



Flourish

Each Fold a Lesson, Each Child a Hope



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The Story of the Castle

ONCE A FORTRESS, NOW A SYMBOL OF RENEWAL.

SAMAcon 2026 is proudly hosted at the iconic Castle of Good Hope, the oldest surviving colonial building in South Africa and one of the best preserved 17th century fortresses in the world.

Known locally as The Castle and originally named Kasteel de Goede Hoop, this historic landmark is located in the heart of Cape Town's Central Business District.

Built between 1666 and 1679 by the Dutch East India Company, the Castle replaced the original Fort de Goede Hoop and served as a strategic refreshment station for ships travelling between Europe and East Asia. Originally positioned along the coastline of Table Bay, land reclamation has since placed the Castle slightly inland.

Photography by [Bernard Gagnon](#)



Over time, it has served as a military stronghold, administrative centre, and prison during the South African War from 1899 to 1902. Today, it remains an important cultural and historical site, housing ceremonial functions and museums.

Visitors to the Castle can experience a unique blend of architecture, history, and heritage. Notable features include the historic bell tower, home to the oldest bell in South Africa, the central courtyard, and the iconic De Kat Balcony from which official announcements were once made.





The Castle is home to several museums that offer powerful insights into South Africa's past and cultural diversity.

WILLIAM FEHR COLLECTION

This collection showcases decorative arts from the 17th to 19th centuries, including paintings, furniture, and ceramics that reflect life in early Cape colonial society. Many artworks depict Table Bay and the developing settlement, offering a visual record of the region's history.

CAMISSA MUSEUM

The Camissa Museum tells the story of the Cape's people, particularly those historically classified as Coloured, through their own voices. It traces the origins of diverse communities shaped by migration, resilience, and shared experience, offering a deeply reflective perspective on South Africa's past.

CAPE HERITAGE MUSEUM

A celebration of the many cultures that have shaped the Cape, this museum highlights the shared histories of communities including the Khoi, San, Dutch, British, Malays, Indians, and others. It is a space that promotes understanding, connection, and unity through storytelling.

The Castle of Good Hope holds layers of South Africa's history, from colonial power to cultural restoration, offering a space that is both functional and meaningful. We invite attendees to engage not only with the programme, but with the heritage of the venue, connecting past, present, and future.



From the President

It is both a privilege and a meaningful moment to stand before you today, gathered here at the Castle of Good Hope. This building carries weight. Its walls have witnessed centuries of history—some of it marked by control, division, and injustice. It is not a neutral space. And yet, here we are, filling it with something entirely different: conversation, curiosity, compassion, and hope. There is something profoundly symbolic about that....and I like symbols! Because isn't that, in essence, what Montessori education asks of us?



Our theme today is Flourish.

It's a hopeful word. An alive word. But also—if we are honest—a demanding one. To flourish is not simply to survive. It is not just to cope, or to get through the day, or to tick developmental boxes. To flourish is to grow with vitality. To feel a sense of belonging. To be seen, known, and valued. To unfold into one's fullest potential – to actualize. And this applies not only to the child. It applies to us.

As Montessori practitioners, we speak often about the flourishing of the child—their independence, their confidence, their joy in learning. We prepare environments. We observe. We guide. We step back. But how often do we pause and ask: Are we flourishing? Are we working in environments that nourish us? Are we supported, inspired, and able to grow? Or are we, quietly and competently, running on empty?

Because the truth is this: A flourishing child is most often guided by a flourishing adult. Children absorb far more than our lessons. They absorb our energy, our presence, our way of being in this world. If we are rushed, depleted, or disconnected, they feel it. And if we are grounded, curious, and alive to possibility—they feel that too. So perhaps flourishing, for us, begins with giving ourselves permission. Permission to keep learning. Permission to not have all the answers. Permission to reconnect with the joy that drew us to this work in the first place.



And then, what of the child? Maria Montessori spoke of the child not as an empty vessel, but as a force—an active constructor of themselves. To flourish, a child does not need us to shape them. They need space. Trust. Time. Respect. They need classroom environments that say: “You belong here.” “You are capable.” “You matter.”

Flourishing in a Montessori environment looks like a child deeply engaged in their work... A moment of concentration so complete the world fades away... The quiet pride of doing something independently for the first time... The social grace of resolving a conflict with dignity, without an adult... These are not small things. They are the foundations of a peaceful, humane society...we know how much we need this in this exact time in this exact place. In many other places too. Which brings us back to this place... The Castle.

