

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



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MONTESSORI

SCHOOLS & CENTRES AUSTRALIA

MSCA 2020 Annual Report

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We envision a sustainable, just and peaceful world where custodians of tomorrow engage, contribute, and thrive.

This Annual Report has been printed in Melbourne, Australia, on 100% recycled paper using environmentally friendly and sustainable printing practices.

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE MSCA BOARD CHAIR

2020 has been a challenging and difficult year for all but as I contemplate the past 12 months and reflect upon the achievements of MSCA I feel extremely proud that we have been able to lay solid foundations and take giant steps towards realising our mission to connect, unite and serve the Montessori community, despite a global pandemic!

Covid-19 could not have come at a worse time for MSCA and greatly disrupted our 2020 plans. As a fledgling organisation trying to gain momentum and membership, connect with schools and centres, and unite our community through events, we certainly had to 'think outside the square' and re-imagine how we could achieve our goals.

However, our organisation showed resiliency and flexibility, and adapted and responded to our 'new normal' and delivered online forums, events and opportunities for our community to connect and unite in the face of adversity.

As has been stated many times throughout this unprecedented time, "Out of a crisis comes great opportunity". It was pleasing to see our 2020 events go ahead in a new format and receive positive feedback from those that attended. Using Zoom to connect online and utilising the 'break out room facility' enabled Montessori leaders and colleagues to connect and share their practise and support each other. Although it is different from face to face occasions, and perhaps not as satisfying, it provided that much needed chance for connection and opportunity to learn from others. I thank our presenters and our Montessori community who attended our Forums and events throughout the year, and also provided us with ongoing feedback to improve our practice and delivery.

In May we held our first online AGM and the interim MSCA Board stood down making way for the new MSCA Board to lead and govern our organisation. It is exciting to have such a great representation of schools and centres, skills and experience on our Board. The interim Board worked extremely hard to establish the organisation in a manner which reflects professionalism and integrity ensuring all practices were grounded in good governance principles. It is pleasing that these practices continue to be ingrained and observed in all that we do as an organisation. It is energising to work with like-minded individuals who appreciate and embody our core values of respect, integrity, transparency, accountability, consultation and collaboration and who are dedicated to reflecting these values in the work that we undertake.

I would like to truly thank the MSCA Board members for their generosity in giving graciously their time, skills and expertise. I believe we work effectively and professionally as a team all striving for the same outcome and I greatly appreciate their passion for Montessori, and for their input and contributions to their MSCA Board and committee work.

We were thrilled with our Grassroots Forum held in August and subsequent discussion groups following the key note presentation throughout that week. Dr Tom Nehmy, our keynote presenter and an award-winning clinical psychologist, professional speaker and best-selling author presented a session entitled, "How students wellbeing can change the world", which was particularly pertinent in the unsettled and disturbing time of Covid-19. We were delighted to have close to 300 attendees at this webinar, the only event that we charged for throughout 2020.

MSCA BOARD DIRECTORS

CATHY FRANCE
Board Chair

VANESSA AIKINS

GAY WALES
*Deputy Chair
Comms & Marketing Chair*

SYLVIA AROTIN

FIONA CAMPBELL

DAVID ANDERSON
Finance Director

RACHAEL STEVENS

JANIS COFFEY
Events Chair

RACHEL WALKER

BILL CONWAY
Education Chair

YAN WU
Secretary

Throughout the year we were pleased to have been able to establish and facilitate hub groups for Montessori Business Managers and new Principals from around Australia with ideas for incorporating more hub groups and opportunities for our community to connect in the future.

We were extremely proud to launch The Hub in October 2020, an electronic portal that our members can utilise. With Montessori schools and centres being sporadically placed around the nation, it can be challenging for leaders to connect and collaborate. The Hub aims to bridge those gaps by providing a space to share resources, create events, request documentation and share online media to further enhance the efficiency of our pedagogy and individual operations. The Hub is designed to act as a portal that school and centre leaders can rely upon for support, establishing a community of collaboration. We hope that this valuable resource serves our members well providing another avenue for connection and collaboration.

I would like to thank the Barrenjoey Montessori School Board for initially providing the financial support and for backing this wonderful project. In particular, I would also like to thank Fiona Campbell and Gavin McCormack for their intellect, creative thinking, foresight and perseverance which enabled their vision of The Hub to come to fruition.

In the latter part of 2020, the MSCA Board established a number of Board committees, and this is where focussed and purposeful work is undertaken to achieve our long term goals. I would like to thank Bill Conway, Gay Wales, David Anderson and Janis Coffey for their commitment, leadership and for chairing these committees.

