Kodaikanal, Ahmedabad, Pilani, Gwalior, Srinagar, and Sri Lanka. 1945 was the first time that courses were offered in two different age groups: 2.5 – 7 and 7 – 12.
The Montessoris returned to Europe in 1947, but came back to India in 1948 to hold courses in Madras, Pune and Ahmedabad, as well as in Colombo and Karachi. Between 1939 and 1948 they held over 16 courses in India and trained well over 1000 students. In addition, Dr. Montessori often spoke on All India Radio, reaching out to parents all over India.

It was in India that she abandoned the black clothes of mourning that she had worn since the death of her mother.

The Impact of India.

Writing in *Around the Child*, the publication of the Calcutta Montessorians, in 1970, about the Impact of India, Mario Montessori wrote:

Dr. Montessori wrote many books during this time. For example, *Education for a New World* was based on her 1946 lectures in India.
Also from *Around the Child*, Mario Montessori wrote:

"Thus does the light gathered in India now shine and spread over the nations... And in my heart, the light of India steadily warms the sense of gratitude for the country which showed so great a regard for Dr. Montessori, surrounded her with friendship, and gave the support and collaboration of selflessly devoted students." Mario Montessori, *Around the Child*, 1970

What is it about India that made this happen, students able to selflessly devote themselves? In Europe it was the industrial model of education. In India the holistic approach was available.

Because of circumstances, the original idea that Dr. Montessori would study Indian conditions and adapt her method did not come to fruition during her time in India. It fell to Mr. Joosten and Mr. Swamy, who took over the running of the Indian Montessori Training Courses to carry on this work. The Montessoris left India in 1948.

Continuing the Work in India

Books published 1946 – 1950:
- Education for a New World 1946
- To Educate the Human Potential 1948
- From Childhood to Adolescence 1948
- The Discovery of the Child 1948
- The Absorbent Mind 1949
- What you should know about your child 1950
- The Formation of Man 1950
Albert Max Joosten practically grew up with the Montessori family. His mother, Rose Joosten, was a Montessori educator. In 1950, Dr. Montessori sent Mr. Joosten to India as her personal representative to carry on the work of training and spreading her ideas in India.

I remember Mr. Joosten to come to where I lived to give a talk. He was very Indian at heart. He later went on to set up the training center in Minnesota. He died in 1980, when I was taking my course. He died two days after returning to India.

The son of Kannadiga Madhava Brahmins, Mr. Swamy came of age during the final stages of the struggle for Independence. He was the 6th child; with all other girls, he was a precious son.

Honoring his family’s wishes of dissuading him from actively joining the fight for independence, Mr. Swamy went to Kodaikanal to study with Dr. Montessori. On his return to Bangalore, he opened a House of Children at the Mahila Mandali School.

In 1950, Mr. Swamy joined Mr. Joosten to help him in his work and became associate director and then director of the Indian Montessori Training Courses in 1980 with the sudden death of Mr. Joosten. He opened schools all across India. My daughter went to one of his schools.
The idea of bringing education to all was important in their work. Mr. Joosten and Mr. Swamy continued the tradition of a traveling course, a series of 2-3 courses of 10 ½ months duration in different cities across India, including: Delhi, Calcutta, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Ranchi, among others. Every three years they would move to new cities for courses.

Each course had an enrollment of about 150 students from all over India and abroad. On an average, about 120 students graduated from each course. The analysis of students showed they mostly had 10th grade education. Since a majority of the students entered the course with a basic school degree, the course included a study of geometry, biology and other cultural subjects. We had students in our courses from the tribal areas in the North East, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Young girls sat side-by-side with people with grandchildren. Public sector factories sent in teachers from their day care centers for training. There were always a few students from the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Malaysia. They developed the materials available for the local languages. Our classes were held in the evening, starting at 3:30pm or 4pm and went to 8pm twice a week to accommodate working teachers and twice a week we came in to practice with the materials in small groups of 25. We had one set of materials. Amukta, Shirley and I trained with Mr. Joosten and Mr. Swamy and Kalpana trained with Mr. Swamy.