The Castle of Good Hope stands as a reminder of a past that we cannot ignore. But it also offers us an invitation. What does it mean to gather here? We can gather here and each of us can reframe what came before us. We are active shapers of the future. How brilliant is that! In a space once associated with power and control, we are listening to words of development and hope and self growth. We are building a community. We are being wise.



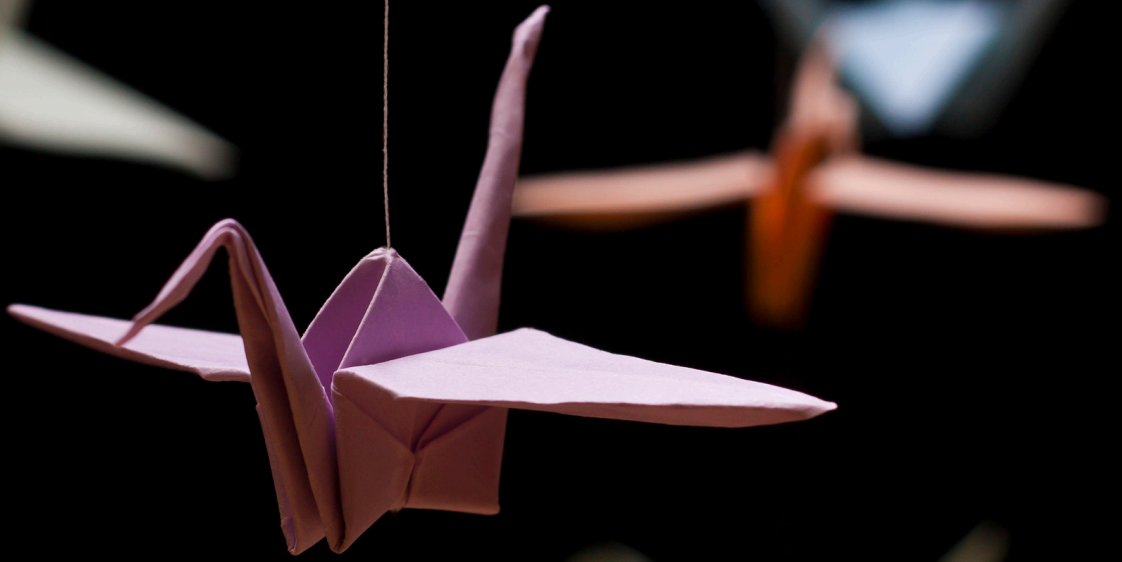
In walls that echo with history, we are, instead, planting seeds of possibility. Now...That is flourishing. Flourishing is not about what came before us, rather it is about transforming it.

So as we move through this conference, I invite you to hold three questions: Where am I flourishing in my practice—and where am I not? What do the children in my care need in order to truly flourish? And how can I, in my own small but meaningful way, contribute to a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world?

Because Montessori education was never only about education. It was—and still is—a vision for humanity.

Nicky Rodeseth





Flourish 2026

This year, we gather within the historic walls of the Castle of Good Hope, a space where South Africa's complex history is deeply etched into stone. Once a symbol of control, it now stands as a place of reflection and renewal. To gather here is to acknowledge the past while choosing transformation, modelling for both children and society what it means to move forward with awareness and intention.

Our theme, Flourish, speaks to growth that is alive, purposeful, and deeply human. It is not simply about development or achievement, but about creating the conditions in which both child and adult can thrive. In Montessori education, we guide this process with care and respect, trusting in the unfolding potential within each individual.

Inspired by the story of Sadako Sasaki and the tradition of one thousand

origami cranes, this theme honours the idea that small, intentional acts can carry profound meaning.

Each fold becomes a gesture of hope, peace, and perseverance. In much the same way, each moment of guidance, each prepared environment, and each act of care contributes to something enduring in the life of a child.

Just as the Castle has evolved over time, so too does Montessori education continue to move from control to freedom, from instruction to discovery, from limitation to possibility. To come together in this space is to reclaim and reimagine it, transforming it into one of dialogue, learning, and shared purpose. Within these walls, where history meets the horizon, we gather to reflect, to connect, and to imagine new possibilities. Each idea shared and each connection made becomes part of our collective unfolding, a reminder that through care, intention, and community, a more compassionate and peaceful future is always within reach.

