

Newsletter

November 2015



Montessori-Europe





Dear all,

First of all I would like to thank all the people who made the congress in Lublin a success. Thank you very much for all you did!

I am happy to inform you about the dates of the next congress in Berlin. The dates of the Montessori Europe Congress are October the 7th-9th 2016. Several meetings for the organization have been planned and we will inform you soon about the theme of the congress.

It is always nice to look ahead at new and exciting things, but it is also necessary to take time for reflection. As I told in the report of the year at the Annual General Meeting it was a heavy and difficult year for the board. This year the board will focus on the refreshing of the image of Montessori Europe. Concerning the congress it would be interesting to start with 'new items' on the program.

The newly installed working groups can be helpful for Montessori Europe. We hope that you feel the shared responsibility to create a European Montessori organization. If you have not signed in for a working group, do it now!

Mirjam Stefels,

President of Montessori Europe





<https://www.montessori-europe.com/lublin-main-speakers>



A NEWCOMER'S IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS

This was my first congress, so I was unsure what to expect. I came with my mum, Helen Prochazka from The Montessori Partnership, who was a speaker on Saturday. We had a table in the foyer to promote the business so part of my role was to introduce myself to other delegates as well as attending talks and workshops.

As such, this meant that I met a lot of people that I might not have otherwise encountered. I got a lovely impression of the variety of people who came. From teachers, parents and trainers to owners of schools and their staff as well as the more political people who are involved at the higher level, all strata of the Montessori world were there. What really struck me, was the welcoming attitude with which all delegates met each other and although I am as yet unqualified, I was made to feel very much part of the Montessori family.

We were treated to an evening of jazz music at Lublin Castle and museum. This along with a Sunday walking tour were a gift from the city of Lublin and showcased talent as well as beautiful architecture. The Gala Dinner held at the Hotel Victoria was the scene of dancing, merriment and beautiful desserts. The atmosphere was fantastic and allowed delegates to let their hair down after attending insightful talks and a huge variety of stimulating workshops that were held at the university.

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience of the Montessori Europe Congress and look forward to next year!



Miranda Robarts-Arnold

Partner in The Montessori Partnership



MONTESSORI CONGRESS 2015 IN LUBLIN

In my active time I was the chairman of the Austrian Montessori-Society and a member of the board of Montessori Europe (ME). In these functions I was involved in the organisation of a lot of Montessori meetings. During this year's congress I was asked me to write about my impressions.

This Montessori Congress started with an amusing musical performance presented by young children. The main program consisted of two offers: The lectures and the workshops. Four speakers from different countries presented scientific and practical aspects regarding to the topic of the congress "Montessori Education: The Child's Development in the Social Environment".

Experiences show that participants at ME Congresses are always a quite heterogeneous group. They come from different countries, vary in their knowledge of and experience with Montessori pedagogy. Some have passed relevant trainings on various levels, others have limited information about Montessori and her educational theory. Therefore it is always very difficult to offer a variety of workshops. But I am sure that at this congress every attendee found a suitable offer within the large selection of 20 workshops.

One of the aims of ME is to bring together European educators of different countries. The two events at the evenings on Thursday and Friday were opportunities for the nearly 200 participants to come into contact and exchange experiences with colleagues from other countries with perhaps quite different school systems.

At the "Annual General Meeting" (AGM) of the organisation Montessori Europe, the president Mirjam Stefels and other members of the board presented a new concept to give members of ME an opportunity working on projects together with other colleagues. Interested persons may choose from a number of "Working Groups" with different topics, in which new ideas can be discussed and new projects can be developed and perhaps realized. Hopefully ME is successful in finding active members who agree to take this opportunity of cooperation with persons of similar interests!

The venue (Hotel Victoria) was an ideal place with perfect technical equipment. I had never been in Lublin before and I was surprised by the historical atmosphere and by the beauty of the old city.

At the end of the Montessori Congress in Lublin 2015 I had the impression that this was a well-organized event with a demanding program at a special place.

Herbert Haberl

Austria

MONTESSORI EUROPE - ESTABLISHING THE WORKING GROUPS

We received some very positive feedback when we introduced the concept of our new working groups at our annual congress in Lublin, Poland.

It is our intention to harness this positive energy and use it to drive Montessori Europe towards its goals over the coming year and beyond! As we stated at the congress we are looking for passionate Montessorians who will be torch bearers for Montessori Europe's mission. Is this you?



If it is, then please sign up for a working group and be part of this new drive to help deepen our impact throughout Europe and to help unite all Montessorians under our mission.

Remember, these working groups will require some work from all their members. We cannot rely on only one or two members doing all the work as there is just too much to be done. If you are already overworked from the day job but would still like to contribute something small we will be introducing ways in which the broader membership can contribute to the working groups without having to be an active member of a group.