We were presented Geometry and Botany, and were required to make notes for these subjects. They had Material Files. You can see how simple they are. (Ms. Ramani showed her original notes for Geometry and Botany. She also showed the files for materials they were required to make.)

They also set up regional bodies in various cities. They were the places where the groundwork happened so they were ready every three years to start a new course. They worked with people like what we are talking about for EsF. They worked in schools with children with special needs – for example, the blind and the spastic societies. It was very important to have locally made materials.

Ms. Taraporewalla’s school was an ideal to aspire for; Leenaben Sarabhai had the Shreyas School in Ahmedabad. Kira Banasinska set up the KayBee Company to manufacture toys, which then led to locally made Montessori materials.
Dr. Montessori was in India during the years before independence. She was aware of the challenges to the new nation – our literacy rate was around 12% for the nation. It was in this context that she wrote the chapter on World Illiteracy in *The Formation of Man*.

Education was accessible mainly to the middle class and upper castes. In her 1941-1942 Course in Madras, she said to the students:

*When Mahatma Gandhi says to you: “Spin and Weave,” I say to you: Help the Children, for they are the threads of your nation; it is through the children that your nation will be constructed. Spin, spin, spin. This should be as a symbol to you, for you cannot weave until you have spun… The first part in this great construction is the spinning and preparing of the skein, then will follow the weaving of the threads which will one day form the society of the future.*

As Mr. Joosten and Mr. Swamy took over in the first years after independence, a strong focus of the course was the Social Question of the Child. They stressed the need to create a place for children in our society; the need to provide every child with the condition for life. They clearly communicated to us during our training that Montessori Education was a Social Movement and not just a method of education. To understand the evolution of the Montessori movement in India after Dr. Montessori left India, this focus of the training is very important to keep in mind.

What you are part of is the Social Movement. It is about the social support of the child. It was told to us so clearly. The evolution of the course was based on this focus that it was part of our training. You must go out and make it better for every child out there. Students were given detailed measurements. That was the spirit in which the course was given to us.

There was a strong sense of service to the nation and the urgency of reaching the children in a country where the population was exploding in the latter half of the 20th Century. From a country of 350 million in 1947, we became a country of one billion by the beginning of the 21st century.

When Joosten passed away in 1980, Mr. Swamy took over the training. As Mr. Swamy’s health began to fall in the 1980’s, it was clear there were no new trainers. The idea was to have a person to carry on the work. Miss Leena made it possible for Mrs. Meenakshi Sivaramakrishnan to go and get trained. She came back and started working with Mr. Swamy and took over the reins of the course in Bangalore.

The course was no longer traveling around and stayed just in Hyderabad. So the others would teach what they knew to those in the other places because the need was there to provide training in the local language.
After Mr. Swamy passed away. These new teachers were instrumental in translation. Later as an independent center, other people also took on this work in the field. The message was that this work had to be carried out.

So there were three robust centers for training in India. There was a vacuum, so there are now Montessori training places everywhere. Montessori schools are rampant in any urban setting in India today, but the public perception of Montessori education is still that of a preschool. There is little understanding of the basic principles of respect and freedom for the child to follow this natural path to development.

In the last two decades, AMI has re-established a presence through the training centers in Mumbai, Chennai, and here in Hyderabad. New trainers are joining the work thanks to the seminar format of training.

Here is the challenge that we are facing now:

- A country with a diversity of languages, culture, religion and socio-economic conditions.
- A population of 158 million children 0-6 years of age.
  - That is about half the population of the USA
  - One out of every 40 people in the world is a child in India below six years of age
  - One in every 15 children in the world is a child in India below six years of age
  - One in every seven Indians is a child below six years of age
- While we have had an enabling policy framework from the first days after independence, stressing the importance of an integrated approach to Health, Nutrition, and Psychosocial wellbeing for our young children, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is still not the right of every child. Under the MDG, the RTE became a fundamental right for children 6 - 14 years old only in 2001. ECCE is still not assured. Less than 40% of our children have access to ECCE, although our policy framework clearly acknowledges the need.