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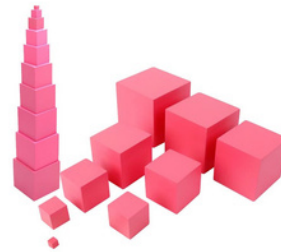
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Saturday 25th

Session Start Times 08h00	REGISTRATION Arrival tea and coffee / Networking / Shopping		
09h00 - 09h30	OPENING – SAMA President - Nicky Rodseth (10min) A Castle Story (20min) P-J Urban		
09h30 - 10h20	SESSION 1: Main Venue – 50min- All ages Flourishing Humanity: The Child's Creative Task in an Evolving Cosmos AllanNguyen		
10h30 - 11h30	SESSION 2: Breakaways – 60 min		
	Breakaway Toddler	Breakaway Preschool	Breakaway Elementary
	Creating an Inclusive Environment for All Toddlers to Flourish Joelene Draper & Claire Howie	Art as a Foundation for Skill Development in the Montessori Classroom Kym vanStraaten	The Power of Storytelling P-J Urban
11h30 - 11h50	TEA BREAK - 20 min Refreshments / Networking / Shopping		
12h00 - 12h50	SESSION 3: KEYNOTE Main Venue–50min - All Ages Once Upon an Ever After Prof Dorian Haarhoff		
12h50 - 13h40	LUNCH - 45 minutes		
13h40 - 14h40	SESSION 4: Breakaways–60min		
	Breakaway Toddler	Breakaway Preschool	Breakaway Elementary
	Trusting Relationships: The Foundation for Flourishing in a Toddler Environment Claire Goffe-Wood & Emma Medell	Maximising the Potential of the 5-6 Year-Old Child's Mathematical Mind Helen van Der Merwe	The Role of History in the Montessori Curriculum Sharon Caldwell
14h50 - 15h40	SESSION 5 : Main Venue– 50 min - All Ages Flourishing Through Our Parent Partnerships Kym van Straaten		
15h50 - 16h50	SESSION 6: Breakaways – 60min		
	Breakaway Toddler	Breakaway PreSchool	Breakaway Elementary
	Supporting Autonomous Construction Joelene Draper & Claire Howie	Phonological Awareness in the Preschool and Early Primary Child Autumn Engelke	Deep Dive Discussion: Montessori in the SA Context and Independent Schools Rights SAMA
17h00	CLOSING DAY ONE		

Sunday 26th



08:00	Arrival tea and coffee / Networking / Shopping		
08h30 - 08h50	OPENING SESSION – 20min Story of the Cranes Kym van Straaten and Jacky Price		
08h50 - 09h30	Honorary-40min Flourishing the Montessori Way: A Personal Journey Pru Ramsey		
09h30 - 10h20	SESSION 7: Main Venue – 50 min How Montessori Principles are Interpreted and Implemented across Diverse School Contexts within the South African Montessori Landscape Hawa Tayob and Kate Rooseboom		
10h20 - 10h40	TEA BREAK-20 min Deliciousfood / Networking / Shopping		
10h50 - 11h50	SESSION 8: Breakaways–60min		
	Breakaway ALL	Breakaway Preschool	Breakaway Elementary
	Flourishing Begins with the Adult: How Each Fold of a Lesson Shapes the Child's Becoming. Yumna Hoosain	A Sensorial Exploration through All Areas Emma Medell	Music and Movement with the Second Plane Child Allan Nguyen
12h00 - 12h50	SESSION 9: Keynote Main Venue – 50 min Flourishing: Learning from Nature and Ancestry. Shaun Dunn		
12h50 - 13h30	LUNCH BREAK 40 min Deliciousfood / Networking / Shopping		
13h30 - 14h30	SESSION 10: Breakaways - 60min		
	Breakaway All	Breakaway All	Breakaway All
	Alumni Discussion	Practical Life Across the Age Groups: 0-3, 3-6and 6-12 Shamiemah Jassiem; Joelene Draper & Sinead Feeley	Helping Children (and Adults) with Dyslexia to Flourish Marietjie van Zijl
14h40 -15h40	SESSION 11: Breakaways–60min		
	Breakaway Toddler	Breakaway Preschool	Breakaway Elementary
	Origami Crane Mobile for Young Babies Claire Howie & Joelene Draper	The Bells - Key to the World of Music Helen van der Merwe	The Timelines and Other Materials for Igniting an Interest in History in the Montessori Prepared Environment Sharon Caldwell
15h50 - 16h20	SESSION 12: Main Venue – 30 min CLOSING SESSION Nicky Rodseth - Dynamic Inclusive Interactive Focus for 2027		
	CLOSING 16h30		

