Who’s Who
Perhaps skilled and knowledgeable educators could penetrate, neutrino-like, the universal tissue of human society - a scattered group of individuals, ambassadors for the child, minstrels who come when called upon and leave when the wisdom of their song has been heard.

These would be the Educateurs sans Frontières, the educators without boundaries, able and willing to go where their presence is required. Never to intrude, not to indoctrinate, but to help and encourage others to learn, to rediscover the wise and ancient plan for wholesome growth with which all humans are endowed.

Renilde Montessori
Hala Aboulela - Egypt
Hala holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Cairo University. She is a parent who decided to shift her career in order to find better learning opportunities for her children as well as other children in Egypt. She spent a significant amount of time researching and learning about different methods of education. A few years later, Hala developed a strong passion towards Montessori education and decided to establish an AMI affiliated Society in order to support the establishment of Montessori schools and centers in Egypt. The Foundation also aims to participate in the reform of education and parenting in Egypt while promoting Montessori values and principles to the society at large.

Charo Alarcon (Speaker) - United States
Charo Alarcón is passionate about creating environments that assist young children in their process of self-creation. She develops toddler classrooms that build communities of learners where children are allowed to discover the world around them, teachers continually learn about the children, and parents participate in their children’s learning process. She established a mentoring programme for home visitors, equipping them to introduce the Montessori approach into the homes of low income families. She is an AMI certified teacher for children from birth to three years and six to nine years, a certified “Parents as Teachers” educator and a life coach.

Victoria Barrès (Speaker) - France
Victoria is AMI’s representative to UNESCO and Board of the International Network for a Culture of Non-Violence and Peace. Recently she represented the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee to the Consultative Group of NGOs for Education 2030. AMI is an accredited partner to UNESCO. Currently Victoria is on the AMI Advisory Council. For years she worked in Africa, training and implementing participatory development strategies for women, girls, adult literacy & early childhood. With international development organisations and NGOs, they developed awareness strategies to highlight women and girls’ education and countries’ socio-economic development at conferences, film festivals and other. She represents AMI at many international events, eg. the first UNESCO Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (Moscow, 2010), the World Education Forum (Incheon, Korea, 2015). AMI 3-6 Diploma, Paris, masters in Applied linguistics, U. Paris.

Karen Bennetts - Australia
Karen has been involved in the Australian Montessori community for over 20 years. She taught 6-12 children for eight years and was a founding principal of a Montessori school for ten years. Karen has completed the AMI 3-6 Diploma and the AMI Orientation to Adolescent Studies, as well as two Montessori Diplomas covering the early childhood and elementary years from MWEI. Since 2014, she has worked for Montessori Australia as a Senior Consultant serving Montessori Independent Schools. Karen is also Publications Coordinator for Montessori Australia, editing the eBulletin, eArticle, Board Bulletin, Insights Magazine and the Annual Report. Karen is in the final months of a PhD in Montessori Leadership at Monash University. She has three adult children, all of whom attended Montessori education.
Maya Berggreen-Clausen - India/Sweden
Maya grew up in the international township of Auroville in south India, an experiment in realising human unity, supported by UNESCO and the Indian government. She completed her studies in Sweden, receiving a B.A. in education and Montessori diplomas at the 0-6, 6-12 and 12-15 levels from the University of Gothenburg. Maya is doing a masters in didactic sciences. For many years she worked as a Montessori teacher in public schools in Sweden. She is now back in Auroville and involved in teacher training. She also works with projects in various fields, including peace education and didactic material development with a Montessori approach of integral education. Maya also works part time as a teacher in the Learning Community, one of Auroville’s elementary schools.

Michelle Bertholle - France
Michelle is an AMI primary educator since 2013 and has been teaching in the alternative education field for 10 years. Guided by values and sincerity, she has a keen interest in practical day-to-day experiences rather than theoretical beliefs. She has observed a large variety of alternative schools from diverse cultures and nations worldwide. Through these experiences, she concludes that the teacher is the magician, not the pedagogy. Apart from Montessori, she trained in Reggio Emilia, Pickler, Freinet and Steiner pedagogies. She speaks French and English. Currently, Michelle is involved in creating an emotionally safe environment for educators and children, and is interested in deepening the integral education approach based on the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. She has dedicated her work to the POP Classroom (non-judgmental space for children) of a kindergarten and the Teachers Centre, a sub-unit of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research in South India.

Solanye Cabrera - United States
Solanye is originally from Ecuador. She grew up in Italy and moved to Minnesota, USA, about 10 years ago. She graduated from the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota in May 2011 with an AMI 3-6 diploma and has been working for “Montessori Partners Serving All Children” since then. She currently works full time as lead guide at Siembra Montessori, a bilingual environment serving the Latino community in the Minneapolis / St. Paul area.

