



# Mario Montessori

## Continuing Maria Montessori's Legacy



Mario Montessori, Sr. was born March 31, 1898. He was the only son of Dr. Maria Montessori. Though he did not have any formal training as a teacher, his love of children and intuitive understanding of his mother's work and approach put him in the international world of education for his entire professional life. Mario was instrumental in supporting his mother throughout her lifetime often acting in the role of personal advisor and business partner. Together, Maria and Mario founded the Association Montessori Internationale or AMI in 1929.

Located in the Netherlands, AMI's mission was to oversee the schools and societies established around the world that promoted use of Maria Montessori's approach to education. AMI also supervised the training of Montessori teachers and eventually instituted a training of (teacher) trainers program in 1976, thanks to Mario.

Mario started accompanying his mother on her travels to speak and train while still a very young man. At 17, Mario came to the United States with Maria. The trip proved to be difficult for Maria prompting Mario to act as a buffer, confidante, and executive administrator on her behalf. This was the beginning of a partnership between mother and son that would last until Maria's death in 1952.

In 1939, Mario and Maria traveled to Chennai, India to conduct what was supposed to be a three-month training course for teachers. Instead, due to the outbreak of World War II, Mario and Maria were detained in India by the British government until the end of the war. After a brief period of actual internment in 1939 at a detention camp in India, Mario was released by the British on Maria's birthday in 1940. Mario and Maria spent the next seven years in India. Between 1939 and 1946 they conducted sixteen series of courses called the Indian Montessori Training Courses. Maria would give her lectures in Italian and Mario would translate them into English. Together Maria and Mario trained over a thousand Indian teachers in the Montessori approach. In 1946 they returned to Holland.

Maria continued traveling around the world lecturing and speaking on her method of teaching. Mario was her constant companion and assistant. After Dr. Montessori's death, Mario actively continued the work of spreading the Montessori approach. He continued to lecture and conduct teacher training courses around the world and remained intimately involved with the organization and operation of the association he and Maria had founded.

In 1956 Mario published the book, *The Human Tendencies and Montessori Education*. For his dedication and work on behalf of children and education, Mario was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in 1970 by Edgecliffe College, a remarkable accomplishment for a man with little formal education.

After a brief period of failing health and eyesight Mario passed away on the 10th of February, 1982.