Monday 27th

08:00 – 08:15	Heads of School Leadership & Management Day REGISTRATION Arrival tea and coffee / Networking
08:30 – 09:00	Welcome and Introduction SAMA President - Nicky Rodseth
09:00 – 09:20	Welcome & Scene-Setting By: PennyTainton
09:20 - 09:45	Mapping the National Landscape
09:45 - 10:30	The Gut Check
10:30 - 10:50	Tea & Refreshments
10:50 - 11:30	What Could Go Wrong?
11:30 - 12:15	Where is the Gold?
12:15 - 12:30	Morning Synthesis and Priority Vote
12:30 - 13:00	Lunch
13:00 - 13:50	Green Sprint - Generating Strategies
13:50 - 14:20	From Ideas to Commitments
14:20 - 14:50	Close - Reflection & Appreciation



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Childrens House



We are honoured to welcome the speakers contributing to this year's SAMA Conference. Each brings a depth of experience, thoughtful insight, and a deep commitment to Montessori education.

Their contributions invite us into reflection, dialogue, and renewed curiosity – encouraging us to consider not only what we do, but how and why we do it. Through their perspectives, we are reminded that education is a living practice, shaped by intention, care, and a belief in human potential.

As we gather and engage, may these shared moments of learning nurture growth within our environments and within ourselves. In this space, ideas unfold, connections deepen, and our collective purpose is strengthened.

To our speakers, we extend our sincere appreciation. Your presence and generosity enrich this gathering and support the continued flourishing of our Montessori community.



KEYNOTE

Allan Nguyen



Allan brings over two decades of experience supporting Montessori communities across multiple continents, with a focus on cosmic education, the development of the human personality, and the unfolding potential of the second plane child. His work weaves together Montessori theory with storytelling, music, and the arts, offering a rich and thoughtful perspective on the child's place within the greater human story.

Through his work with First Children, and in association with AMI and Paideia Nova, Allan continues to support educators globally in creating spaces where both children and communities can thrive.

In ***Flourishing Humanity: The Child's Creative Task in an Evolving Cosmos***,

Allan explores the child as an active contributor to an evolving world. Drawing on Montessori principles, he reflects on the human capacity not only to adapt, but to consciously shape culture and environment. He highlights key developmental forces such as trust, movement, imagination, spiritual connection, and the search for meaning, each revealing the child's natural orientation toward growth and contribution.

Aligned with the theme Flourish, Allan invites us to recognise the significance of our role as adults in preparing environments, both seen and unseen, that allow each child to grow, act, and discover their unique place in the world.

Human beings are capable of conscious contribution to the wider world.

Allan also offers a breakaway session, ***Music and Movement with the Second Plane Child***, a practical exploration of how music and movement support pattern, expression, coordination, and joyful collaboration in the 6–12 environment.



SPEAKERS



CLAIRE HOWIE

Claire Howie is the owner and manager of a small school in Wellington and is currently training as an AMI 0–3 trainer. She is passionate about the creative powers of the young child and the role of carefully prepared environments in supporting each child’s holistic development. Claire’s work is grounded in the belief that the environments we create shape the adults our children become.



JOELINE DRAPER

Joeline Draper brings over 15 years of Montessori experience across the 0–3 and 3–6 environments. An AMI Assistance to Infancy Diploma holder, she lectures at the Montessori Early Learning Foundation, serves as a CoRE Facilitator with the Indaba Institute, and works with the PEACE programme. As the owner of Moonrise Montessori in Paarl, her work is deeply rooted in inclusive education, early intervention, and supporting children with additional needs.

With a shared passion for the early years and inclusive practice, Joeline and Claire explore how prepared environments support every child’s growth and independence. Sessions include ***Creating an Inclusive Environment for All Toddlers to Flourish*** and ***Supporting Autonomous Construction***, as well as a hands-on workshop: ***Origami Crane Mobile for Young Babies***.



KEYNOTE

Kym Van Straaten



Kym van Straaten is an experienced Montessori educator and Head of School at The Bay Academy in Hout Bay, Cape Town, with over 25 years in the field.

She has led children from toddler through elementary levels and previously founded and directed Randburg Montessori in Johannesburg for 18 years. She holds AMI 3–6 and 6–12 diplomas, a BA in Early Years Education, and a Diploma in Human Resources, and is a long-standing member of the South African Montessori Association.

In her keynote, ***Flourishing Through our Parent Partnerships***, Kym explores the vital role of collaboration between educators and families in supporting the child's development.