Prisca Chacha - Tanzania
Born in Iramba-Serengeti-Mara and now living in Mwanza, Tanzania, Prisca has followed the Montessori Teacher Training courses in Mwanza for children from 0-6 and 6-12 and obtained her Grade III A Teachers’ Certificate. Prisca is currently working at the Montessori Primary School, Mwanza and is attending the Corner of Hope Elementary (6-12) Course – (Help the Children Projects AMI) in Nakuru, Kenya with AMI trainer Dr. Jean Miller.
Prithika Chary (Speaker) - India
Dr. Prithika Chary is the first woman in India to be qualified and practicing as both a neurophysician and a neurosurgeon. She is a widely acclaimed clinician, researcher, teacher, and motivational trainer, with extensive experience over the past 28 years in cognitive and behavioural neurosciences, psycho-social rehabilitation and epilepsy. Her teaching experience spans 40 years. She is also involved in social causes in the community, especially those empowering and enabling girls, women, the less abled, and the economically underprivileged. Her mother was trained directly by Maria Montessori in the third course held in India.

Megan Davies - South Africa
Megan, a newcomer to the world of Montessori, holds the position of programme lead for the Indaba Montessori Academy in 2016. She is passionate about facilitating processes that support and invest in human potential. The Indaba Montessori Academy is located in the Lynedoch Ecovillage in Stellenbosch, South Africa. It aims to provide Early Childhood Development teachers from the Winelands, Africa and beyond with training in a Montessori-based approach to learning that will provide transformative opportunities for children to flourish. It is being established as a joint venture of the Indaba Education Fund and the Sustainability Institute, supported by Cape Classics Incorporated. Megan graduated with her MPhil in Sustainable Development from the Sustainability Institute and the School of Public Leadership in 2016. She completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development cum laude in 2013 as well as a B.A. in Knowledge Management and Decision Making from Stellenbosch University in 2011.

Sue Ferrari - United States
Sue is a thirty-year veteran AMI primary guide, who teaches in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA. Many years ago, she and her family were forced to flee their home in Beirut, Lebanon, during a resurgence of the Lebanese Civil War. Though she has visited the region many times since then, she always yearned to return there to live and work. She is thrilled that she will finally be able to move to Cyprus over the next two years. By attending this 2016 EsF Assembly, she is hoping to refresh and renew a dream of founding a Middle East Montessori Center on Cyprus, an idea that was spawned at the EsF assembly in Burgos, Spain in 2004. She is very excited about attending her third EsF assembly and looks forward to sharing with and learning from all the attendees and speakers.

Monica Ferri - Ecuador/ Italy
Monica is a 3-6 AMI Diploma holder and works full time as a Montessori advocate. Formally her career was in business. In 1989 she became immersed within the educational development field in Quito, the capital city, and established the ‘Foundation Dejemos Huellas’ (FDH) to support children from low income backgrounds with scholarships. Soon afterwards Ferri became the Executive Director. In 2002, FDH began implementing the teachings of Maria Montessori. Until now, over 600 people have been taught about Montessori principles and method. Today, the school ‘Escuela Particular Monte Carmelo’ has about 130 children enrolled at different levels, as well as a programme of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for children from 3-12 years. Over the past 6 years, Monica has worked with children aged 6-9 years. She is a mother of four, grandmother of fourteen, and great grandmother of one.
Norma Gonzalez - Dominican Republic
Norma has been involved in Montessori education since 1997, first as a primary teacher and then in 2006 at Elementary level in a little village called Puerto Plata. She started a project in 1999 and is now working toward setting up a Montessori Adolescent Programme. She has also been supporting nonprofit associations, running Montessori programmes in the community and would like to become more involved in this work. Norma is also certified in Business Administration, Graphic Design and Elementary education. In addition to her passion for Montessori, she loves to travel and meet new people.

Christine Harrison (Speaker) - Australia
Christine has been involved in Montessori education since 1985 and was principal of the Canberra Montessori School, one of the largest Montessori schools in Australia for over ten years. She is the founding Chair of the Montessori Australia Foundation and was Chair of the Association of Independent Schools in the Australian Capital Territory and on the Board of the Independent Schools Council of Australia. Christine has been involved in policy development, compliance, student care, curriculum development and educational leadership in schools and has a background in mediation, conflict resolution, adult education and a particular interest in governance in community organisations. Christine is a Member of the AMI Board.

John Hemanth Kumar Gaddam - India
John works as an applied psychologist specialized in Education, Sports and Suicide Prevention. He is actively involved in the development of various groups of children at risk, with behavioral problems, lack of interest and motivation in education and sports, suicidal tendencies and emotionally disturbances, especially among teenagers. John obtained his AMI Primary Diploma along with his wife Mrs Chandana. He is the Director of “The Neurons - developing quality minds,” a psychology center for children of all ages. He also guides schools and their parents and teachers to understand their children and extend psychological support for their development. He will be highlighting these activities and is open to discussions about the various initiatives.

Fay Hendriksen (Staff) - Netherlands
Fay Hendriksen joined the AMI team in February 2015. She has first hand knowledge of Montessori, as she graduated from a Montessori high school in the Hague. She is delighted that she can match international outreach work with the Montessori approach. Fay studied International Relations and obtained a Masters in Conflict Resolution. Afterwards, she spent four months in Nicaragua providing vocational training. This experience made her increasingly aware of the importance of quality education in order to develop independent, socially engaged individuals. Fay’s responsibilities at the AMI office in Amsterdam include coordination of Educateurs sans Frontières and Funds Development.
Mamta Jain - India
Mamta was born in Hyderabad and moved to England in 2003. She was brought up in an extended family of 40. Such diversity has prepared her for life and also influenced her ability to settle anywhere around the world without feeling uprooted. She completed her Bachelor of Commerce and Diploma in Business Management in 1996. Before pursuing a career in Montessori Teaching, she worked as an assistant manager for a catering company and nanny in the UK. She was first introduced to Montessori through her eldest daughter’s school, which led to her determination to pursue a career in Montessori education. She completed the Assistants course in November 2012 and worked in a Montessori School in the UK for 3 months. Then she obtained the AMI Primary (3-6) Diploma in April 2014 from Navadisha Montessori Foundation, Chennai. Since then, she has been working in primary (3-6) classrooms in the UK & USA. She has two daughters, aged 8 and 13. She loves to travel, read, fly kites, community work and socializing.

