

Montessori Summer Seminar Amsterdam

The third edition of the Montessori Summer Seminar was held in Amsterdam from August 26-31. Run in collaboration with Jacqueline Hendriksen of AVE.IK, a Dutch consultant of Montessori work, it is intended to provide a mixture of lectures, time for reflection and deepening of knowledge, interspersed with historical visits and information on the life and work of Maria Montessori, and, not forgetting, an experience of Amsterdam. Participants came from Brazil, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, Nigeria, Romania, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and USA. Workshops, presentations and lectures took place at AMI's head quarters in Amsterdam, with visits to Ajax Youth Football grounds, Noordwijk, and school observation visits in Pijnacker and Amsterdam.

We had a strong programme: Professor Adele Diamond (Professor in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of British Columbia) spoke on Executive Functions; Dr Steve Hughes (paediatric neuropsychologist) made a strong plea for school 2.0; Developmental Coach Derk de Kloet (Ajax), and Montessorians Fred Kelpin, Liene Hendriksen and Lynne Lawrence gave various inspirational presentations. And thanks to school principals Tessa Wessels and Simone Davies the group could also enjoy school observations for age groups 0-9.



The group enjoying some sunshine in Noordwijk, on the Dutch coast.

The main theme was one of sharing and collaboration, or "society by cohesion". Hosted at the AMI Headquarters in Amsterdam, it meant presentations could be held in the adjacent new building, which, once renovation work has taken place, will house an attractive lecture room. Participants had access to the AMI library, and materials display room. Fred Kelpin, a former Montessori teacher trainer in the Netherlands and Montessori historian, shared some of Mario Montessori's prototypes with those who were interested. Participants had the opportunity to sign up for a walking tour of Amsterdam with Fred that included seeing the Montessori school that Anne Frank attended. There was time for a stop-off at the bookshop where Anne's father bought her diary.



Jacqueline Hendriksen and Lynne Lawrence congratulating the participants on being part of the Summer Seminar.

An unusually interesting seminar was led by Derk de Kloet, a developmental coach with an elite sport training programme at Ajax Youth Football Academy.

The programme that he and others are hoping to develop and refine is based on the belief that children live what they learn. Their approach uses key elements of the Montessori approach to help ensure that players become more well rounded, involving parents in the process, so that training becomes more holistic.

We look forward to the next edition of this Seminar. Please write to summerseminar@montessori-ami.org if you would like to receive more background on the set-up and future dates we are currently deciding on.