One of the best decisions we made in 2020 was the appointment of Alice Champion in the role of MSCA Administrative Assistant. I would like to publicly acknowledge Alice and the work that she has done and continues to do. We hit the jackpot when we employed Alice and I would like to sincerely thank her for her work, her initiative and her pragmatic 'can do' attitude, her skills and expertise that she brings to her position; she is an integral part of our organisation and a hugely valued member of the MSCA team.

I would like to thank our founding members in our inaugural year for joining us on this venture, believing in the principles and vision of MSCA and showing their support by becoming members and attending events, providing input, feedback and support. We look forward to growing our membership base in the future and are grateful for the continued support from our wonderful Montessori community. The MSCA Board looks forward to achieving more great work heading into the future and collaborating with Montessori Schools and Centres to meet their needs so we can continue to connect, unite and serve the Montessori community.

MSCA'S PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- To advance education by promoting the pedagogical principles and practice formulated by Dr Maria Montessori for the full development of the human being;
- To assist, strengthen, represent and promote the interests of its members in any way whatsoever;
- To support and encourage Montessori education in Australia;
- To foster, promote and sustain a climate in which Montessori education becomes or remains pre-eminent in early childhood, primary and secondary education;
- To support and encourage the establishment and sustainability of bodies delivering Montessori education and programs to ensure more children have access to Montessori education in Australia;
- To represent in a professional manner the collective interests of members to Government at all levels, other regulatory bodies, other relevant peak bodies, media, and the general public;
- To do all such other lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of any of the above purposes.



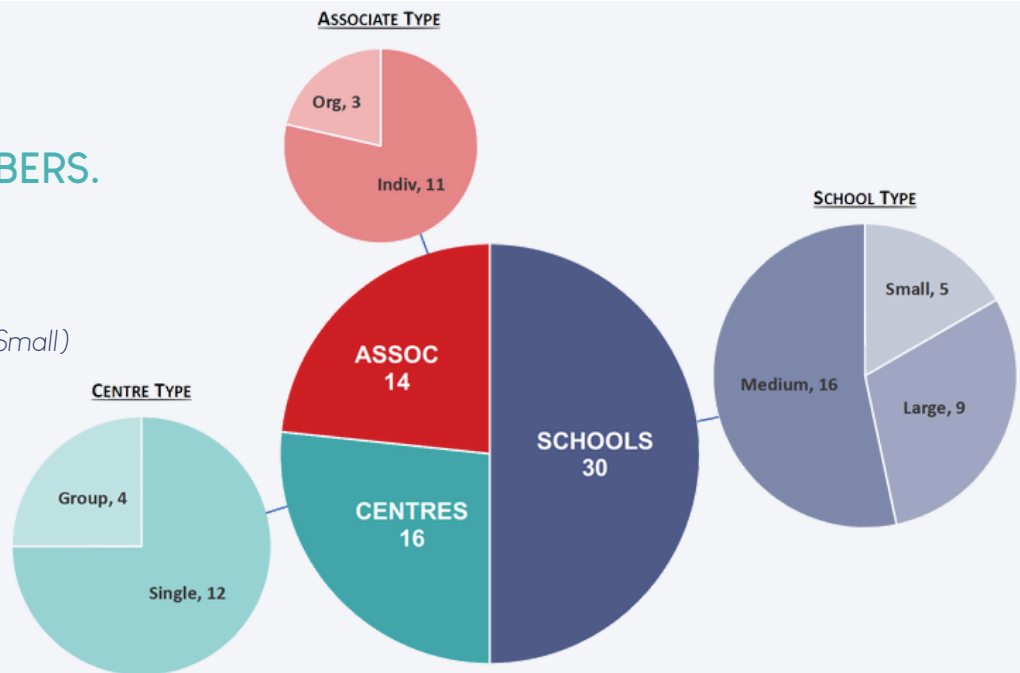
CATHY FRANCE
MSCA Board Chair



2020 MSCA HIGHLIGHTS

BY DECEMBER 2020,
MSCA HAD 60 MEMBERS.

- **46 Full Members**
 - 30 Schools
(9 Large, 16 Medium, 5 Small)
 - 16 Child Care Centres
(4 Groups, 12 Single)
- **14 Associate Members**
 - 11 Individuals
 - 3 Organisations



ADMINISTRATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Xero Finance accounting package established
- Applied for AMI affiliation
- Membership invoicing & membership certificates created
- Appointment of Administrative Assistant
- Establishment of Hub Spot & database
- Review and update of MSCA Logos & branding

GOVERNANCE HIGHLIGHTS

The following documents and processes were created and implemented.

