



## Editor's Note

*Since our inaugural newsletter in July 2017, so much has happened in our group. Indeed, our 'group' has morphed into a fully-fledged AMI affiliated society, the Foundation has been formally launched in Nigeria and we have facilitated the first AMI certificate course in Nigeria. We have entered into agreements with Heutink Limited and Montessori Pierson Publishing Company to sell their products and books at a discount to registered members of the Foundation.*

*In the coming few months, the outreach arm of the Foundation will be embarking on life changing seminars targeted at supporting mothers of children under 3 years old. The next year promises to be quite exciting for spreading Montessori in Nigeria as plans are underway for more training opportunities in Nigeria, the Aid to Life program offering more seminars within and outside Lagos State and a book club to further engage Montessori teachers.*

*In this newsletter, we have included a refreshing testimony of a mother's efforts at applying the Montessori philosophy to her children at home, an article about encouraging independence in the Children's House, what Montessori guides expect of children who are transitioning from the Children's House to the Elementary environment and thoughts of a Montessorian on Constancy and Consistency.*

*This is a good time for Montessori in Nigeria and we look forward to you joining hands with us as we work towards our goal.*

September 2018

## MONTESSORI BOOKS & MATERIALS



Are you tired of materials that don't meet the AMI recommendations? Are you fed up with materials that don't last and have to be

replaced over and over? You need not worry again. This is the opportunity you have all been waiting for. We are offering an amazing 30% discount on materials from Neinhuis Montessori. These materials last a lifetime. Hurry whilst stock lasts! We are taking orders from the second week of September.



## Book Sale:

We are selling Maria Montessori's books at a 20% discount. Bulk orders are welcome.

Contact: **Ajoke David** – [membership@fmen.org.ng](mailto:membership@fmen.org.ng)



## My Montessori Journey

*Oyin Akinlotan*

I will never forget that moment I heard about



Montessori from my daughter's pre-nursery school teacher. There and then, my journey as a Montessori mum started.

It was one that actually started slowly but got me yearning for more as I continued to swim across

the pool of information available on Internet. Lots of oh and wow moments made me conclude early that, it is the best humane way of parenting and teaching which no child should be deprived of (wanted that for me as a child).

As a mum of two preschoolers, all I could see was them showing and telling me "Help me do it myself" in everything they do from waking up to getting back to bed. Never knew that preparing an environment with their individual needs in mind can really showcase discipline, independence and sense of order at their age. Being committed and calm enough (latter can be difficult) to give extra time and support when it's time to shower, dress up, clean up as well as eat, encourages them to blossom like a little bud ready to show off its petals. Of course, it was always easier and faster to just pull, push and drag them through all these daily events without my conscience poking me, but the level at which they focus, and express pure satisfaction made me eager and willing to commit more.

Prep time for meals became messier and longer as they learnt to scrub carrots and potatoes, use real knives and wash grains. I soon discovered all they needed was an adult to show them how. I remember getting a carpenter to make a step stool wide enough to use during dish washing escapades. Introducing my girls to breakable cups and plates was also easier than I imagined after watching videos of toddlers in action. Although I cannot count the ones I had broken in my adult life.

As it wasn't unusual for them to get bored of their toys easily, several activities that grabs attention and inspires them enough to do it over and over became a hit in my home. From sorting exercises using raw grains like corn, beans and rice, colored buttons, dyed and regular matchsticks, colored spoons, stacking up measuring cups and drinking cups to pouring water through funnel into clear bottles. We hardly run out of our work (play) to-do list which gradually reduced tv time (Barney and friends).

Relaxing a bit and allowing them make mistakes and learn to do it right on their own made a lot of difference. Although it gets frustrating when they are struggling to get something right, I simply offer support and help when necessary.

As I look back to those years, I wish it had been Montessori from birth. Now ten and eight years respectively, and attending traditional elementary school, Montessori is still a major part of our family. Supporting them with Montessori principles gives them a broader picture of life and the total essence of mankind. There is no way one will think of a whole child without thanking God for the life and work of Maria Montessori.

***Oyin is a mother of two children and is passionate about the Montessori method of child development.***

### QUIZ

Maria Montessori was originally a.....

- a. doctor b. teacher c. psychiatrist d. engineer

Maria Montessori was born in .....

- a. 1952 b. 1929 c. 1870 d. 1907

Maria Montessori's child's was called.....

- a. Renilde b. Marie c. Henry d. Mario

Maria Montessori's first book was called.....

- a. The Secret of Childhood  
b. The Absorbent Mind  
c. The Montessori Method  
d. The Formation of Man

Maria Montessori's first course had how many students...