Nagarjun Karnatakam - India
Nagarjun was born in 1992 in Guntakal, a small town in Andhra Pradesh, India. Nagarjun completed his Bachelor of Business Management Studies at Christ University, Bangalore in 2014. He is currently pursuing a Post Graduate in Diploma Management - HB from Welingkar Institute of Management Development & Research. One visit to a Montessori school transformed his life. During his visits to schools as marketing manager, he noticed the difference with traditional schools. The children inspired him to choose Montessori as his profession. At 23, he completed his 3-6 diploma at International Montessori Training Centre, Bangalore, India in 2016. Presently he runs Penguin Montessori House of Children in his home town, where quality education is lacking. A lover of magic since his childhood, he is a mentalist also. He looks forward to exchanging ideas at this EsF Assembly.

Anne Kelly (speaker) - Australia
Anne is a Montessori Dementia Consultant, who also holds post graduate qualifications in dementia management, assessment and workplace training and dementia care mapping. She has worked extensively in dementia care in both residential and community for the past 30 years. In 2009 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to further study Montessori principles used in dementia care. This fellowship enabled her to travel to Greece, Canada and the USA to work alongside world experts in this area. Since her return to Australia, Anne has continued to build her reputation as an experienced aged care Montessorian and is now in demand to provide mentoring and training in Montessori principles for organisations wishing to embrace Montessori principles into their professional practices.

Lynne Lawrence (speaker and moderator) - Netherlands
Lynne has been the Executive Director of AMI since June 2008, and prior to this held the position of AMI General Secretary ad interim (2007). She also headed the AMI Human Resources Committee. Lynne was Director of Training and Schools at the Maria Montessori Training Organisation (MMTO), now known as the Maria Montessori Institute since 1989. In her role as AMI Executive Director, Lynne actively promotes AMI’s involvement in Montessori educational initiatives in developing countries, alongside many other areas of AMI’s work, including teacher training programmes, global and ancillary Montessori programmes, research and development.
Sharon Lickerman - United States
Sharon is Head of School at Resurrection Episcopal Day School, an AMI recognized school in New York. She trained under Silvia Dubovoy at the Montessori Institute of San Diego, and has been an AMI Montessori educator for over 16 years. With a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas, and M.A. in Early Childhood Special Education from New York University, she taught at REDS from 2000-2013. She belonged to the School’s Outreach and Transition committees, and was faculty representative on the Board of Trustees. In 2014-15, Sharon served as the Education Specialist at REDS, providing guidance and support to the community, collaborating with faculty, staff and parents to be strong advocates for the students. Sharon was also Associate Director of Reachwithin, a non-profit organization whose aim is to improve emotional and social well-being for abused and neglected children by helping them access, cherish and build their inner strength and character. She consulted on education and global public Health projects in the Bahamas and Peru.

Evelyn Bai Ling - China
Evelyn trained in Hangzhou, China. She is a volunteer for Montessori Volunteers Association (MVA) in western China. She participates and also organizes many MVA activities, including monthly workshops for home-schooling. Currently she runs a children’ home in Nanning, Guangxi province, China. She is the only AMI graduate in the Guangxi region. Six years ago, she started working with Chinese NGOs, where she is engaged in educational needs of children in poverty. She is committed to special needs’ children (0-6) in the Montessori classroom. She hopes to become more involved in outreach work for children in the future through the EsF network and global initiatives.

Maya Majji - India
Maya completed her Bachelors in Psychology and Political Science and also holds an AMI Primary Diploma. She graduated from the Navadisha Montessori Training Institute in Chennai in 2012. Since then, she has been working as a Primary Directress at Pragnya Montessori School in Hyderabad and has been dedicating herself towards children’s development. Maya is a quiet person with a deep commitment to children.

Kishore Majjiga Venkata - India
Kishore holds a Bachelor’s Mechanical Engineering. He attended the AMI Montessori Adolescent Orientation Programme (12-18) at Cleveland, Ohio, USA in 2014 and is now training in the AMI Elementary course (6-12) at Navadisha Montessori Foundation, Chennai, India. He is involved in running Medha Montessori School at Hyderabad, India.
Jacquie Maughan (Speaker) - United States
Jacquie received her AMI primary diploma in Palo Alto, California. She has taught at both the primary and adolescent levels, and has founded two schools, Woodland Montessori School in Spokane, and Pacific Crest in Seattle, Washington. Currently she focuses on the development of Montessori Birth-to-Six Family Community Centers in at-risk and underserved communities. Jacquie has served on the North American Montessori Teachers’ Association (NAMTA) Board since 1986 and has been President since 2000. She serves on the AMI board as Affiliated Societies board member. She attended the 2011 Dallas EsF Assembly.