- Board Member Consent to Act and Code of Conduct
- Board Action Plan
- Board Annual Calendar
- Board Skills Matrix
- Board Nomination Forms, Proxy Forms, AGM Notice
- Board Induction Information Pack
- Committee Charters
- Annual Board Review Survey

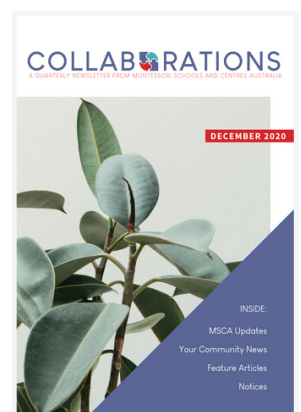
COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Three editions of MSCA Collaborations Newsletter published
- Facebook page established and maintained
- Development of an electronic resource portal; The Hub
- Regular email communication with members
- Establishment of MSCA website
- Successful Google Ad grant
- Member surveys and event feedback surveys

MSCA POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Written & ratified by the MSCA Board in 2020

- Finance Policy
- Membership Policy
- Members Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy
- Collection Notice
- Privacy Breach Response Protocol
- Grievance Policy
- Travel Procedures
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Risk Management Plan
- Third Party Marketing Policy



2020 MSCA HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

All events were delivered online in 2020

- Head to Head (H2H) Forum
- Down to Business (D2B) Forum
- Director to Director (D2D) Forum
- Dr Tom Nehmy Webinar
- Business Managers Hub Group
- New Principal's Hub Group (LEAD4M)
- AGM
- The Hub Launch



The Healthy Minds Wellbeing Wheel presented by Dr Tom Nehmy – An evidence-based, multi-factor model of mental health and wellbeing incorporating biological, psychological and social components (a 'bio-psycho-social' model).



EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

- Montessori National Curriculum copyright status and ownership was investigated
- Consideration of development of a new syllabus document to meet the needs and expectations of schools in Australia.
- A Position Statement was drafted addressing MSCA's stand on the Montessori National Curriculum for dissemination in 2021.
- The MSCA Board supported the formation of a sub-committee to work on the new syllabus.
- The Montessori high school curriculum (15-18) was drafted.
- A list of teacher training organisations was compiled.
- A presentation was given to the AMI trainers of Australia to familiarise them with MSCA, its purpose and goals.

VISION

To unite & serve the Montessori community in its endeavor to educate for peace.

MISSION

To advance education by promoting the pedagogical principles and practice formulated by Dr Maria Montessori for the full development of the human being.

VALUES

Respect & Caring
Trust, Integrity & Patience
Transparency & Accountability
Collaboration & Consultation
Inclusive & Openness

FINANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: David Anderson

*Members: Alice Champion, Cathy France, Rachel Walker,
Yan Wu.*



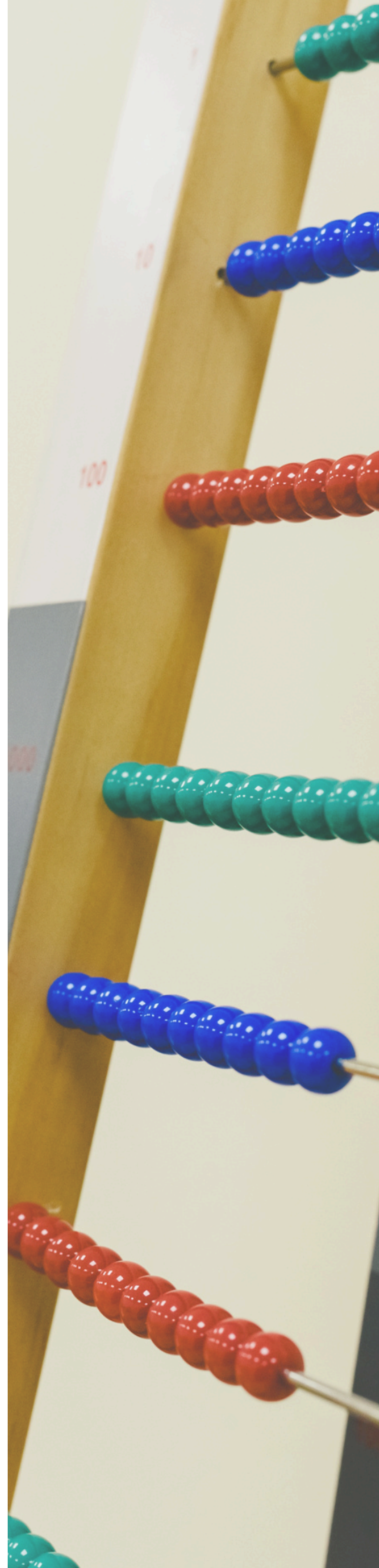
DAVID ANDERSON
MSCA Finance Director

Well, what an interesting first full year of operation it turned out to be! Needless to say, the year ended up significantly different to what we had envisaged. 2020 saw strong membership support from Schools, Centres and Individuals from across Australia and overseas. Thank you. Throughout 2020 we continued to invest heavily in establishing a sound and robust operating model focussing strongly on sound governance practices.

