



## Newsflash

### ALL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

### SAMA MEMO – MONTESSORI ACCREDITATION

Dear SAMA Members,

#### **What does it really mean when a Montessori training centre or school says they have “international accreditation” or “international recognition”?**

The short answer is that, in the generally perceived interpretation of those words, it means very little. The reason being that there is no ONE global body or organisation that accredits or recognises Montessori teacher training centres, programmes or Montessori schools. It is a misleading statement because it does imply that there is an overriding authority that oversees this process and the majority of people who are exploring Montessori for the first time make that assumption.

What it really means is that the training centre or school has received accreditation or recognition through or by an organisation (usually an affiliated organisation) overseas. That organisation may hold accreditation with the authorities in their country of origin, which is then applied to the South African based organisation. That however, does not, in the true meaning translate into “international accreditation”. Often the “mother” organisation has accreditation in their country and it is then assumed this accreditation is transferable to other centres around the world when in fact that accreditation is only valid in the country of origin.

To be legally recognised in South Africa by SAQA, SACE etc, courses need to be accredited with the legal authorities in South Africa. International qualifications can get this indirectly by having the qualification verified by SAQA and aligned to the National Qualification Framework (of South Africa). A short course may be recognised by SACE as part of their professional development programme but these are not qualifications.

MACTE (Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education) is often claimed being the authority that gives “international” accreditation or recognition. Whilst MACTE does offer accreditation to teacher education programmes outside of the United States of America, it is an organisation established predominantly to meet the quality assurance and standards required by the government of the United States, and allows US-based organizations to claim funding.

Although subtle, there is a difference between having accreditation through an affiliation to an organisation based in another country, and “international accreditation” / “international recognition” compared to organisations that are registered with and accredited by South Africa authorities, or organisations that have their international qualifications verified by SAQA.

It is important for members of the public, prospective students and prospective parents of adult students to ask questions like:

- What do you mean by international accreditation / recognition?
- How does it benefit me, or my child, that you have international accreditation / recognition?
- With this “international qualification” can I legally teach in South Africa?
- Do you in fact have full and correct accreditation with the authorities within this country?
- Is your accreditation and registration with the Department of Education and Council on Higher Education (CHE) – this is for professional qualifications – or is the accreditation with the SETA – which is a Department of Labour authority and offers accreditation for vocational training only? Has your qualification been verified by SAQA?

When people are honestly and accurately informed, they are able to make REAL choices about their decisions. Making real and authentic choices is a cornerstone of authentic Montessori education – for children and adults.

*Warm regards,*

SAMA ExCo

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