- a. About 70 b. About 100 c. About 200 d. About 50

**Answers on page 4**

## Independence in the Children's House

**Bimpe Pogson**

### Dr Montessori's take

Over a hundred years ago, Dr Montessori put forward the importance of independence in the child aged under 6 based on her years of observing these children and how they responded.



She said:

*"At birth, the child leaves a person – his mother's womb – and this makes him independent of her bodily functions. The baby is next endowed with an urge, or need, to face the out world and to absorb it. We might say that he is born with 'the psychology of world conquest.' By absorbing what he finds about him, he forms his own personality." (Dr Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind)*



Dr Montessori is saying here that the child has a natural desire to be independent and to an extent what is in his environment will contribute to developing his personality. The tangible and intangible aspects of the Montessori Children's House encourage independence.

### Tangible and Intangible Aspects of the Environment

In the Children's House, the size of the furniture and materials are such that the children can easily access and use them. There are tangible controls in the materials that help the child realise when they have made a mistake without having an adult point this out. The materials are real, attractive and functional to make the children desire to touch and work with them independently. They are also placed from simple to complex so that the child gradually increases their skills and understanding.

The practical life activities which are the first activities children get introduced to in the Montessori Children's House are vital as they help the children master their movements, increase their focus and attention to activities, help them realise that they can carry out tasks by themselves and also they learn a particular skill. These activities lay the foundation for other areas of our Montessori curriculum.



The intangible aspects are as important as the tangible aspects of the Children's House. The one-to-one presentations given to children give them the possibility to make their own independent choices based on their interest. Each presentation is given as a full cycle and so the child sees how to start and finish an activity independently. The naming games and the verbal grace and courtesy groups equip each child with words to express their thoughts and wishes as they interact with other members of the Children's House community. The trained adults in the environment understand the desire in the child to be independent and thus sometimes have to hold back in circumstances when they see the children facing challenges with some materials they know a child has the ability to complete. Nothing beats an 'I DID IT!' moment.

I will conclude with Dr Montessori's quote:  
*"The children of three years of age in the "Children's Houses" learn and carry out such work as sweeping, dusting, making things tidy, setting the table for meals, waiting at table, washing the dishes, etc ., and*

*at the same time they learn to attend to their own personal needs, to wash themselves, to take showers, to comb their hair, to take a bath, to dress and undress themselves, to hang up their clothes in the wardrobe, or to put them in drawers, to polish their shoes . These exercises are part of the method of education, and do not depend on the social position of the pupils; even in the "Children's Houses" attended by rich children who are given every kind of assistance at home, and who are accustomed to being surrounded by a crowd of servants, take part in the exercises of practical life. This has a truly educational, not utilitarian purpose. The reaction of the children may be described as a "burst of independence" of all unnecessary assistance that suppresses their activity and prevents them from demonstrating their own capacities. It is just – these "independent" children of ours who learn to write at the age of four and a half years, who learn to read spontaneously, and who amaze everyone by their progress in arithmetic."* (Dr Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence)

**Bimpe Pogoson is a trainer-in-training at the Maria Montessori Institute in London.**

*The material for development is necessary only as a starting point. The material part does not contain the impress of the whole soul, anymore than the impress of the foot is the impress of the whole body.*



Dr Maria Montessori, *Advanced Montessori Methods, Volume 1*, Clío Press

## Transitioning to the Elementary Class

### Banke Faloye

When a child is approaching the end of the first plane of development, there are certain aspects worth taking note of in order to help the child transition



smoothly into the second plane. Some key questions to ask while deciding whether a child is ready to transition into the elementary include;

1. Does the child make independent work choices? Is work chosen by the child completed and returned to the shelf in a state that's ready for another to use? Is the child regularly working in all areas of the classroom?
2. Is the child able to communicate clearly, his or her needs to both adults and other children in the classroom?
3. Is the child at ease in company, that is, can they participate, contribute and receive? The child should have a heightened sense of social responsibility.
4. Does the child demonstrate appropriate behaviours and actions in the classroom consistently? Is the child able to make a choice, focus and persevere? Is the child self-disciplined?
5. Are age appropriate choices being made by the child in the classroom?
6. Does the child show a love for learning? Does the child have the ability to interrogate – ask 'why' questions?
7. Does the child demonstrate characteristics that are signs of changing planes of development?
8. Has the child been shown, and has worked with all the exercises in the Practical Life and Sensorial subject areas?
9. Has the child seen all the four math operations with the collective exercises (and this should include long division)? Has the child a good foundation in memorising the essential number combinations with the four operations?
10. Is the child reading independently, and is able to choose appropriate language activities in writing as well as reading? With writing, is the child using forming letters, spacing words, placing words on lines and using punctuations?

