

# Editorial

This issue of *Communications* has been long in the making, with preparations starting in 2010. We initially planned to devote one issue around the theme of the adolescent, but with the wealth of material available we soon decided that this would probably evolve into a double issue. Further down the road, the idea grew that it might be beneficial to create a comprehensive publication around the theme of adolescent education. There are various pertinent, hitherto unpublished, writings by Maria Montessori on the subject. Also we have seen, especially during this past few decades, many dedicated and inspired efforts to develop Montessori's ideas concerning the education of young people in the third plane of development and bring these into practice.

Undoubtedly, the efforts in the USA have had a leading role in this development, inspired by Mario Montessori and Mario Montessori Jr. as well as others from Europe, such as Camillo Grazzini, Baiba Krumins-Grazzini, Renilde Montessori, and Peter Gebhardt-Seele, who revived the Erdkinder model. Two noteworthy schools, the Hershey Montessori School Adolescent Program on the Farm (ages 12-15) and the Montessori High School at University Circle (age 15-18) are within the framework of this development of particular importance as testing grounds for Montessori adolescent principles of theory into practice. The programme "Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies" that each year is being organized by the North American Montessori Teachers' Association was reviewed by AMI and in 2010 both parties signed an agreement to collaborate on this orientation programme. AMI currently has recognized NAMTA as its primary source for Adolescent research and teacher prepara-

tion for ages 12-18 years of age.

During many years the driving force in the realization of Montessori adolescent education programmes has been the American expert David Kahn, who, together with Laurie Ewert-Krocker, founded the Hershey Montessori Farm School. For all questions on the subject of adolescence Mr Kahn is an internationally well known and highly valued expert, adviser, speaker and author. We are therefore delighted to have secured his collaboration as a guest editor on this issue of *Communications*. Many aspects of this publication rely heavily on his initiatives and the work of his team. In an article serving as introduction to this issue, David shares his vast knowledge on the subject and offers us a glimpse into the ideas of Maria Montessori on adolescent education and how these developed over the years. His leading principle is that he lets himself be guided by the primary texts on the topic by Maria Montessori that are included, in chronological order, in this issue, and substantiates his arguments with experiences from the Montessori lab schools in the USA.

It is not always easy to interpret unequivocally the development of Montessori's concept of adolescent education and the contemporary sources that influenced her thinking. There is very little material where Montessori herself expands on those aspects. Too many documents have not yet been consulted sufficiently and analysed, necessitating further research. Hopefully, *Communications* will stimulate that work. We are confident that as early as in 1920 Montessori entertained certain ideas about a secondary schooling programme, as evidenced in her letter to Augusto Osimo, included in this issue. It is, however, doubtful whether she presented ideas in that vein during her

lectures at the University of Amsterdam, as Rita Kramer asserts in her biography of Montessori's.<sup>1</sup> The Amsterdam lectures of January 26 and 28 January 1920 to which Kramer refers rather deal with the usual aspects of her basic ideas on pedagogy for the young child, without any references to adolescent education.<sup>2</sup>

However, a letter Montessori wrote to the London Times on 12 February 1920, cited by Kramer, states that the University of Amsterdam had expressed willingness to cooperate with her and a few scholars had expressly stated that they wanted to further develop Montessori's work along the principles of the university. This was even followed up with a written agreement between Montessori and the university.<sup>3</sup> This corresponded with Montessori's ideas of having a scientifically based educational and schooling programme according to her principles. In her second major pedagogical work of 1916 she wrote,

The highest external organisation is not based solely upon psychological necessities, but also upon those factors which take into account the cultural aspect itself. Each subject of study, as, for instance, arithmetic, grammar, geometry, natural science, music, literature, should be presented by means of external objects upon a well-defined systematic plan. The essentially psychological character of the preliminary work must now be supplemented by the *collaboration of specialists* in each subject, in order to ensure the establishment of that *aggregate of means necessary and sufficient to incite to auto-education*.<sup>4</sup>

Most certainly what was being described here is the further development of the teaching work related to the single subjects for the primary school (until 12 years) (\*elementary school in the American school system).

