

Newsletter

WINTER 2017

WINTER
Edition



Montessori-Europe

After the Berlin congress, we have continued working on our to-do list. We had a meeting in November in which we made arrangements concerning our edWeb portal and communities. You may have read about this in the December issue of the ME Newsletter. We also paid attention to our new website. The web designer and builder are working on the first design and we hope to present the results in the spring.

In January we met again to have a brainstorm session about several topics: the involvement of our members, membership issues in general, the next congress and our financial situation. In order to make brainstorming easier we went to the summerhouse of one of our board members where we had an uninterrupted view into the mountains. This hopefully influenced the free flow of thoughts resulting in positive outcomes for the future of ME.

Nevertheless, there is a less optimistic side as well. As you know, our financial situation does not look too good. Although many people attend our congresses, this is not sufficient to cover all our yearly costs. Therefore we had to make some painful cuts in our fees for workshop leaders. We trust you understand these measures, which will help to make the future of ME more secure.

ME and the Dutch Montessori Association (NMV) are busy preparing our next congress in The Hague, which will take place from 3 to 5 November 2017. Next month we will ask you to respond to our call for proposals for workshops focused on children's rights. We already have confirmations from the keynote speakers and will shortly present the first version of the congress programme.

We are also considering options for our congress in 2018. In November I visited Bulgaria on the invitation of Montessorians who would like to organize the congress there. So Bulgaria is a serious option; in the next few months we will make a final decision.

For me personally, the month of February means that I will concern myself with trying to build a firm link between ME and Montessorians in Serbia. The Montessori Association in Serbia organizes its yearly conference on Saturday the 24st of February and I will try to make them realize what ME can contribute to their work. Hopefully we will then welcome a new group of teachers in The Hague. Thus we will make our network bigger so that the exchange of knowledge and experience will grow even more.

Mirjam



LET'S GET DIGITAL!

ME portal at edWeb

We have a slow trickle of members starting to participate on our portal and communities at edWeb: the Montessori Europe portal and communities for Secondary Education, Guidelenes and Research.

Also Jörg Boysen has recently started a new discussion thread at the portal. The first paragraphs of his opening statement are as follows:

'Digital technology and media are an integral part of the life of our children and adolescents. Digital educational offerings have already been introduced to most Montessori secondary schools, and to some primary and even elementary school classrooms. Parents expect Montessori educators to have constructive and intelligent answers to their use.

In Germany at least, public discussion of digital education policy is not visibly influenced by Montessori thought leaders. Rather, terms such as "Montessori 2.0" are used by third parties as a synonym for the possibilities of individualized learning with digital tools, without our involvement!

As far as I can see, our "pre-digital" Montessori educational concepts have not yet been systematically examined as to whether and how they should be adapted – in particular at the elementary and primary school levels – to

- the new technical possibilities;
- new scientific research on digital learning;
- the changed social environment.'

Would you like to read all of it? Then join our community and start participating.

<http://www.edweb.net/Communities/MontessoriEuropePortal>

ME WEBSITE

We have a new website coming as part of the strategy of the board to update our image somewhat. The building process does take a long time as all the steps have to be considered carefully. The board spent a long time in deciding about the 'map' of the website. Now we are waiting for the first proposals of a new design. Once we have approved the final design, the website will be built and then the next step is to provide content. This can partly be content that we have on our website now, but many parts will have to be rewritten. In short, a lot of work, but hopefully with some nice results. We expect to launch the new website in May.

EVALUATION BERLIN CONGRESS

We have selected edWeb (www.edweb.net) as our digital platform. edWeb was selected by 86 Participants filled in the online survey. On the whole, their evaluation was positive. The new formula, with more attention to structured opportunities to meet and interact, corresponds to the wishes of the respondents. There could even be more of this, for instance world café sessions for teachers of all age groups, discussion groups and so on.

Workshops are still considered as very important too. Most, but not all were evaluated positively. An emphasis on a practical approach is considered to be very important. Information before the congress should be more extensive: not just a short summary of the content, but also a biographical note and photo of the workshop leader.

Many suggestions were made on the programme, some contradictory: for example more lectures or fewer? For our next congress the board will try to implement some of the suggestions that were made. There will be world cafés for teachers of all age groups. Also we will bring the Saturday night dinner back, though perhaps in a slightly different form. We will also ask workshop leaders for more information and publish that before the congress. And we will follow up very practical suggestions like having badges with national flags. Finally, we would like to thank all those who filled in the survey.

THE HAGUE CONGRESS 3 TO 5 NOVEMBER 2017

Registration for the congress will open on May 1, with an Early Bird Discount until June 30. We will have a discount for ME members, Eastern Europe attendees and students.

As in previous years, we will have school visits on the Friday and Monday.