

# 2004 EsF Assembly Speakers

1-22 August, 2004

## Keynote Speakers

**Winfried Böhm**, Germany, is a Doctor of Philosophy from Würzburg University and Professor of Education at the same university. Disciple of several distinguished contemporary philosophers, and an internationally renowned authority in Philosophy of Education, his teaching work has led him to many universities in Europe, Latin America and the U.S.A. He has published more than 30 books and over 300 articles. In 1987, the Catholic University of Cordoba, Argentina, conferred an honorary doctorate upon Professor Böhm. From 1987-2002 Professor Böhm was president of the Deutsche Montessori Gesellschaft, a society affiliated to AMI. In addition, Professor Böhm is a performer, composer, professor and producer in the musical field.

**Maria Gabriella Lay**, Italy, has been a Senior Communications Officer in the Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organisation since August 1997. She is responsible for the management of the Global Campaign to Raise Awareness and Understanding on Child Labour (GAC), a project aimed at mobilising key sectors of society in the fight against child labour. As part of this campaign she designed a large-scale project named SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media), which aims at encouraging young people to participate in and commit to the global campaign by giving them responsibility and by recognising the value of their contribution. As Public Affairs Officer for the Child Rights and Policy Section of the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef in New York (1992-1996) and Geneva (1997)), she managed policy framework relations with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Maria Gabriella Lay is an Italian national. As Tenured Professor for twenty-one years, she developed programmes based on student's ownership of the learning process.

**Silvana Quattrocchi Montanaro**, Italy, received her degree in medicine and surgery, with a specialty in psychiatry, from the University of Rome. In 1955 she joined the staff of the Rome Montessori School for Assistants to Infancy, where she taught mental hygiene, child neuropsychiatry, nutrition, and obstetrics. Dr. Montanaro is currently the Director of Training for the Assistants to Infancy course in Paris, San Diego and Yokohama. She has been the Director of Training for the AMI Assistants to Infancy courses in London and Mexico City and was responsible for bringing toddler training to the U.S.

**André Roberfroid**, Belgium, gained a B.A. in chemistry and a B.Sc. in economic sciences from the Catholic University of Louvain, in 1966. He subsequently completed a postgraduate programme in economic development at IRFED, Paris. From 1968-1974 he spent a great deal of his time in Africa, working both with civil servants and conducting planning studies for government departments in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Gabon. In 1974 he joined Unicef and had many postings, in various capacities, in North and Central Africa, and the Middle East. He returned to Europe in 1996, and was stationed in Geneva, Switzerland where he became Regional Director for Europe, in charge of coordination with humanitarian agencies and of Unicef fund raising activities. In 1999 he relocated to New York, where he assumed the position of Deputy Executive Director for programme and strategic planning, in charge of developing the overall Unicef strategies in the field of child health, education, nutrition and child protection. He was responsible for the implementation of Unicef programmes in the field and reported to the Unicef Executive Board. He retired in 2003, and is currently writing a book on humanitarian diplomacy, to be published by the United Nations University.

**Roland Wiederkehr**, Switzerland, has been a member of the Swiss Parliament (National Councillor) for the Group of Independents since 1987. He is also Director of "Exchange for Peace"—a global youth exchange on peace building in Switzerland. In 1992, in the Swiss Parliament House, Berne, he founded

the World Green Cross to provide emergency aid during environmental disasters. In the same year, on the occasion of the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Mikhail Gorbachev called for the foundation of what he called a “Red Cross of the Environment”, in short Green Cross International. Both organisations merged in 1993 to form Green Cross International (GCI). Mr. Wiederkehr is coordinator of GCI’s “Destroy Chemical Weapons Now” Campaign.

**Ita Williams**, Ireland, has been an External Examiner for the AMI 6-12 Elementary Course for many years. She has examined extensively throughout the European AMI Courses. She is currently a member of the Board of the Montessori College, Dublin. In the past Mrs. Williams was President of the Association of A.M.I Teachers (Ireland). She took her Elementary training in Bergamo under Camillo Grazzini and taught for many years in the Montessori College in Sion Hill where the Irish training course was first established in 1934. She has worked with many eminent Montessorians during her time in the field.

## **Presenters**

**Gabriela Ortega Esquivel**, Mexico, holds an AMI Assistants to Infancy diploma from the Centro Educazione Montessori, Rome, an AMI Primary diploma from Centro Internazionale Montessori, Perugia and an AMI Elementary diploma from Centro Internazionale Studi Montessoriani, Bergamo. In 1986 she founded a Montessori school in Cancun catering for children from 1.5 to 12 years old. In recent years, Gabriela has spent much time and energy on setting up Montessori classes for Maya children, thanks to fundraising efforts to realise an ambitious school campus—a project which is still ongoing.

**David Kahn**, USA, is Executive Director of the North American Montessori Teachers’ Association, and was the founding Programme Director of the Hershey Montessori Farm School, in Huntsburg, Ohio. He is now establishing an International Centre for Adolescent Studies dedicated not only to the development of the Montessori third plane, but to the integration of the Montessori adolescent preparation with that of early childhood as well as the elementary years.

**Monica Sullivan Smith**, USA, has a degree in English and an AMI Primary diploma from the Maria Montessori Training Organisation in London. During the summer of 1999, Ms Sullivan Smith participated in the first Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières (EsF). With Dr. John F. Erhart (Child Psychiatrist, USA), she co-founded The Montessori Intervention Programmes, a not-for-profit agency inspired by AMI’s EsF initiative. Ms Sullivan Smith is also a primary teacher in the Franklin Montessori Programme, an AMI Montessori approach in the public school sector (Rochester, NY City School District).