Her efforts to further develop the primary school programme received prominent attention in her publications and lectures in the 1920s, whilst she continued to also extend her thoughts on early childhood.<sup>5</sup> This is substantiated by a 1922 article in the Dutch magazine *Montessori Opvoeding* reporting on Montessori's school visits and travels.<sup>6</sup> On the occasion of her visit to Amsterdam the teachers of the Montessori school enquire about the elaboration of the method for the subjects Geography, History, Physics, etc.<sup>7</sup> The report summarizes Montessori's answer as follows:

It then transpired that our ideas of being able to develop together with experts all these subjects at all schools according to Dr Montessori's instructions was not correct. Montessori already has very clearly outlined ideas, according to her assistant Miss Pyle and as can be gathered from various accounts given to us by Dr Montessori herself, just as surprising in their originality and ingenuity as the reform of the subjects she has thus far undertaken. She has filled many notebooks with her ideas on the subject, which unfortunately have not been further developed because Montessori has not had the time to do so due to her extensive travelling and lecturing on the one hand, and because she has not found collaborators she deems capable enough to further develop her ideas (or the right local conditions) on the other.<sup>8</sup>

Subsequently the article lists names of Montessori collaborators whom she had asked to do further work on the materials for certain subjects.<sup>9</sup> During the 20th international training course in Nice, 1934, when she offered for the first time a special course for secondary school teachers, Montessori also employed this focus on subjects for the teaching in secondary (middle) schools.

A report on this interesting course, published in Italy and based on the information supplied by the countess Hélène Lubienska, who was closely involved in the organization of this course, is included in this issue of *Communications* with the title “Impressions from Maria Montessori’s XX International Course, Nice, France, July-September, 1934”.

Meanwhile, the parents of pupils of the Montessori primary school in Amsterdam had been urging Dr Montessori, as early as the 1920s, to make it possible for their children to continue their Montessori education at secondary school. In 1926 the first group of pupils to finish their Montessori primary school had to transfer to a traditional secondary school, having to take a special exam in order to be admitted.<sup>10</sup> Although the Montessori pupils did very well in these exams, the exam requirements had a limiting effect on the school’s freedom during the last year. Consequently, 1928 saw a meeting of interested parents and specialists who decided to found a Montessori secondary school: on 10 September 1930 the school was established under the name Montessori Lyceum.<sup>11</sup> In 2010 the oldest Montessori secondary school celebrated its 80th anniversary. In his article, Wiebe Brouwer, today’s principal of the Lyceum, sketches the history and the principles that guide the school’s current pedagogy. His article also demonstrates that by the late 1920s Montessori’s thinking on secondary education had not yet been sufficiently fleshed out, which meant that she could not suitably support the work of the school. Nevertheless, during a 1932 visit to the school, which had based its approach on the work with the primary children, Montessori praised the efforts. In France, as described by Grazia Honegger Fresco, in her book review, a Montessori secondary school was established in 1931 near Paris, in Sèvres, which, however, with the onset of the Sec-

ond World War came to an end.<sup>12</sup>

Apparently, Montessori’s ideas at the time were much directed at a radically different set-up of secondary education. Originally Montessori had been thinking of further expanding the free work periods guided by the materials, as was common in the primary school. Mr Brouwer writes that in 1929 Montessori promised a delegation of Montessori parents from Amsterdam that had travelled especially to London ‘to develop materials for children in the 12-18 age range’. When the following year, for the same reason, the school principal Miss Osterkamp travelled to Rome at her own initiative, returning empty-handed to Amsterdam, she once more repeated her promise ‘to produce material for certain subjects: for history, geography and Latin’.