Grounded in her deep respect for the child's freedom to construct themselves within a prepared environment, her work highlights how strong partnerships can create the conditions for meaningful growth.

Children flourish when educators and families work together with shared purpose.

She also presents the breakaway session ***Art as a Foundation for Skill Development in the Montessori Classroom***, where she explores how purposeful art experiences are far more than creative expression. Kym examines how working with real materials and processes supports the refinement of movement, coordination, concentration, and independence, while also nurturing creativity and confidence.



SPEAKERS

PETER-JOHN URBAN

Peter-John is a Montessori guide who values storytelling as a fundamental tool for learning. Drawing on his background in theatre and dance, he brings narrative and movement into his work across different age groups, creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

He has also facilitated parent workshops, demonstrating the power of storytelling and offering practical ways for families to bring this tradition into the home. Explore storytelling as a fundamental tool for learning in his session ***The Power of Storytelling.***



SHARON CALDWELL

Sharon is a teacher, trainer, writer, and Montessori advocate with nearly four decades of experience across Montessori and conventional education settings. She holds qualifications in Montessori 3–6, 6–12, and 12–15, and has worked internationally in training, material development, and professional development for Montessori educators. She currently supports schools in SA through consultancy and trains part-time with SchoolScape in India.

Sharon presents two breakaway sessions: ***The Role of History in the Montessori Curriculum*** and ***The Timelines and Other Materials for Igniting an Interest in History in the Montessori Prepared Environment.***





AUTUMN ENGELKE

Autumn is a speech and language therapist with over 20 years of experience, Autumn specialises in literacy and language development and works closely within a Montessori environment. In her session, ***Phonological Awareness in the Preschool and Early Primary Child***, she explores phonological awareness as a foundation for reading, offering insight into how educators and parents can support children in becoming confident, independent learners, and how early intervention can make a meaningful difference.

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KEYNOTE

Prof Dorian Haarhof



Dorian Haarhoff is a writer, storyteller, mentor, and speaker, and a former Professor of English in Namibia. His work is rooted in a deep passion for nurturing creativity and imagination, and he is widely recognised for his belief in the power of stories to create new realities, support healing, and cultivate belonging.

Through his workshops and writings, including *The Writer's Voice* and *Route 77: A Poememoir*, Dorian invites individuals to reconnect with their creative potential and rediscover the power of their own voice.

His "wordshops" blend storytelling, reflection, and creative practice, and he has shared these experiences with Montessori communities through story-based workshops in schools.

In his keynote, ***Once upon an ever after life: The Meaning of Stories in Montessori***, Dorian explores the role of storytelling within the Montessori environment and its importance in the child's development.

Stories have the power to create new realities, bring healing, and build belonging.

He reflects on how stories shape identity, foster imagination, and connect us more deeply to the human experience. His work reminds us that storytelling is not only a teaching tool, but a way of understanding ourselves and the world we inhabit.



SPEAKERS



CLAIRE GOFFE-WOOD

Claire Goffe-Wood has over 20 years' experience in a toddler environment at Chameleons Montessori School in Durbanville. She is a passionate advocate for the child under three and their unique developmental needs.

She holds AMI Birth to Three Certificate and Diploma qualifications and currently works as a CoRE facilitator, supporting early childhood education in communities including Kraaifontein, Eerste Rivier, Heidedal, and Kayamandi.



EMMA MEDELL

Emma Medell has over 35 years of experience in Montessori education. She trained in London with AMI, completing her Casa dei Bambini and Birth to Three qualifications, and has worked as a directress, principal, and co-founder of Chameleons Montessori School.

She is currently a CoRE facilitator with Community Rooted Education, supporting ECD communities in Kraaifontein, Eerste Rivier, Mbekweni, and Kayamandi. Emma is passionate about empowering educators to better understand the child, themselves, and their environments, and continues to contribute to Montessori training and development.

In their session, ***Trusting Relationships: The Foundation for Flourishing in a Toddler Environment***, they explore how secure relationships support each child's growth.

Emma also presents ***A Sensorial Exploration Through All Areas***, reimagining the environment as a rich, sensorial space for discovery.





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KEYNOTE



HAWA TAYOB

Hawa Tayob brings decades of experience in Montessori education across toddler, pre-primary, and primary environments, both locally and internationally. As the Founding Director of the Montessori Early Learning Foundation (MELF), her work has been instrumental in expanding access to Montessori education in South Africa, particularly within underserved communities. Her background spans teaching, training, curriculum development, and national contributions to inclusive education.



