The background features a series of red, wavy, concentric lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized 'C' or a series of overlapping curves. The text is white and stands out against the dark background.

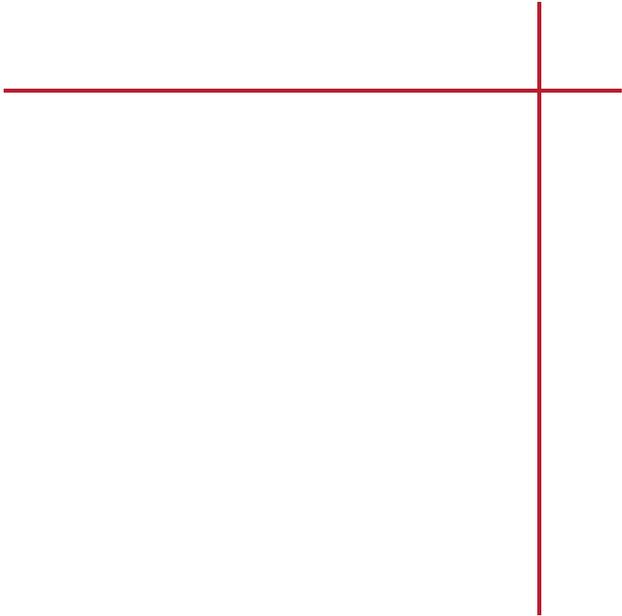
CFTE Centre for Finance,
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**CFTE ACADEMIC AND
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**The Role of the
Government in Education**

Maccs Pescatore
Chief Executive Officer,
Montessori Centre International

ARTICLE 2

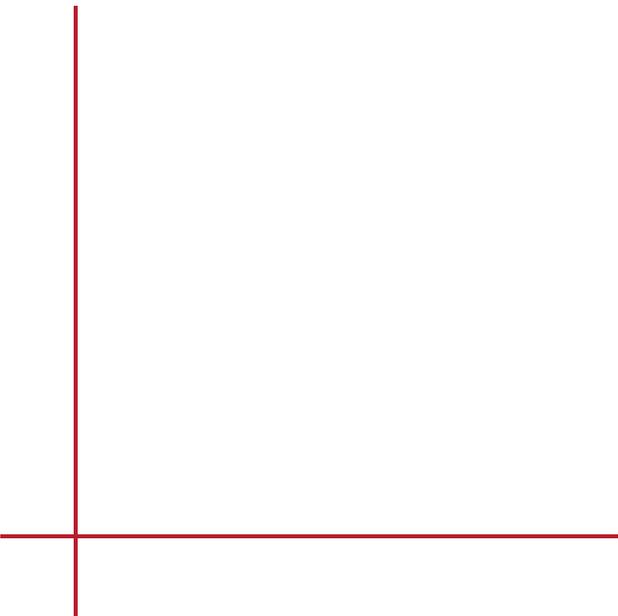


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The critical role of quality education, starting in the Early Years, in a technology based world

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Lifelong Learning is a commitment that the Montessori Method to education brings to the child, adolescent and adult. The pedagogy is an approach, not a syllabus – so it complements any curriculum or educational structure. The Montessori principles provide a scaffold which supports the learner. They allow a child to experiment; to try, fail, try again, and to understand that this is a valuable journey.

Rigid education systems are failing some learners and poorly prepare young people for workplace requirements in the future. A workforce that grows up with creativity, problem solving, resilience and curiosity will see technology and AI as sophisticated tools which enable greater thinking and outcomes, and not threats. Many innovators in Silicon Valley credit their success to their Montessori education. Innovative start-ups exist which apply the Montessori principles in technologically based toys to teach coding and electric circuitry to children from the age of 4.

The standout features of the Montessori approach in practice are:

- **Active Learning** - Children choose the activities they want to do. If a child is excited by or drawn to an activity, they will be more focused and both concentration and understanding will be increased. The Montessori teacher only puts activities in the classroom that they know will help the child learn.
- **Trust and respect for Learners** - By trusting children, we are not only building their confidence and self-esteem, we are also helping them understand their own limits. By being truly respectful we can let the child show us what they need and want, as opposed to trying to steer the child towards doing what we want them to. If we can trust that the child will do what they can by themselves, and ask for help when it is needed, then that child is well on their way to independence.
- **Following the Learner** - Teachers observe children to find out their interests and abilities. The teacher uses this information to plan activities for the child that will help them take the next steps in their learning. The child benefits from a classroom and a teacher that responds to their needs – and develops as they do.
- **Development of inner discipline and social responsibility** - Children are not praised for the work they produce but are praised for their effort, the support they give others, or other emotional traits. This avoids children becoming discouraged if their work is not ‘perfect’, but instead associates praise with skills which will support them throughout their learning and their life. Children are encouraged to manage their own emotions and behaviours, be in control of the choices that they make and be responsible for themselves, the activities they use, and for each other. Children are encouraged to return activities to their place when finished and to tidy up any mess they might have made. By developing a collective responsibility, where each child understands that they are taking care of the classroom for the benefit of everyone, they are growing in empathy, respect and social conscience.

Child development psychology and neuroscience confirm Dr Montessori's observations: from birth to the age of 7 is a key period when these traits develop, fuelling the potential of the adult.

The Montessori Approach is practised in the early years in many countries, and in some countries, up to 18 years. It works in any context: in war-torn countries, economic poverty, living with mental health challenges such as dementia. Whilst Montessori has a global reach, the delivery of quality Montessori will remain fragmented and exclusive without government recognition.

We call governments to formally adopt the Montessori Approach in the early years, primary and secondary schooling, as part of the delivery mechanism.

Quality Montessori courses up to degree level and those aimed at continuing professional development already exist in the early years' sector. Our pool of international Montessori tutors delivers training to learners on behalf of institutions. We train educators to deliver courses to their students, thus empowering institutions. We do this using our proven digital learning approach (Virtual Learning Environment "VLE"), developed by academics, which puts learners at the centre of the journey and reaches learners anywhere in the world synchronously. This can be scaled and quickly. Our network of international placement settings allows students to gain practical experience as part of their studies, if not already in practice.

To give an example of ambition at scale, we have started a collaboration with a significant educational institute in the UAE to develop Montessori training and practice in the region. The medium term's aim is to create a local, self-sustaining ecosystem with quality assurance and certification by MCI. Specifically, the multi-year project has a number of stages: designing Montessori modules for inclusion in the Early Years degree, remote and blended delivery through MCI's VLE, training faculty staff to deliver the practical elements independently of MCI, and a programme of training in local nurseries to deliver teaching using the Montessori method.

More generally, we have a track record of training nursery staff in-country in Montessori using qualifications validated by Cache and providing continuing professional development from our portfolio of long and short courses, all delivered through our VLE. Our accreditation and endorsement framework provides the scaffolding to ensure ongoing quality provision in schools and educational institutions.

The pandemic is highlighting the importance of educating our children at the youngest of ages in these attributes and skills which will enable them to become adaptive, innovative and creative adults with high levels of emotional intelligence and anti-fragility. We have been talking with many governments in South East Asia, Europe and MENA, all of whom have expressed an interest in understanding how Montessori can support their early years education systems and curriculum.

In conclusion, the infrastructure and delivery mechanisms already exist to adopt and scale the Montessori Approach in early years, anywhere in the world. The Approach can be extended into education from the age of 6, too. The wonderful thing about the Montessori Approach is that it is person-centric and is not affected by geography, economic status or religion. What is needed is mass-scale adoption.