In 1932, the year when Montessori’s visit to the Amsterdam Montessori Lyceum finally took place, she published a lecture in the magazine *New Era*, the journal of the New Education Fellowship (later known as World Education Fellowship) founded in 1921 in Calais, in which she outlines her further ideas on a radically different type of education during adolescence, particularly puberty. She points out that children who have enjoyed Montessori education until they are twelve, have reached a level of education generally expected of fifteen-year-olds. Under the title *Let them Leave their Narrow Homes* she writes:

I am going to plead for something that may seem strange to you, but which seems to me not only fine but essential: the child should have a holiday for the three years he has saved. This will coincide with the age of physical development, of puberty. The child whose chief mission should be to develop his own integrated individuality stands at the threshold of adult life. I should like to see children

leave their narrow homes and go into the hills or to the sea, or into the country, where they will be in touch with nature and learn some practical trade. Here they can meditate and their innate sense of justice and of life will blossom tranquilly under ordered labour and this natural existence. Under such conditions humanity will attain a state of freedom and kindness in which it will sense the answers to many questions which seem to us obscure and difficult. I can imagine these children returning to their formal studies when they are sixteen, feeling that they understand something of life and have achieved a sense of direction.<sup>13</sup>

A little later, in 1934, the Montessori scholar Claude A. Claremont picks up this vision of Montessori's in an enthusiastic article and writes: 'Surveying all this I say to myself: "Here we have a many-sided, a tangible message; something to do, not just a word; a path of deliverance in which the humility and constancy of action will be sufficient"'.<sup>14</sup>

Montessori develops her new views of adolescent education under the influence of experiences gained in the 1920s and 1930s with the schools of New Education. At least since 1929 she worked together with reform pedagogues from all over the world that were connected with the New Education Fellowship.<sup>15</sup> We know, for instance, that she had contacts with the famous German reform pedagogue Peter Petersen, whose Jenaplan school for six to sixteen-year-old boys and girls shows many similarities to a Montessori school.<sup>16</sup> Particularly the *Landerziehungsheimbewegung*, widespread in Germany, founded in 1898 by Herman Lietz and inspired also by English models, not only had a great influence on Petersen's concept of school, but very likely also on Montessori's ideas of creating a school on the land.

Devan Barker in his contribution "A Historical Look on Montessori's Erdkinder" in this publication has further explored these connections. He assumes that Montessori was familiar in particular with the Odenwaldschule founded by Paul Geheeb in 1910. What makes this assumption probable is that Paul Geheeb joined the work of the New Education Fellowship congresses early on.<sup>17</sup> Whether Montessori personally visited the Odenwaldschule cannot be established for certain, but we cannot rule it out either.

After the First World War, Montessori found herself frequently in Germany, also for longer periods on the occasion of lecture tours and training courses, especially in Berlin, where she may very well have visited local reform schools, for instance the Gartenschule, as indicated by Barker in his article, but especially the farm school established as a boarding school for boys in 1922 by the pedagogue Wilhelm Blume (1884-1970) on the island Scharfenberg in Lake Tegel (Berlin). At "Scharfenberg" pedagogical cohesion was formed by offering classroom instruction and extracurricular activities to the students, of which the agricultural production was a major part, which is also so characteristic of Montessori's Erdkinder environment.<sup>18</sup>

Montessori's Erdkinderplan is in places explicitly inspired by aspects of English boarding schools. Against the backdrop of various influences Montessori proceeded to develop an independent, original concept for adolescent education, on which she elaborated in more detail for the first time in 1936 in her Oxford lectures, to be published in English in 1939. A crucial element is that Montessori at this stage does not envisage a straightforward continuation of independent work with the primary materials but that she proposes new educational concepts extending to life, work and learning.

In a lecture in Amersfoort late 1936 she states:

Once the child has passed the age appropriate to his formation as an individual he needs to devote himself to the formation of his personality, and if secondary education is set up along the very same lines as this first level, it goes against nature. The level of education must be changed at this point. The adolescent's social formation must now begin, and the individual must be given social experience. (*Education and Peace*, 1972, 109) <sup>20</sup>

Along the same lines Montessori explicated about the transition from the Children's House to primary school.<sup>21</sup> She often uses the term *metamorphosis* when referring to such changes.<sup>22</sup> Apart from these, aspects of continuity also apply to this development. Part of continuity is foremost the human personality, but also the goals of education in all stages of development which can be understood as a 'help given in order that the human personality may achieve its independence'.<sup>23</sup>

Certain principles of education continue to be valid: 'it is essential for the child, in all periods of his life, to have the possibility of activities carried out by himself in order to preserve the equilibrium between acting and thinking'.<sup>24</sup> The form in which such activities are offered can certainly vary. During adolescence they are different from those during the years six to twelve.