Sara-Dunja Menzel - Germany
Sara-Dunja was raised in Germany in the Black Forest area. She studied education and romance philology at the University of Freiburg and received her Masters in 2002. Then for ten years, she worked in different fields of education, especially with youth in initiatives focusing on social work, street work, farm work and several creative projects. During this time she attended a Montessori course for Children's House and Primary. In 2012 she set out on new paths. She took AMI 0-3 training in Zürich, visited schools in India, participated in the Brain Development and Learning Conference in Vancouver, Canada and the Montessori Congress in Portland, Oregon in 2013. Currently she works with children from 1-3. She also designs concepts and projects for different age groups to promote global responsibility, sustainable action and cooperation.

Tricia Miller - United States
Tricia attended the 2011 and 2015 EsF Assemblies in Dallas and Thailand and looks forward to this one. She works at Waypoint Montessori in Colleyville, Texas as the upper school coordinator and as an upper elementary guide. For the last five years, she taught all subjects for the land-based Adolescent Programme at Waypoint Montessori, which includes four apiaries, laying hens, and organic gardens. She is the Treasurer of the Montessori Institute of North Texas (MINT) and AMI Board Member. Tricia obtained her AMI 6-12 diploma from Washington Montessori Institute and her MEd from Loyola University, Maryland. She attended the NAMTA Orientation for Adolescent Studies. Tricia has a B.A. in Biology and earned her Ph.D in Cell Biology from Baylor College of Medicine.

Helen Mohan Elias (staff) - India
Helen received her AMI primary diploma from the Montessori Training and Research Trust (MTRT), Hyderabad. Since then she has worked with the trust. She has assisted on several Montessori Training Courses and is currently the chief directress of the Model Montessori House of Children run by MTRT. She has conducted workshops for parents and teachers of the missionary schools, Montfort Brothers of St Gabriel and has worked on making text books for the primary level. She is part of KGF School Development Group, which adopted a government school, raised funds to improve living conditions and has hired trained teachers to ensure quality education for the children. She has been successful in getting permission to start a Montessori primary environment in the school. She is looking forward for this project to start in January 2017.
Jacqueline Mwombeki - Tanzania
Jacqueline obtained a Montessori preschool teacher certificate in 1994 in Dar-es-Salaam and received her 3-6 AMI diploma in 2006 in London (MMTO). She has 25 years of experience in early childhood care and development, serving as a full time volunteer for Partage, a private organization supporting children in need in north-east Tanzania. In 2007, Jacqueline established her own centre to organize Montessori teacher training courses, aimed at supplying quality preschool teachers to public and private schools, as well as promoting Montessori education to the broader community. She has translated into Kiswahili (the national language) the core matters of Montessori Preschool Teachers’ Curriculum.

Amira Nagati - Egypt
Amira is a Montessori Education Programs International (MEPI) Montessori directress for early childhood and a lecturer in the MEPI Montessori teacher training course in Cairo, Egypt. She initiated a Montessori programme for African refugees in Cairo with St Andrew's Refugee Services NGO and is currently the programme coordinator and directress. The programme intends to provide early childhood care for refugee families and is attempting to expand its work to create a community-based programme with a replicable framework.

Jennifer Moore - South Africa
Jennifer has been involved in Montessori for the past 27 years in Cape Town. Her journey took her from the 3-6 into the 6-9 level, and increasingly into adult education programmes, where she has had the privilege of guiding people, through discussions and workshops, on a journey of personal discovery to experience expansion in their understanding of both the child’s world and their own. During these years, she became a mother and also made two trips into the continent of Africa, visiting some 18 countries. She is presently connecting with groups of women who look after children in the impoverished communities of Cape Town and rural areas. Raising the levels of awareness, understanding and practical skill, and developing resources, will directly benefit those individuals and the children in their care.

Philip O’Brien (Speaker) - Ireland
Philip is the President of Association Montessori Internationale. He is Senior Adviser at the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation. Formerly he was Executive Vice President for Communications Advocacy and Development at the Foundation. Before joining Elizabeth Glaser, Philip worked for UNICEF in a number of positions and roles, including Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe, and Director of Private Partnerships and Fundraising. He has lived and worked in Asia, Africa, US and Europe. He holds a Master of Science in Economics from the University of Wales, Swansea, UK.
Julie Parraguirre - United States
Julie began her journey as a Montessori parent in 1995, when her first son was a year old. At the time, she was an attorney practicing labor and employment law. After the birth of her third son, Julie decided to pursue AMI training. She will begin her 17th year as a teacher in the Children’s House at The Post Oak School in Bellaire, Texas. Julie has a B.S. in Economics, a Juris Doctor degree, and her AMI (Primary) diploma. After her youngest leaves for college at the end of this academic year, Julie would like to help provide Montessori education to the underserved. She is delighted to attend the EsF Assembly to learn about initiatives worldwide and is hopeful that her experience will provide her with resources and inspiration to fulfill her dream of serving others.

Lesley-Ann Patrick - England
Lesley-Ann is a graduate from the University of London and a Montessori teacher since 1988. She worked with children from 3-12 in the UK, and has spent the last four years coordinating an Adolescent Community’s work and study at a Farm School in Sweden. For the past 12 years, she has been involved in a Montessori project in India. She is also a qualified Active Birth teacher, herbalist and doula. Her African childhood awakened a desire to serve communities with different cultures. Lesley-Ann is the mother of six Montessori children, and has spent the last year volunteering in projects overseas with the three youngest. She is interested in learning how adolescents can be involved in making a valuable contribution to EsF.

