

Montessori and the International Decade

Donna's plea resounds strongly in the International Coalition of the International Decade of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World's goals. Its proposed text aims for UN member countries to support a new international declaration in a common voice, stating clearly:

- that all children have a right to be educated peacefully, and
- that all children have a right to education on peace and non-violence.

Mary Caroline Parker drafted a simplified version about the UN and peace education and used it in her school, East Dallas Community School, to help the 6-9 year-old children understand the UN and its work for peace. Some excerpts include:

- Children should have homes and schools without violence—no hitting, no yelling, and no hurting other people.
- If a child is hurt or threatened, he or she should be able to go to a friendly and understanding adult for help.
- Teachers should learn about peace and non-violence, so they can teach children about peace.
- Schools should help children learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully, by talking, not fighting.
- Schools should help children learn how to protect and take care of the Earth's environment.
- TV, videos, movies, and the Internet should help everyone learn about peace...and how to resolve conflicts peacefully.



Other versions will be put on AMI's web site, including: French, German, Norwegian, Japanese, Swedish, and Vietnamese, among others. Children are encouraged to explain what peace means for them in a brief caption.

What is The United Nations?

The United Nations is an organization for people in all countries, all over the world. Today 192 nations are members of the United Nations, and they want:

- to keep peace all over the world
- to help people live better lives, be healthy, and learn to read and write



- to protect the Earth's environment
- people to respect each other's rights and freedoms
- to help children all over the world

Representatives from these 192 nations meet at the UN to talk about the world's problems. First one person talks, and all the others listen. Then a person from another country talks, and everyone listens. They search together for peaceful solutions to problems.

The UN has its own flag. It shows all the continents, united in peace. Astronauts have carried this flag in orbit around the Earth, and even to the moon!

United Nations' Montessori Model United Nations 2009

Victoria Barrès

In April 2009, 600 students from 60 Montessori schools gathered in New York City for the third Montessori Model United Nations programme (MMUN 2009). They learn they can have a voice on world issues of peace, non-violence and social justice. This programme is a fascinating 'going out' exercise for Montessori children, aged 9 years to 15 years. Introduced twenty-five years ago, many Model UN programmes for high school and university students are held annually. Three years ago, Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, the Dominican Republic Ambassador to the UN, asked Judith Cunningham if a Montessori Model UN existed. When she said no, he suggested she do it. The MMUN, the first Model UN programme for younger children, is based on Montessori principles that encourage collaboration rather than competition.

The children learn about the UN and its sixty-year evolution towards greater dialogue and cooperation among the 192 member countries. Each class represents one country. They spend several months learning about 'their country' and its official positions on key issues at the UN. Montessori children from Canada, Haiti, Mexico, United States and Virgin Islands represented 'their countries' at the MMUN 2009 UN committees: General Assembly, Security Council, FAO, ILO, UNICEF and other specialized agencies. The last day, they all met in the UN General Assembly chamber and voted their resolutions, which have been given to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

This Montessori Model UN programme hosted almost a thousand Montessori children, parents and teachers.



With concern, dedication, and concentration, the children listened to presentations, prepared resolutions and caucused to garner support. Many realized, some excitedly for the first time, that they aren't isolated because they belong to a large international Montessori movement.

One student from Santa Barbara Montessori School has shared her thoughts with us.

My Montessori Model United Nations' Experience

Caroline Montgomery

After a long day of travel from the beautiful beaches of Santa Barbara to the incredible cityscape of Manhattan, my class and I embarked on our first ever Montessori Model UN conference. We'd worked for five months. I was excited, scared and still felt unprepared. Leina King, my classmate, and I walked to our Security Council room. We represented France... Promptly at nine o'clock our president Raymond Ratti Beato walked in. He's a tall Dominican Republican man, who works at the UN on behalf of his country. We began our routine for the next three days. We took roll. When the president called our country's name, we'd stand up holding our placard and say: "France (or each country's name) is present and voting" and then set the day's agenda and topic.

We worked hard for 6-7 hour days, but every time I talked to someone about what France wanted or was willing to do about the Sudan or the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, I felt I'd found my calling. When I read my speech, I got this rush that I haven't felt before, like I was important and doing something in this world.



At the end of our hard two days, the Security Council presented two resolutions. One on the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and one on the Situation in Sudan. Our class has definitely decided to support the proposal for the International Declaration on Children's Right to Non-Violent Education and the ILO programme to raise awareness on child labour. One of the more shocking images was the movie shown on the opening night about what so many millions of children throughout the world have to endure. We all felt so helpless and spoiled, and realized that there's so much work to be done.

I'm so happy I got to experience the Montessori Model United Nations. It's inspired me to look more into the UN. I hope I'll have a future in being a UN delegate. Helping

the world is something I plan to do, and this was a definite starting point for me... The MMUN is the best thing that's ever happened to me.

Read and see more on <<http://www.montessori-mun.org/>>

MMUN 2010 registration begins June 22nd, 2009!

Did you know ... ? that the first stone of The Peace Palace, The Hague, Netherlands was laid the same year Montessori started the first Children's House?

Charlotte Elliott

A late 19th century social reformer, Maria Montessori grew up during an era when the concept of world peace swept across Europe and America, supported by hundreds of active peace organizations, with millions of members. The word "pacifism" was coined then by the Swiss organization, "La Société de la Paix".



This international peace movement was fuelled by many leading activists, notably Leo Tolstoy who inspired the Russian Tsar, Nicolas II. In August 1898, he invited all major nations to join an international conference on peace and disarmament. However, it took the US President Theodore Roosevelt's acceptance to create momentum. The results of this first World Peace Conference in 1899 were immense: "a Convention with 61 articles for curbing the arms race, humanizing the conduct of war and founding the Permanent Court of Arbitration," based on principles of non-violent mediation and arbitration to prevent or end future international disputes.

The Peace Palace was designed to give the new Court a suitable setting, and an outstanding library on international law. Decorated by artwork, textiles, stained glass windows and marble-work donated by member organizations, the Palace is a fascinating architectural symbol of "Peace through Justice."

For more information, visit: <<http://www.vredespaleis.nl>>