David Kahn ("Eight Pictures at an Exhibition"), Clara Tornar ("The Secret of Adolescence"), Laurie Ewert-Krockner ("Montessori's Plan of Work and Study: An Explication") and Jenny Höglund ("Valorization") all offer helpful insights on how to interpret the "Erdkinderplan". Since Montessori put forth her opinion, as early as in 1920, in her letter to Osimo, that a valid concept for a school

for adolescents would not work unless a link with practical reality were created, we can assume that she wished to test, concretize and further develop her ideas by using lab schools. The fact that many European countries were under the rule of dictators, and that the Second World War was about to break out, prevented the realization of such plans. Also the publication of her Erdkinderplan in Dutch (1940) and French (1948) failed to have much of an impact.

The development of Montessori secondary schools after the Second World War rather followed the path taken by the Montessori lyceum of Amsterdam. Although the lyceum's principal, Miss Osterkamp, had learnt about Montessori's Erdkinder concept by the mid 1930s, as Wiebe Brouwer reports in his contribution, she considered its realization a utopia. In 1950 Montessori herself had not considered conditions for the realization very favourable, requesting a report on the work of the Amsterdam lyceum. As a matter of fact, Montessori included the following passage in the last book that was published during her life time.

In Holland, there are five Montessori Lycea, the results of which have been so satisfactory that the Dutch Government has not only granted them subsidies, but has given them the same recognition and independence as the other recognized Lycea. In Paris I saw a private Montessori Lyceum where the students were more independent in character and less scared of examinations than in other French Lycea...<sup>25</sup>

It appears then that Montessori did consider the secondary schools that followed those lines as taking steps in the right direction, even when they did not follow the more revolutionary concept of the Erdkinderplan.

The years after the Second World War saw



the establishment of several new Montessori lyceums in the Netherlands. In the article by Herman J. Jordan he describes the early stages of such a new school, its development and the principles guiding their work. In Germany, the secondary schools initially followed the Dutch examples but later developed independently. At present there are some eighty Montessori secondary schools in Germany that take their inspiration, each in their own way, from Montessori's ideas. Representatives from different Montessori organizations in Germany have formed a special secondary school working group in which they work together on the possibilities of implementing Montessori's ideas within the conditions laid down by the German school system. Especially during the last ten years, important developments have been realized.<sup>26</sup> And in Italy as well there have been initiatives during the past ten years to create secondary schools along Montessori principles. Monica Salassa reports on this development in her article "Montessori High Schools in Italy".

In addition to these articles that have a rather historical orientation, we have a number of contributions that describe present-day opportunities for translating the Montessori ideas on adolescent education into practice. These are by Laurie Ewert-Krocker ("The Dialogue Between Nature and Supernature"), Larry and Kris Schaefer ("The Montessori Land School") and Guadalupe Borbolla ("General Baccalaureate at the Montessori of Tepoztlan School, Mexico", complemented by two concise reports from two Montessori students from Mexico).

To conclude this issue of *Communications*, Grazia Honegger Fresco reviews the Italian edition of Montessori's work *From Childhood to Adolescence* [dall'Infanzia all'adolescenza] with notes and commentary by Clara Tornar, which is the first critical edition of this title.

For this issue of *Communications* a fifty page international bibliography on Montessori adolescent education was compiled, of which we are able to include only the list of primary, published sources. We will, however, make available to our readership a complete digital bibliography. We thank all who helped to compile this Montessori adolescent bibliography, especially Renée Pendleton, to whom we owe the detailed bibliography of English language publications.