In 1975, the Government of India launched the Integrated Child Development Scheme, to provide a package of health, nutrition and pre-school education services to children from pre-natal stage to 6 years of age. Services are offered through Balwadi (3-6) and Aanganwadi (0-3) workers who are community members trained to provide ECCE services.

Gandhi said in London in 1931:

_I must not take up your time. I have simply given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me, namely, the delicate problem, considered in human terms, of drawing out the best from these millions of children of whom I have told you. But I have learned this one lesson – that what is impossible with man is child’s play with God and, if we have faith in that Divinity which presides over the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope I live and pass my time and endeavor to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are_
endeavoring to teach those children, through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won’t have the struggle, we won’t have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

India now has 1.2 billion people. It has a literacy rate of 37%, and 45% of its population is below 14 years of age. That is about half a billion children. How do you make Montessori for all if you have this many children? They also have multi-cultural, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic country needs.

- Children below 6 years: 158 million - that is 2% of the world population, 13% of the population of India
- An interdependent whole: Health, Nutrition and Education: Early Childhood Education to Early Childhood Care and Education
- What we have: An enabling policy framework that focuses on Health, Nutrition and Education; Maternal and child welfare and well-being
- The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS): Aganwadis and Balwadis
- The challenge: From policy to practice

India still has 50% of the children malnourished. In a recent study, early childhood education programs were found to be poor and inadequate and only available to 40% of the children.

As we move into this new phase of AMI work in India, it is a great time to remember the first courses conducted by Dr. Montessori and the Indian Montessori Training Centers and to recall Gandhiji’s plea to Dr. Montessori in London in 1931.

"We have the problem of giving real vital education to these children of India’s hovels, and we have no material means. We have to fall back upon the voluntary assistance of teachers, but when I look for teachers, they are very few, especially, teachers of the type wanted, in order to draw the best from the children through understanding, through studying their individuality and then putting the child on its own resources, as it were, on its own honor...."

Mahatma Gandhi, London, 1931

I must not take up your time. I have simply given you what is, at the present moment, agitating me, namely, the delicate problem, considered in human terms, of drawing out the best from these millions of children of whom I have told you. But I have learned this one lesson – that what is impossible with man is child’s play with God and, if we have faith in that Divinity which presides over the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible and in that final hope I live and pass my time and endeavor to obey His will. Therefore, I repeat that even as you, out of your love for children, are endeavoring to teach those children, through your numerous institutions, the best that can be brought out of them, even so I hope that it will be possible not only for the children of the wealthy and the well-to-do, but for the children of paupers to receive training of this nature. You have very truly remarked that if we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won’t have the struggle, we won’t have to pass fruitless idle resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at
last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

It is 85 years since Gandhiji spoke these words – our questions today remain the same: Qualified teachers, quality programs, and equity in access to programs. It is a question of children’s rights. As Montessorians, we must answer this challenge with care and thought, but also with a sense of urgency and purpose.

Dr. Montessori gave a very simple mandate. We need to do this work. We need to not be daunted by these figures.

A 2009 study found that ECCE centers were of poor quality. The problems were multiple: lack of sound pedagogy and curriculum design; untrained or poorly trained staff; lack of regulation and standards; and inadequate resources. Speaking at the conference organized by the Indian Montessori Foundation in 2011, Professor Venita Kaul, policy advisor to the Government of India on ECCE issued a plea to Montessorians.

*We know that you have knowledge, a great pedagogy, a proven method. Can you not help to bring this to our children, she asked, without the emphasis on the materials, in a format that is relevant to our grassroots level workers?*

What do I tell Dr. Kahl?