Mary Caroline Parker - United States
Mary Caroline is the Executive Director of the Montessori Institute of North Texas (MINT), an AMI teacher training centre in Dallas. A former head of school of Lumin East Dallas Community School and The Barbara Gordon Montessori School, she holds the AMI primary diploma, a B.A. from Smith College, a J.D. from American University, and an M.Ed in Montessori Integrative Learning from Endicott College. She served on the AMI Board from 2008 until 2015 in the Humanitarian and Child Advocacy position. A member of the EsF Organising Committee, she was the local liaison for the Assembly in 2011. She serves on the board of Lumin Education, which operates four Montessori programmes in low income Dallas neighbourhoods, including two public Montessori charter schools and an Early Head Start programme.

Zoe Paul - United States
Zoe obtained both the 0-3 and the 3-6 diploma at the Montessori Institute of San Diego and she has taught both as an Assistant to Infancy and in the Children’s House. She has worked in different countries and recently opened a small Montessori school in San Francisco. Zoe’s interests are in bringing AMI training to the Middle East and Africa, as well as working with children in conflict zones.
Lauren Proulx - United States
Lauren, originally from Carmel, California, has lived in New York since 2005. She is a Primary directress at Resurrection Episcopal Day School. Lauren followed AMI training with Silvia Dubovoy at the Montessori Institute of San Diego in 2009 and obtained her ME.d from Loyola University. Lauren has always had an interest in education for young children and received her undergraduate degree in Child Development and Psychology. After attending the AMI refresher course in Long Beach, Lauren was eager to attend the EsF Assembly. Having travelled throughout India ten years ago, she is excited to return while continuing to pursue her passion for Montessori. She is particularly interested in collaborating with others and discussing ways to integrate Montessori with the elderly and homeless populations. Lauren is looking forward to meeting everyone.

Moiza Rafath - India
Moiza is an Economics Graduate, AMI 3-6 diploma holder, has a Masters in Public Relations and a B.A. in Education. She founded Pebble Creek Montessori School in 2005. In 2012, Pebble Creek Life School was set up to meet the growing needs of children. Today, the school works with 440 children in its 5 primary and 4 elementary environments. Despite the limitation of having no AMI trained 6-12 adults or training available in India in 2009, she set up her first elementary environment in 2009, by applying some Montessori principles. Moiza is passionate about Montessori education and Montessori community. She dreams of a community that is interactive and open to new ideas and thoughts. She aims at getting Montessori education recognized in India through her school’s affiliation with National and State Education Boards.

Geetha Raghuraaman - India
Geetha received her AMI Elementary diploma from the Navadisha Montessori Institute (NMI), Chennai (2010). Since then she has been working with the 6-9 children at Navadisha Montessori School. As a Montessori directress she has been taking special interest in addressing behavioral challenges in children. She has also been helping the trainers during the 6-12 course at NMI, Chennai. She also conducts workshops for parents on Montessori methods and geometric art. She has a masters in communication and journalism and has worked extensively with publishers. She is trained in Indian Classical Music and enjoys sharing her passion with the children.

Nandini Prakash - India
Nandini obtained her AMI 3-6 diploma at IMTC and her lower elementary diploma from IMC. She has been a faculty member at the Indian Institute for Montessori Studies (IIMS) since 2000, where she coordinates the activities of Hosa Chiguru, a Montessori intervention programme in public and private schools, with a focus on vernacular based education for children of lower economic strata. She has worked with 180 community owned schools of an NGO called Maya and several public schools. Nandini has presented several research papers, workshops, conferences, based on the impact of the Montessori Method in Indian conditions, in several conferences and was awarded the Collaborative Research Grant from the International Study Association for Teachers and Teaching in 2012. Her current interest is in adapting Montessori principles for the education of visually impaired children.
**Rajagopal P.V. (Speaker) - India**

Rajagopal, the son of a Gandhian worker, studied agriculture at Seva Gram in Wardha. In the early 70s he worked in the violence-ridden area of Chambal (Madhya Pradesh) helping to rehabilitate dacoits. In the years that followed, Rajagopal travelled to several tribal areas and developed an understanding of the plight and needs of India's tribal people and their cause became part of his lifetime mission. After setting up several training organizations across Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa, the following mobilization led to the consolidation of a peoples’ organization, namely, Ekta Parishad in 1991. In 2007, Rajagopal carried out one the largest non-violent marches ever held, known as “Janadesh 2007”. He led 25,000 people on a one-month march from Gwalior to Delhi. In 2012, he led a march of 100,000 people to the capital of India to demand people’s control over land and livelihood resources.

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**Sharon Rajan - Canada**

Sharon was born in Uganda and moved to Canada in 1972. She currently lives in Calgary, Alberta and she has two children who have both completed high school and are pursuing post-secondary careers. Sharon completed her primary training at the Montessori Training Centre for British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada in 1986. Since then, she has had a wonderful career working in Montessori schools in Vancouver, London, and Texas. Sharon currently works at the Calgary Montessori School in Calgary, Alberta, where she has been since 2001. She loves to swim, read and make Montessori materials, and also enjoys conducting parent education workshops.