QUALITY AND STANDARDS – WORKING GROUP 5

Over the last year a very small group (Mirjam Stefels, Clare Healy-Walls and Helen Prochazka) were working on minimum criteria that Montessorians across Europe, regardless of training affiliation and geographical location, could sign up to as a first step towards developing more precise quality standards for Montessori schools and training in Europe.

The point of doing this is for Montessori Europe to have a clear statement of the criteria that underpin authentic Montessori practice in Europe, to present at national and pan-European government levels to support the Montessori community in its struggle for recognition and to protect its practice from the constant pressures to become more mainstream in order to attract funding, or even to be allowed to exist.

We envisage that arriving at a definitive statement of the quality criteria that underpin all authentic Montessori practice will be a lengthy process, because we have to develop the criteria in such a way that everyone can sign up to them and feel themselves to be part of the process of identifying quality. This is not something that can be imposed from the top down, and so over time there will be a gradual refinement of what is now very basic.

At the Congress in Lublin Helen presented Clare's power-point summary of the work completed so far.

The work for 2016 is twofold:

- to trial the criteria proposed as the basis for self-assessment of quality of both training providers and schools
- to enlarge the working group, to set up effective communications between us, and to take our work forward. The work will consist of evaluating how the trialling is progressing.

Enlarging the group

A number of people came forward and offered to join the group. Thank you for your enthusiasm, and we will be in touch shortly. If anyone else would like to be involved please e-mail mirjam-stefels@zonnet.nl asap so that we can start work soon.

Trialling the criteria

If you are interested in supporting this work by carrying out a self-assessment as either a training provider or a school, and including anyone who took a printed pro-forma of the self-evaluation immediately after Helen's presentation at the Congress, please e-mail mirjam-stefels@zonnet.nl to request a Word document version that you can fill in electronically and e-mail back.

Any questions – just contact the group at: mirjam-stefels@zonnet.nl

MONTESSORI EUROPE - FACEBOOK GROUP

Just a quick reminder that we are now operating a Facebook group. We are currently at about 121 members, but would like to grow this to include all our members who are on Facebook.

In the search bar in Facebook just type Montessori Europe and request to join our group.

We will be posting information on what is happening in the Montessori Europe world and Facebook is also a place for discussion amongst the members of the group. The more of you that come along and join us on Facebook, the more dynamic it will be.

Hopefully we will get to see you on Facebook as well as at our next congress.



FEEDBACK FORM



This year we changed the feedback form of the congress, which is now digital. All of you should by now have received it by email. In case you have not received it yet, please let us know so that we may forward it to you.

Your feedback, positive or negative, is important for our work in preparing for the next congress in Berlin. Share your ideas and suggestions with us and tell us what we should continue doing. Do you know a good speaker with an inspiring topic for our congress? Let us know!

We do hope that everyone will take the time to complete the feedback form. Thank you!

WORLD WIDE MAP BY MONTESSORI EUROPE IS LAUNCHED

The World Wide Map by Montessori Europe (WWMME) was launched recently. It is a networking tool that can be used by Montessori establishments and institutions around the globe. It provides information about Montessori pre-school establishments, primary and secondary schools, Montessori training institutes and associations including contact information.

WWMME is an open technical platform providing space for the presentation of every Montessori institution (establishment) around the globe.

Montessori Europe respects an open concept of Montessori pedagogy. There is no authority in the world authorized to grant permission to institutions to use the name "Montessori". It is the individual responsibility of every establishment to decide whether it meets the conditions to name itself "Montessori establishment".

Therefore any Montessori establishment for children, training institute and association can be displayed on WWMME.

WWMME is managed by Montessori Europe. Although there are no restrictions for being displayed on WWMME, ME reserves the right to eliminate data and/or information of an offensive nature, dissonant with the humanistic and peaceful fundament of the Montessori philosophy.

For information, questions, remarks, proposals or other communication related to WWMME, please contact wwmme@montessori-europe.com.

NOCME

In the NOCME meeting that was held during the congress the follow items were discussed:

- The membership of NOCME: the ME board will make a proposal on NOCME membership.
- The precise nature of the role of NOCME as advisory council to the board and network for national associations.

In the next few months the NOCME members will try to clarify this role by working on concrete tasks. The first will be to evaluate the ME declarations by

answering the following questions:

- Were they useful for the national organisation?
- Has the organisation used them?
- Any comments on the style and presentation?

The members also talked about various issues for which the sharing of documents and plans might be useful. Finally, the scope and use of the World Wide Montessori Map by Montessori Europe were discussed.

ME MEMBERSHIP FEES + MEMBERSHIP CLARIFICATION

The AGM accepted a new version of our Membership Terms & Conditions (www.montessori-europe.com/membership-conditions). Membership fees are unchanged, but our membership year has been unified to the ME Business Year (July 1 - June 30), with some transition provisions from the old monthly scheme.

We have sent out payment notices to all organisations and persons who we have registered as ME members. All of our other contacts will receive an email on this - if you consider yourself an ME member but have not received a payment notice, please contact the ME office.