Montessori was aware that her ideas on the education of the adolescence did not yet present a completely and perfectly worked out plan. For her it was a point of departure, handing the tools to start, requiring, however, further development both in theory and practice. In her last work published work (1949) the following observation almost reads like a legacy: 'It is not necessary that the whole work of research be accomplished. It is enough that the idea be understood and the work be taken in hand following its indications.'<sup>27</sup>

Evidence that Montessori's thinking on the secondary school is still topical is shown by the position taken by the well-known education specialist and psychologist Helmut Fend.<sup>28</sup> In 2000, he published a comprehensive compendium on developmental psychology during the adolescent years. Based on the state of current international research on the subject of developmental psychology, he concludes his work by describing the essential characteristics that a modern school for adolescents should have. Quite surprisingly, although by no means a Montessori expert, he introduces as an example of such a school Montessori's *Erdkinderplan*.<sup>29</sup> It will thus be worth the effort, in view of the current state of knowledge of adolescent development, to do extended work both theoretically and practically along the "tracks" set out by Montes-

sori, and we hope that this current issue of *Communications* will stimulate that effort. We would like to thank everyone who has helped in the creation of this issue and also you, dear reader, for your patience as this title has taken so long to reach you.

Harald Ludwig

## NOTES

- 1 Kramer, Rita, *Maria Montessori—Leben und Werk einer großen Frau*, Chapter 17, München 1977, p. 257.
- 2 See Montessori, Maria, Lectures on 26 and 28 January 1920, in *Montessori Opvoeding* 3 (1920), no.3 (January 31, 1920), pp. 17-22 (stenographical notes translated into Dutch) and no.4 (February 14, 1920), pp. 25-27 (non stenographed summary and overview, in Dutch, of the content of Montessori's presentation based on the notes of various people in the audience).
- 3 Kramer, 1977, p. 257. Evidence of this collaboration came a little later with the multilingual Montessori Journal *The Call of Education*, which was published by Maria Montessori in cooperation with the Amsterdam professors Dr Géza Révész and Dr J.C.L. Godefroy, supported by an international advisory board, in 1924 and 1925.
- 4 Montessori, Maria, *The Advanced Montessori Method*, vol. 1, Madras 1988, p. 70 (first Italian edition 1916).
- 5 See Montessori, Maria, *Das Kind in der Familie*, Vienna, 1926 (German translation of a series of French lectures delivered by Maria Montessori in Brussels in 1922). New German edition: *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7, (Freiburg: Herder, 2011); see also the thoroughly re-edited third Italian edition of her 1909 title *Il Metodo...*, Rome 1926, as well as the considerably edited and enlarged second Italian edition of her 1914 Handbook (Naples, 1930). Please also refer to the review of the new Italian critical edition of Montessori's title *From Childhood to Adolescence* by Grazia Honnegger Fresco in this issue of *Communications*.
- 6 Godefroy-van Mill, M.R., Bezoek van Dr. Montessori aan Amsterdam, Brussel en Berlijn en iets over de beweging in andere landen, [Visit of Dr Montessori to Amsterdam, Brussels and Berlin and something about the movement in other countries] in *Montessori Opvoeding* 5 (1922), no. 23 (December 30, 1922), pp. 180-185.
- 7 In the second volume of her 1916 work Montessori proposed a basis for practical work in the primary school. Montessori, Maria, *The Advanced Montessori Method*, vol. II: *The Montessori Elementary Material* (Madras, 1996) (first Italian edition 1916).
- 8 Godefroy-van Mill (see note 6), p. 181.
- 9 Ibid., pp. 181/182: Montessori herself had created in Barcelona didactic materials for Physics and History, with local collaborators working together with an important geography museum on geography, Prof. Bertolini from the University of Bologna for Mathematics, Mr Portielje in connection with the Amsterdam Zoo for Biology. Dr M. Révész-Alexander had promised her help in the field of the arts, and Dr Godefroy for the introduction to working with clay.
- 10 The information given by Rita Kramer (Maria Montessori, München 1977, Chapter 19, p. 283), that parents of the students of the Amsterdam Montessori primary school had established a secondary school along Montessori principles in 1926 is not accurate. See R. Joosten-Chotzen in the commemorative issue dedicated to Anna Maria Maccheroni (*Communications* 3, 1966, p. 23 ff).
- 11 Jordan, Herman Julius, "Was ist ein Montessori-Lyzeum?" In *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Montessori-Gesellschaft* 1/1958, pp. 1-4.