**Banke Faloye is trained at the 3-6 and 6-12 levels. She is the Elementary Guide at Ecole Montessori, Casablanca.**



*Answers to Quiz: Teacher, 1870, Mario, The Montessori Method, About 100*

**Please email questions or comments on any of the articles to [info@fmen.org.ng](mailto:info@fmen.org.ng)**

*And CONGRATULATIONS again*



Our very own Tope Sanusi being congratulated by Ann Dunne (AMI 6-12 Director of Training) at the 6-12 Graduation Ceremony in September 2018 at the Maria Montessori Institute, London. Looking on are Alison Awes (L)(AMI 6-12 trainer) and Lynne Lawrence (R) (AMI Executive Director)

## Montessori Musings

### **Constancy and Consistency - Christine Laubin**

*I have just been reflecting on the importance of modelling 'constancy of emotion' for children of all ages! I like the term constancy perhaps a little more than consistency.*  
*Constancy like consistency, but for me more interesting.*  
*Holding an element of commitment of the heart.*  
*a 'willing the good of another'.*  
*constancy of presence.*  
*The adult in the Infant Community (IC) engaging in the practice of being present to the children and what is going on now, in this moment.*  
*Maintaining a purity and clarity of presence - emptying of everything to do with your own life, to create a clear space.*  
*Constancy of emotion for the child in the IC - constancy of care; and care for you, a caring unconditionally - all these invisibles in the Nido, IC, Casa, etc. etc. but which build up the atmosphere, security, community cohesion of these human environments.*  
*constancy of encouragement*  
*constancy of observation*  
*constancy of emotional equilibrium (as much as possible!)*  
*constancy of enabling....helping the child to choose, to be active.*  
**Christine is a member of the Maria Montessori Institute's board, a fine art business partner and a Montessori pedagogue**



### Dates to take note of

In partnership with Lagos State Government, we plan to hold our first set of parents' training, our Outreach initiative, from Monday - Wednesday, 24 - 26 September 2018 at the Agege Local



Government Education Authority Hall, Dairy Farm School, Agege, Lagos. The participants, parents to children aged 18 months and below, will attend 8 hours of training focused on learning how to support their child's development at home in 4 areas; Movement, Communication, Independence and Self-Discipline.

**Yinka Awobo-Pearse – Treasurer and Aid to Life Coordinator**  
[treasurer@fmen.org.ng](mailto:treasurer@fmen.org.ng)

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

FMEN is happy to introduce the first in its series of Seminars geared towards Professional Development and facilitating greater awareness of the Montessori Approach in Nigeria.

Our maiden Seminar is scheduled Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November and the topic is 'Parent Awareness- Taking Parents Along the Journey'. It is geared towards providing ideas on how Montessori School Owners and Practitioners can most effectively and successfully keep Parents abreast of how their child is learning and ways they can continue to support their development at home. It will highlight championing partnership between School and Home in the best interest of the child and specifically highlight how Montessori meets all early year's childhood developmental goals. The Seminar is to be held at The Libra House Montessori School Ikoyi and will be run by its owner, Bola Benson.

The Seminar is open to all interested in the Montessori Approach whilst being of particular interest to Montessori School Owners. We trust this will be a successful kick off to FMEN's on-going Seminar Program and continue to support Maria Montessori's Legacy in Nigeria.  
BOLA BENSON – [adviser@fmen.org.ng](mailto:adviser@fmen.org.ng)

### MONTESSORI MANIA

#### *Introducing the Montessori Teachers Book Club.*

Montessori Mania is an initiative of the Foundation for Montessori Education in Nigeria. It is being set up to support and inspire Montessori teachers in Nigeria.

Our aim is simply to read Dr Maria Montessori's books and share ideas, this way our knowledge and work with the children will continue to grow and we can draw on each other's experiences.

We hope to start with *The Secret of Childhood*. Free copies will be made available to teachers who are interested and do not have the books. Kindly email [secretary@fmen.org.ng](mailto:secretary@fmen.org.ng) or send a WhatsApp message to 08022910366 for your free copies.

Please note that we had initially ear marked August for our start date. But the general agreement from interested teachers was that they would like to enjoy their holidays. Our new start date will be October. After we have launched our Aid to Life project.

A WhatsApp group will be set up for this book club.

Please visit our Facebook page for more information.  
[Facebook.com/fmen1](https://www.facebook.com/fmen1)

Text to read will be announced on Fridays, usually 2 to 3 pages. Sharing will be done on Wednesday and Fridays 8-9 pm. Join the conversation

Please pass this message on to anyone you think will be interested.

### Save the date!



AMI 2019 AGM and Montessori Forum  
5-8 April 2019, Amsterdam

<https://montessori-ami.org/international-events>