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**Uma Ramani (Speaker) - India/ United States**

Born and raised in India, Uma Ramani now lives and works in the USA. She holds AMI diplomas at both 3-6 and 6-12 levels. She is currently Director of Training (3-6) at the Montessori Institute of North Texas in Dallas. After several years in the classroom, Uma joined the Annie Fisher Montessori Magnet School in Hartford, Connecticut, helping to lay the foundations for a fully implemented Montessori programme in a public school setting. She has served as consultant to the Elm City Montessori School, a charter school started by a coalition of parents to serve the children of New Haven, Connecticut. She enjoys communicating Montessori principles to diverse groups of adults in various settings and she looks forward to further expanding her work under the EsF umbrella.

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**Sraddhalu Ranade (Speaker) - India**

Sraddhalu is a scientist, educator and scholar based at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, in Pondicherry, India. He has been involved in educational research and teacher-training programmes for over 20 years, and has conducted intensive teacher-training workshops in integral education and value-based education all over India and abroad. His book "Introduction to Integral Education" has been widely acclaimed and is read in many schools. The principles and methodology of integral education are close to the Montessori principles, which he has studied in depth. He has specialised in physics, mathematics and computer sciences, integrating them with his philosophical, metaphysical and spiritual studies. He believes firmly that India is destined to lead the world into a new paradigm of development in education, science and life based on a new consciousness.
Lakshmi Reddy - India
Lakshmi was born in Khammam, Telengana. Her interest in Montessori education began around the age of 12. She holds a degree in Home Science, and joined the AMI Primary Course in 1993, under Zarin Malva at Jeedimetla at MTRC, Hyderabad. Lakshmi started ‘Samskruthi MHOC’ in Miryalguda supported by her husband in 2006. She sponsored many candidates for AMI Training at Hyderabad and Chennai, and also those attending the Assistants’ Courses. In 2015, she started ‘Prakruthi MHOC’ at Kondapur, Hyderabad, and inspired by K.E. Taraporewalla, sent her three daughters, nieces and nephews to ‘Taraporewallas MHOC’ in Hyderabad. She has a strong network of relationships with other directors and has attended the Montessori congress in Chennai in 2009. Her wish is to spread Montessori throughout rural India.

André Roberfroid (Speaker) - Belgium/France
André is now AMI’s Global Ambassador, after serving as President of AMI from 2005 to 2014. André was UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for programme and strategic planning, in charge of developing overall UNICEF strategies in the fields of child health, education, nutrition and child protection until his retirement in 2003. His past work involved work for children including Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, and Cameroon. In 1984 he became senior planning officer in the UNICEF regional office for the Middle East and North Africa, and advised governments on policies for children in all countries of the Middle East, including Beirut, Lebanon, Morocco and Iran.

Keiko Sawada - Japan
Keiko has a nickname and hopes to be called ‘Sawa’ by everyone. She is eager to contribute to improving the lives of young children in the world. Initially, she obtained the national nursery teacher license in Japan. After having some experience to work at schools and facilities for children, she took the AMI course in the U.K. Two years ago, she obtained the 3-6 diploma. Although she does not work for a school currently, she would like to explore her options and gain experience. She has been on two world trips on the Peace boat as an AMI teacher. The ship is the only one in the world with a Montessori children’s house on board.

Shabnam Talat- India
Shabnam received her 3-6 AMI diploma in 1998, and then worked with Roots Montessori House of Children for seven years, helping to teach Montessori and prepare the environments. She graduated from Delhi University. She travelled throughout India, visiting 11 schools in various states. She has worked alongside Helen Mohan Elias, setting up the Model Children’s House with the Montessori Training and Research Trust in Hyderabad. She has immensely enjoyed the experiences of observing children become independent in different locations. She worked as an assistant to the Director of Training on the Training Course for five years and is currently studying at Navadisha Foundation in Chennai as part of the AMI training of trainers programme.
Emily Steriti - United States
Emily presently lives and works in the West Texas town of Marfa. She has partnered with the public school system and serves as the Director of Early Childhood in Marfa.
She has spent the last twenty years actively engaged in Montessori and Positive Discipline communities, with a focus on rural areas, elderly care, and prison populations.
Emily looks forward to the opportunity to exchange ideas and initiatives with her fellow Montessorians.

Vidya Shankar (Speaker) - India
Vidya Shankar has a Bachelor of Technology in Chemical Engineering from Anna University. After working four years in the Industry, she pursued social work starting with an NGO Relief Foundation in 1998, which uncovered the reasons for delinquency and drop out, linked to lack of good quality education. After working 8 years in the juvenile justice system, she moved to prevention. She is actively engaged in strengthening rural education using Montessori principles and practice. She obtained an AMI Elementary Diploma, besides a postgraduate diploma in Child Rights Law from National Law School, Bangalore. The foundation runs two centres in villages that serve as a platform and hub for social reform thinking and dialogue.