We employed an Administrative Assistant throughout the year who has been invaluable in providing the necessary backbone to our operations throughout the year. Thank you Alice! This investment has also expanded to an excellent website, Montessori Hub for Members and a vibrant advertising and marketing approach. Our primary event held throughout the year; the webinar presented by Dr Tom Nehmy, was well received. Attendance and participation was strong which provided a source of additional income.

Financially, Income was made up of approximately 76% from Membership Fees and approximately 24% from Conferences and Events. Expenditure included significant establishment/formation costs which are considered to be one-off. Notwithstanding these one-off costs, financial performance for the 2020 calendar year (our financial year) was considered sound. Sufficient financial resources were available to ensure that all financial and legal obligations were met throughout the year as and when they fell due.

Like everyone, we are not sad to see the end of 2020, however we are proud of what we have achieved in our first full year. We are excited by what 2021 may bring with ongoing marketing and a full program of events scheduled. Thank you to the Finance Committee and the MSCA Board for their dedication, commitment and ongoing support.



EVENTS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Janis Coffey

Members: David Anderson, Alice Champion, Cathy France.

2020 will be remembered as the year of ZOOM events! Despite the challenges that 2020 presented, MSCA events connected our Montessori community and created conversations between leaders and educators across the nation and beyond the borders of Australia. In 2020, MSCA, in its inaugural year, hosted key events for school leaders, childcare centre educators, teachers, new Principals, and Centre Directors.

Key highlights included Dr. Tom Nehmy whose presentation on raising resilient children and the science of delayed gratification struck a chord with parents and educators alike. MSCA welcomes back Tom in 2021 for a second presentation, which is planned to extend to parent audiences in the MSCA community.

At the core, one of MSCA's aims is to create events which inspire and connect our Montessori community, but also to engage new audiences who are new to the work of Maria Montessori. MSCA's commitment to providing quality professional development for the Australian Montessori community remains at the forefront of the committee's work.

The events program provides access to a range of Australian Montessori experts as well as international speakers. Creating networks, sharing experiences and knowledge at a grassroots level, and guiding new leaders formed part of the Committee's key focus in 2020 and into the future.

Broadening our scope beyond our Montessori community has also been on our radar with events scheduled to engage a wide audience of educators, parents, and school leaders. The work of Maria Montessori has influenced education in the past 100 years and continues to do so through MSCA's advocacy and reach throughout Australia. As the national peak body for Montessori education, MSCA's events have and will continue to promote excellence in practice.



JANIS
COFFEY
Events Chair





COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Gay Wales

Members: Sylvia Arotin, Alice Champion, Bill Conway, Yan Wu.

A lot has been achieved since our first meeting in August 2020! We began the life of the committee by creating the Charter and Objectives which would determine our direction and the goals to be pursued.

One of the first goals was to determine the branding and logo of MSCA. After much collaboration and many discussions, the logo was finalised, colours agreed upon, a style guide created and specific logos for the range of different applications eg. The Hub, were adopted. Alice Champion has been instrumental in many of these aspects and she has put in a huge amount of work on the look and structure of the website – including a much-needed description of how to pronounce MSCA! A whole range of resources is now available on the website which has a clear, modern, user-friendly feel. Thank you, Alice!

The committee members have developed a one page Position Statement about the values of MSCA, our aspirations and particularly our stance on the Montessori National Curriculum and our belief that the copyright should not be owned by a for-profit organisation and should be publicly and freely available to all. This one pager will be disseminated to the wider Montessori community in 2021.

Several organisations have now asked to advertise on our website and through our social media platforms, and so we developed a Third Party Marketing Policy and application form so that we can best assess those with whom we have affinity and who represent our values.

These documents were ratified by the Board and we now have some people who are using this facility. This organically led to the need for a fee structure and so our Marketing Packages have been developed with options ranging from Bronze, Silver, Gold to Platinum.

