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Report on the Polish Montessori Days.
Organizers: The Polish Montessori Association
and the Institute of Pedagogy, Maria Curie-
Skłodowska University in Lublin.
“Childhood Phenomenon. From Maria
Montessori Till the Present Day”. The Jubilee of
30 Years of Montessori Education in the Lublin
Region

Sprawozdanie z Polskich Dni Montessori.

*Organizatorzy: Polskie Stowarzyszenie Montessori i Instytut
Pedagogiki UMCS w Lublinie.*

*„Fenomen dzieciństwa. Od Marii Montessori po współczesność”.
Jubileusz 30-lecia edukacji montessoriańskiej na Lubelszczyźnie*

On 3–5 June 2022, there were held the Polish Montessori Days (PMD), the conference of educators whose activity is based on the principles worked out by Maria Montessori and researchers in this field. The meeting took place at the Institute of Pedagogy, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (MCSU) in Lublin. The leading theme was “Childhood Phenomena. From Maria Montessori till the Present Day”.

The eighth edition of the PMD provided the opportunity to celebrate the jubilee of the thirty-year presence of Montessori pedagogy in the Lublin region. This is just in Lublin where there was signed an agreement between Hogeschool van Arnhem an Nijmegen (currently HAN University) and the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology of MCSU, in May 1992. The contract referred to the implementation of a project of “Individualized Education Based on the Montessori Principles”.

The organizers of the PMD, a conference that brought together more than two hundred participants and guests, were the Polish Montessori Association and the Institute of Pedagogy, MCSU in Lublin. The official opening of the event, on Friday, 3 June 2022, was preceded by school visits in Montessori institutions located in Lublin and Świdnik. The opening ceremony, attended by distinguished guests, began at 3 p.m. The PDM participants were welcomed by the Director of the Pedagogy Institute, Dr hab. Stanisława Byra, MCSU Professor. The Plenipotentiary of the Minister of Education and Science for Family Affairs, Tomasz Pitucha, read out a letter addressed by the Minister to the conference participants and welcomed them personally. The assembly members were also wholeheartedly welcomed by the Vice-Rector for Science and International Cooperation, Prof. dr hab. Wiesław I. Gruszecki and the Dean of the Pedagogy and Psychology Faculty, Dr hab. Andrzej Różanski, MCSU Professor. The opening ceremony was added splendor by the statement of the President of the Committee on Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Prof. dr hab. Agnieszka Cybal-Michalska, the Dean of the Faculty of Educational Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU) in Poznań. Next, the President of the Polish Montessori Association, Dr Małgorzata Miksza, addressed all the attendees. The welcoming ceremony was closed with a performance given by the children, parents and educators from Montessori kindergartens in Świdnik.

The inauguration lecture was delivered by the President of Montessori Europe, Barbara Isaacs, who emphasized the relevance of Montessori’s views, referring to those of the researchers in the field of pedagogy and psychology. Then Dr hab. Renata Michalak, AMU Professor, developed the idea of synergy of selected learning theories. The presentation by Dr hab. Barbara Surma, Professor of Jesuit University Ignatianum from Kraków, was about the accomplishment of STEAM education project for the formation of research competence in kindergarten. Finally, Dr hab. Renata Grzybek, MCSU Professor outlined the process of Maria Montessori’s rise to the educational work, and Dr hab. Beata Bednarczuk, MCSU Professor focused on thirty years of developing Montessori pedagogy in the Lublin region.

The workshop sessions as well as discussion meetings were held on the second day of the conference (Saturday, 4 June). The participants were offered three inspiring sessions of methodological character and the choice was among eleven proposals, prepared by teachers and scientists from all over Poland. The workshop

subject matter was differentiated to respond to various needs of the participants. It covered the language, mathematics, art education. It was possible to get familiar with the creative techniques for creating Montessori materials, as well as to develop the ability to model the relations between parents and teachers. During the lecture, Dr Miksza brought to mind Montessori's views about the child. Of significant interest were the panel discussions devoted to the administering the Montessori institutions, children education during peace and war time as well as organizing the institutions with Montessori groups taking into account the thirty-year experience in the Lublin region.

The last day of the Polish Montessori Days (Sunday, 5 June) started with a lecture delivered by Dr Angela Murray of Kansas University, head of the Montessori Education Research Center, entitled "Research on Montessori Practices". The need for studies on education in the Montessori system was justified and the results of latest analyses as well as valuable bibliographic sources were presented. The lecture was followed by a lively discussion, full of personal reflections of Montessori school graduates. The fourth workshop session ended the educational part of the meeting. At the end of the conference, considering the situation in Ukraine, there was adopted the declaration in support of education for peace. The PMD conference was brought to an end with a performance presented by the Faculty of Arts students.

The Montessori Conference in Lublin, within the hospitable walls of the modern building of the Institute of Pedagogy, after two years of lockdown, was the first opportunity to meet face to face and exchange experiences. The participants held productive discussions and made valuable observations. The earlier contacts were restored, and new ones were made. The Conference was held in an atmosphere of friendliness, cooperation and understanding.