Maxine Swensson - New Zealand
Maxine has an AMI 3-6 Diploma from Hyderabad, India with over 15 years experience in Montessori 3-6. She works at Montessori By the Bay in Sydney. For the past 25 years, she has also has been involved in Christian religious education in India and Australia. She obtained Catechesis of the Good Shepherd diplomas for 3-6 and 6-9 in Sydney.
Since the beginning of the Montessori work in Thailand (2004), Maxine has travelled there many times. She has found another Montessori endeavour: working in aged care and Dementia. She organizes practical workshops with the carers and staff on the Montessori approach to the elderly in Australia and India. Maxine is also a board member of Gamarada Montessori, which supports early childhood education for indigenous children in Sydney.

Abdul Khader Siddiqui - India
Khader is an engineer, who has been involved in Montessori education for 13 years. He obtained his AMI primary diploma (MTRC) and elementary training (IIMS). His wife also trained at the primary and elementary level. His Montessori training helped in homeschooling his four children, from age 6, because there was no Montessori elementary education in Hyderabad. The positive experience furthered his conviction in Montessori philosophy. In 2013, they started Living Bridge Montessori Academy to provide quality education based on Montessori principles. They are keen to bring Montessori to underserved children, as they believe all children should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. He also conduct math workshops to give non-Montessori children opportunities to work with the material, develop concepts and hopefully develop a love for math.
Parimala Rani Thipparthy - India
Parimala has a bachelor's diploma and AMI diplomas at the primary and elementary levels. She is running a school for the rural children in the village Gopalpet in Telangana state. She thoroughly loves and enjoys working with the children in the school.

Megan Tyne - Australia
Megan holds an AMI 3-6 Diploma and a B.A. Dip. Ed. and has been involved in Montessori education since 1985. She has three grown children, all of whom attended Montessori schools. With a professional background in computers, finance and marketing, she has assisted numerous Montessori associations in Australia and overseas. She was Chair of the International Montessori Centenary Committee and is website designer for several Montessori organisations, including AMI. Megan also assists with Indigenous Montessori organisations in Australia. She attended the 2004, 2011 and 2015 EsF assemblies. She is currently Executive Director of the Montessori Children's Foundation and the Montessori Australia Foundation, CEO of the Australian Centre for Montessori Studies and Director International Projects for AMI.

Junnifa Uzodike - Nigeria
Junnifa holds a BSc. from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, and a MBA from Clark Atlanta University. After working for five years in senior analyst and management positions, she serendipitously discovered Montessori and has passionately sought to learn and do more with it since then. Junnifa has the Nigerian nationality and she is a mother of two children under 3, with whom she has implemented Montessori from birth. She holds an AMI 0-3 diploma and is currently completing the AMI 3-6 training. She also completed the Resource for Infant Educators foundations training. She is the founder of Nduoma Education services, which offers Montessori from Birth e-Courses, supporting parents from all over the world. She also consults for schools in Nigeria, offering parent education sessions and environment improvement services. Her dream is to make quality Montessori education and teacher training available to more Nigerians.

Maria del Valle Collado - Spain
Valle holds a Bachelor Degree as an elementary teacher with the specialty in music from the University of Barcelona. Since 2005, she has been working in public education in Spain, where she found a great group of teachers trying to change the traditional system. That is when she learned about the Montessori approach and went to Bergamo where she received the AMI 6-12 diploma in 2014. Since then, she has been working in Montessori education at Roseborough in Florida, having new experiences and deepening her understanding of Montessori principles. She is hoping to learn more about Educateurs Sans Frontières in this Assembly.
Samantha Vejay - United States
Samantha is from Greenville, South Carolina. She earned a Bachelors Degree in Business and Nonprofit Management and a Masters in Education from Loyola University. She holds AMI diplomas at the 3-6 and 6-12 levels, and lectures at a local university, introducing Montessori principles to education majors. Samantha has experience teaching primary, lower elementary and upper elementary as well as 7 years as a school administrator. She currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia and spends her days in a 9-12 classroom at Arbor Montessori School. Samantha is most interested in using Montessori with the elderly, specifically Alzheimer patients, and working with underprivileged communities.

Chaithanya Yalamanchili - India
Chaithanya holds a bachelor's degree in Engineering and masters in Mathematics from BITS-Pilani, India. He holds an AMI 6-12 diploma and is currently the programme director for elementary education at Pragnya Montessori School. Chaithanya has also followed the AMI orientation to adolescent education and plans to start a Montessori adolescent programme in Pragnya school. He has also worked with organizations running education programs for uneducated adults. From the experiences shared at the 2016 EsF Assembly, he hopes to draw ideas for community work and implement them within his school.

Kalpana Vishwas - India
Kalpana became an AMI primary diploma holder in 1983 and earned her BSc in Psychology. She currently works as Chief Directress at Taraporewallas Montessori House Of Children, in Hyderabad, India. She has two sons, Karna who works for Google at Mountain View, CA, and Rajiv who works with children at the Taraporewallas Montessori school. Vishwas practices yoga and meditation under the guidance of The Art of Living Foundation. She is the daughter in law of Miss Taraporewalla, who was trained directly by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1939.

Pooja Velji - India
Pooja learned about the Montessori method while visiting Karachi, Pakistan, in 2001. As a keen learner, she started gathering information about the course in India and took the 2003-2004 course in Hyderabad. With guidance from her Directress Mrs. Laxmi Krishna Kumar and Ms Helen, she started her first school for her son in 2007 named Little Steps which continued for six years. She moved to Pune, Maharashtra in 2012 where she started with I cube Montessori, her husband also obtained his AMI diploma in Mumbai the same year. The journey continues and everyday is a new day with new learning as an educator. With all the passion for Montessori, she nevertheless sometimes finds it challenging to increase awareness about Montessori to other people.

