

General Information

First Assembly Educateurs sans Frontières

Raison d'être

Maria Montessori created the Association Montessori Internationale in 1929 to give structure to her work, and to ensure that it would be perpetuated after her death in accordance with her pedagogical, psychological and practical guidelines.

Dr Montessori was a scientist of a competence akin to genius. It was not her desire that her pedagogy be followed blindly as dogma. Having assiduously and consistently studied children during many years, observing the universal characteristics of their development, she acquired the absolute faith that within the child lies the power which will allow humanity to fulfil a potential as yet unattained. Only a few years before her death she said:

"I assure you that were I not absolutely certain that mankind can be bettered, I should not have had the strength to battle for fifty years, having so frequently had to begin again when my work was destroyed by others. I would not have had the strength, at my age, to travel the world, proclaiming this truth."

She did indeed travel the world, indefatigably - pilgrim of an idea, champion of the child, ambassador extraordinary for generations of children yet unborn. She and those who pursued her teaching created the Montessori Movement. This Movement was eventually left as a legacy to the Association Montessori Internationale.

After her death in 1952, the Montessori Movement became more restricted in scope, necessarily focusing on the consolidation of earlier work. Thus the activities of the AMI were almost exclusively directed at establishing permanent Montessori centres for training teachers, developing an efficient structure and organisation and training trainers to continue the work of the centres.

Now the Association Montessori Internationale aims to reinvigorate the Montessori Movement, restoring its original dimensions. As one step to make the Movement operational, AMI has opened a new chapter, under the name Educateurs sans Frontières.

Definition

The Educateurs sans Frontières are to become a new corps of workers in the Montessori Movement, cattedra ambulante of Maria Montessori's educational reform with its vision of a deep ecology which, in evolutionary terms, is suddenly and rapidly permeating human consciousness.

The Educateurs sans Frontières will travel the paths Maria Montessori followed as she undertook her unceasing work of sowing seeds of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the natural laws of human development, wherever, whenever, she was called to go, leaving these seeds to germinate, and then always moving forth. In 1940, in a letter from India to her two granddaughters, she wrote:

"We abandon all and travel the world, as did those in former times who would sow seeds and go on their way. This is our destiny: to sow! To sow everywhere, without ceasing, never to harvest."

When using the term Educateurs sans Frontières, we refer to borders which transcend the obvious ones to do with nation states. The truly important ones are the psychological and spiritual frontiers - the

ideological, religious, racial, social and economic, cultural and linguistic boundaries which artificially divide a humanity as yet largely unaware of its intrinsic unity and its interconnectedness with the earth that brought it forth.

Dr. Montessori's work can be applied in a wide variety of ways which can benefit the cause of the child beyond the school and the home. Her own term for the pedagogy she created was 'Education as an Aid to Life', and education as an aid to life is applicable at any time, in any place, within all social strata, through public or private agencies, in settings rural, urban and remote.

When Montessori principles are applied in the wider context of society, their possibilities are vast and all-encompassing. They can be of incalculable help to parents, social workers, child-care workers, family counsellors, in short, to any person involved with the developing human being; they can be, and have been applied with children undergoing lengthy hospitalisation, maladjusted children, physically impaired children, children victims of violence, children abandoned, children at risk.