We also need to promote the MSCA services to the Montessori community, especially the myriad of events which are available for everyone from business managers to new principals, and a budget was allocated at the start of the year which enables us to regularly post on Facebook and Instagram as well as to advertise each event through different media. To streamline this process an Advertising Schedule was determined which states how many weeks in advance and how frequently each event is promoted. We look forward to creating a monthly event email which focuses on the speaker, the topics etc.

At the end of last year, a survey was sent to all those who had attended any MSCA event so that we could reflect on the feedback and take on board any changes or suggestions made by our members and others and this feedback is currently being analysed. A huge thank you to all the committee members who have so willingly given of their time and expertise to help promote MSCA and its good work! An especial thanks to Alice who has driven much of this work through her dedication, computer skills and design sense!



GAY WALES

*MSCA Deputy Chair
Comms & Marketing Chair*

EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Chair: Bill Conway

*Members: Vanessa Aikins, Sylvia Arotin,
Fiona Campbell, Janis Coffey,
Rachael Stevens, Gay Wales.*

This Education Committee was appointed by the MSCA Board of Directors in July 2020 and our first meeting was held on the 20th August 2020. The committee considered its membership, positions and Charter as the first order of business and the MSCA Board approved the Charter at the September board meeting.

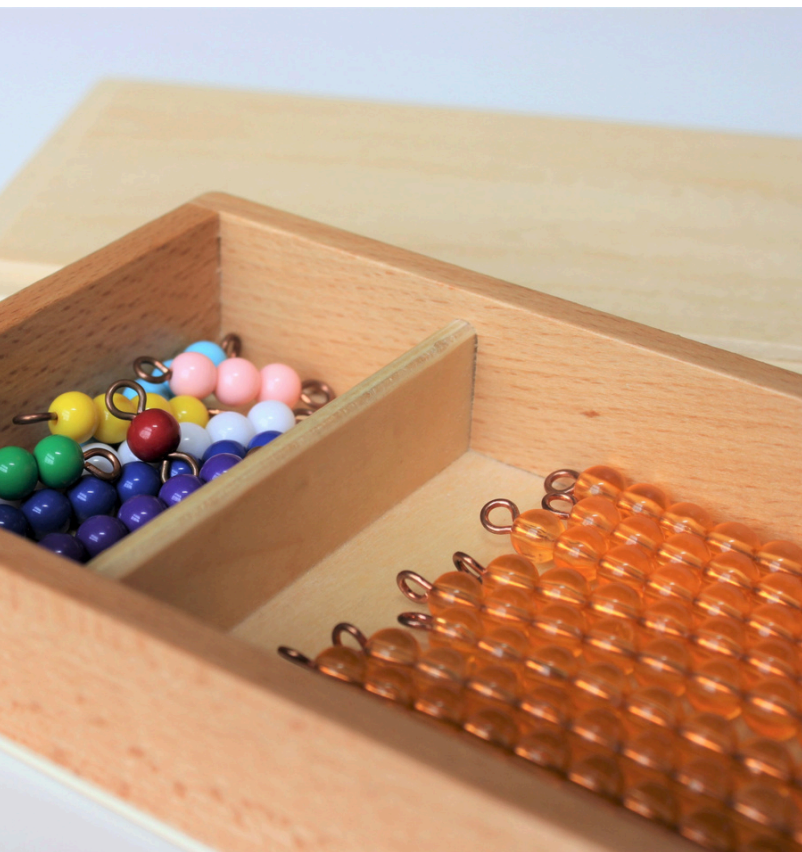
There were five monthly meetings of the committee held in 2020. The meetings were held online, usually on Thursday afternoons, with committee reports provided for each MSCA Board meeting.



BILL CONWAY
Education Chair

PRIMARY AREAS OF ATTENTION FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

- **Montessori Teacher Training**
 - Monitor and understand current course availability in Australia
 - Support training organisations
- **Montessori quality delivery**
 - Understand current models of quality assurance (MQAP and Global Schools Accreditation)
 - Consider appropriate models for Australia
- **Curriculum/syllabus for Montessori**
 - Understand and review existing Montessori National Curriculum
 - Consider possible directions for curriculum/syllabus structures and documents for schools and centres
- **Education Resources**
 - Understand and review sources of education resources available to Australian schools and centres
 - Consider quality, price, availability of education resources
 - Support resource delivery
- **Parent Education**
 - Consider approaches to parent education in the Montessori context
- **Professional development**
 - Provide suggestions and ideas for PD events to refer to the Events Committee
- **Post-Montessori destinations**
 - The committee intends to monitor Montessori alumni (post-secondary) as a matter of interest and to assist planning.





An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking: it involves the spiritual development of humankind, the enhancement of their value as individuals, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.

'Education and Peace', p. 30

— *Maria Montessori*



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