Who is Who — Educateurs sans Frontières Assembly — India 2016 — page 17
Gunnita Malhotra - India
Gunnita Malhotra is an educator and mathematician. She is a trustee of GM Montessori Mumbai school for underprivileged children and KGT international school in Mumbai. She runs the school to impart quality education and care to the children, not as a profession but as a passion.

She believes that education is the satisfaction of sheer curiosity of a child’s mind and the answers should be an outcome to questions, which ought to be a useful and enjoyable learning experience for them.

Her idea is that teachers should become mentors to their students, for which she has developed a counseling/mentoring system in educational institutions. Gunnita has also made Montessori-inspired math materials for the age group 12-16.

Amukta Mahapatra (Speaker) - India
Amukta is an independent consultant, working with organisations including the government sector in India. She was involved in reviewing Activity Based Learning (ABL) and its variations in seven states of India for the UNICEF–EI study. While she worked with UNICEF, she was part of a task force that brought out the Quality Package, which was initiated in 1000 schools in 13 selected states. She worked with the department of education in Tamil Nadu, developing a model for large-scale training of educators, with the faculty of the District Institutes of Education Training (DIETs), which ultimately trained 200,000 elementary school teachers and other government functionaries. This programme laid the ground for ABL methodology for classes one to four in Tamil Nadu. She conducts one-year and short term teacher development programmes enabling teachers to work at elementary level following Montessori principles of pedagogy. She has been associated with the International Democratic Education movement for many years.

Abdul Azeez - India
Abdul Azeez is the founder and director of Stellar Montessori School in Kottakkal, Kerala, which was founded in 2010. He opened the Montessori elementary programme in 2014. Abdul plays an active role in spreading authentic Montessori in Kerala. He attended Montessori elementary training conducted by the Indian Montessori Training Course in Coimbatore, India. He dreams about setting up a Montessori adolescence programme as well.

Matesha Sembuche - Tanzania
Matesha lives in Mwanza, Tanzania. She has a B.Ed in Psychology from Dar Es Salaam University and an MA in Public Administration from Dodoma University. She currently works in Mwanza at the Montessori Primary School. Matesha is currently attending the Corner of Hope AMI Elementary (6-12) course - (Help the Children Projects) in Nakuru, Kenya with AMI Trainer Dr. Jean Miller.
Christina Cheung - United States

Christinia is the founder and director of a Montessori dual-immersion school educating children from birth to age 18. Her 25 years as school director and involvement in postgraduate research conducted in conjunction with Stanford University on language development and children’s socialisation have shown her the vital need for books that both treat subjects in greater depth and are also designed with the aim of leading children to become more reflective and more aware – of the world, of the past, and of others.

Emily Green - United States

Emily has over twenty years’ experience in Montessori as a teacher and administrator in both the private and public sector. She served as founding implementer of the first public Montessori programme in San Francisco, created a California credentialing track for AMI diploma holders at San Francisco State University, and has been a presenter at California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC), AMI/USA’s Public School Forum, and San Francisco “First Five” conferences. She attended the 2004 EFS assembly in Burgos, Spain and was Co-Chair of AMI/USA’s 2007 Montessori Centenary Celebration in San Francisco. Emily has a B.A. from Vassar College and is an AMI primary diploma holder.

Mai Nhgiem- Canada/Vietnam

Mai holds an M.Sc. (University of Toronto), and a B.Sc. (University of Saigon). For 25 years she was a biomedical research associate (University of Toronto, University Health Network, Amgen, Vigen). She has been active in Twinkle Star Home Day Care, Metro Toronto International Caravan, Saigon Pavilion, Vietnamese-Canadian Community Council of Greater Toronto, Vietnamese Youth and Women Center of Toronto, MetroToronto Chinese and South East Asian Legal Clinic. In 2005 Mai earned her AMI primary diploma. In 2011 she started the Vitali Montessori School, and in 2010 became founding president of the Vietnamese Montessori Education Foundation. She has helped translate several Montessori titles into Vietnamese and is liaison for future collaboration between USSSH of Saigon and AMI. Mai assists local grass-root groups in starting free Montessori Casa programmes for children from disadvantaged and rural areas. Her passion is promoting and developing Montessori projects.

Louis-Georges Arsenault (Speaker) - Canada

Louis-Georges was appointed UNICEF Representative to India in 2012. He served as UNICEF’s Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes from March 2008. Louis-Georges served as the UNICEF Representative in Bangladesh from 2005-2008 and he served as the Deputy Director, Programme Division in UNICEF New York. From 2001 to 2003, Louis-Georges served as the UNICEF Representative in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. As UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan from 1998 to 2001, he managed one of UNICEF’s largest humanitarian operations. Louis-Georges joined UNICEF in Mali in 1995 as Deputy Representative. Prior to joining UNICEF, he worked for the Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO) as Regional Director for West Africa based in Togo. In the mid-eighties he was Director of the Canadian International Development Agency-supported bilateral project on Integrated Water Supply and Sanitation, covering the maritime region of Togo.
Notes, thoughts, considerations
This copy of Who is Who belongs to: