

2004 EsF Assembly Opening

1-22 August, 2004

Educateurs sans Frontières Revisited

The first Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières was held in 1999 in Città di Castello, Italy. This hugely successful event inspired participants to start up and continue projects and initiatives outside the traditional Montessori classroom setting. In the words of the EsF coordinators, the aim of the programme is to invite and encourage those who have participated to emulate 'Maria Montessori in her unceasing work of sowing seeds of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the natural laws of human development, wherever, and whenever (...).'

In 1998, the *Raison d'Etre* of the Educateurs sans Frontières was defined by Renilde Montessori, Camillo Grazzini, Hilla Patell and Baiba Krumins Grazzini as follows: '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 who are victims of violence, children abandoned, children at risk.'