- 12 Montessori visited this school before the Second World War and had expressed her appreciation for the work carried out there, Montessori, Maria, *The Formation of Man* (Madras, 1991) p. 19.
- 13 Montessori, Maria, "Disarmament in Education", in *The New Era* 13 (1932), pp. 257-259; quotation from p. 259.
- 14 Claremont, Claude A., "The Light that Burns not Dim", in *Montessori Notes* I (1934), no.2 (March), pp. 13-14; quote from p. 14.
- 15 See proceedings of the fifth Congress of the New Education Fellowship (N.E.F.), in August 1929 in Elsinore (Denmark): *Towards a New Education*, ed. for the N.E.F. by William Boyd (London/New York, 1930) with contributions by Maria Montessori. As of which date Montessori attended the congresses of the N.E.F. that were organized biannually since 1921 is not precisely known. She does not appear to have been present on the occasion of the founding meeting in Calais in 1921. To date there is no evidence that corroborates the assertion by Rita Kramer (Maria Montessori, München 1977, Chapter 19, p. 288). The same observation would apply to the other congresses of the N.E.F.: Montessori's participation in 1923 in Montreux, 1925, in Heidelberg, or in 1927 in Locarno cannot be substantiated. We are however, certain that Montessori, apart from the 1929 Elsinore Congress, had participated also in the 1932 Nice (France) Congress. Both events featured parallel International Montessori Congresses.
- 16 See Ludwig, Harald, "Peter Petersen und Maria Montessori" in *Montessori-Werkbrief* 28 (1990), no. 1/2, pp. 34-60; Klein-Landeck, Michael, "Freie Arbeit bei Maria Montessori und Peter Petersen" (Muenster, 1998—fifth edition 2009). Petersen held the chair for Erziehungswissenschaft (Pedagogy) at the University of Jena. In the school attached to the university he let a mixed age group of six to eight-year-olds work freely with the Montessori materials. He also supported the set-up of the first German Montessori primary classroom in Jena, led by E. Glueckselig.
- 17 Geheeb also was a participant at the N.E.F. 1929 Elsinore und 1932 Nice Congresses, which demonstrably were attended by Montessori.
- 18 See Haubfleisch, Dietmar, "Schulfarm Insel Scharfenberg, Teil 1 und 2" (Frankfurt a. M.: 2001) (Dissertation, University of Marburg, 1999).
- 19 This reference applies to the transition from the primary school to the secondary school.
- 20 Montessori, Maria, *Frieden und Erziehung*, [Peace and Education] (Freiburg, 1973) p. 62. Reference to the third lecture delivered in Amersfoort, dated 30 December 1936, entitled "L'éducation de l'individualité" of which AMI holds a French manuscript, (E 8). It concerns a shift in emphasis of the questions of education.
- 21 Montessori, Maria, *From Childhood to Adolescence* (Madras, p. 4) 'The principles that can be applied usefully to the first period are not the same as those that must be applied to the second.'
- 22 Ibid., p. 5 and 9.
- 23 Montessori, Maria, *The Formation of Man* (Madras, 1991) p. 6 (original in Italian, 1949).
- 24 Montessori, Maria, *From Childhood to Adolescence* (Madras) p. 24 ff.
- 25 Montessori, Maria, *The Formation of Man* (Madras, 1991) p. 3.
- 26 For the latest state of knowledge and research in Germany, see the last special issues of the leading German Montessori journals on Montessori adolescent education: *MONTESSORI – Zeitschrift für Montessori-Pädagogik* [Journal for Montessori Education] 48 (2010), nos. 1 and 2; *DAS KIND* [The Child] 38/2005; 39/2006; 42/2007.
- 27 Montessori Maria, *The Formation of Man* (Madras, 1991) p. 19.



28 Helmut Fend (1940) is professor emeritus of Pedagogical Psychology at the University of Zuerich, Switzerland, since 1987. In the 1970s, when he worked at the University of Konstanz, he was responsible for the empirical research on Comprehensive Schools in Germany.

29 Vgl. Fend, Helmut, *Entwicklungspsychologie des Jugendalters* [Developmental Psychology in the Adolescent Years] (Opladen, 2000) p. 468 ff.