KATE ROOSEBOOM

Kate Rooseboom is a lecturer at the Montessori Early Learning Foundation (MELF), where she draws on her background in psychology, research, and teaching to support the development of Montessori educators. She holds an M.A. in Research Psychology and has over ten years of experience in market and social research. With experience as a Montessori pre-primary guide, Kate's work is informed by classroom practice, with a strong focus on literacy development and supporting second-language English learners. She is currently completing a Master's degree in Curriculum Studies at the UCT.

More about their talk, *How Montessori Principles Are Interpreted and Implemented Across Diverse School Contexts within the South African Landscape* on the next page.



HAWA AND KATE CONTINUED

In their keynote, ***How Montessori Principles Are Interpreted and Implemented Across Diverse School Contexts within the South African Landscape***, Hawa and Kate explore how Montessori practice is expressed across a range of schools in South Africa. Drawing on data from the South African Montessori Association's tiered accreditation process and school mentor visits, their research examines how Montessori principles are interpreted and implemented in real contexts.

The study identifies emerging patterns, strengths, and areas of tension in practice, offering insight into consistency, lived experience, and quality assurance across schools. Rather than testing a fixed hypothesis, it uses an exploratory approach to better understand how Montessori principles are enacted on the ground and what this reveals about professional support and implementation within the South African context.



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KEYNOTE

Pru Ramsey



Pru Ramsey is an English-speaking South African educator with a lifelong commitment to Montessori education and early childhood development.

After beginning her career teaching high school Geography and English, she completed her AMI Diploma in Preprimary Education in 1980 in California under Dr Lena Wikramaratne, a direct student of Dr Maria Montessori.

Returning to South Africa, Pru worked in a range of Montessori settings including The Ridge School and Montessori Country School, later becoming Principal. She has been a key contributor to the Montessori movement in Southern Africa, serving as a founding member

and Chair of the Montessori Society of Southern Africa, and is an Honorary Life Member of SAMA.

Her work expanded into adult education, where she spent decades training and mentoring ECD educators across South Africa, including leadership roles in Montessori teacher education programmes at the Sustainability Institute, Learning for Sustainability, and the Indaba Institute. She has also been closely involved in the Community Rooted Education (CoRE) programme, supporting its development and facilitator training.

How has your Montessori journey shaped the way you see life, service, and the legacy you leave behind?

In her keynote, **Flourishing the Montessori Way: A Personal Journey**, Pru reflects on how Montessori training reshaped her life and continues to influence her understanding of service, purpose, and human connection. She invites reflection on how Montessori education shapes not only practice, but also worldview, relationships, and legacy.



SPEAKERS

HELEN VAN DER MERWE

Helen van der Merwe has nearly 20 years of experience across Montessori 3–6, 6–9, and 9–12 environments. She holds AMI diplomas in both 3–6 and 6–12, as well as a Master of Montessori Education, and has worked as a guide, principal, and school founder, currently leading Cornerstone Children's Centre in Somerset West.

Helen presents two breakaway sessions: **Maximising the Potential of the 5–6 Year Old Child's Mathematical Mind** and **The Bells – Key to the Work**.



MARIETJIE VAN ZIJL

Marietjie is a qualified remedial teacher, 6–9 Montessori directress, and founder of Boss Your Brain Dyslexia Solutions. With over 40 years of experience exploring the nature and support of dyslexia, she has developed and refined her approach through decades of practice with both children and adults.

In her breakaway session **Helping Children (and Adults) with Dyslexia to Flourish**, she offers practical insights into understanding dyslexia and strategies that can be applied immediately to support learning and growth.



KEYNOTE

Shaun Dunn



Shaun Dunn is an educator originally from Durban and now based in the Western Cape. With a background in secondary education, his professional journey has expanded through immersive learning experiences across Africa, including time in Tanzania where he engaged with traditional medicine practices and indigenous understandings of health, community, and the natural world.

How might remembering our interconnectedness with each other and the Earth reshape the way we lead?

His work in African Earth Jurisprudence, alongside engagement with indigenous communities in southern Africa, has deeply shaped his relational approach to education. These experiences continue to inform his interest in how African knowledge systems can meaningfully contribute to contemporary learning and leadership spaces.

Shaun currently lectures in the Diploma in Sustainable Development at Stellenbosch University, where he facilitates learning that moves beyond the classroom into lived experience. His approach to sustainability education emphasises ecoliteracy, systems thinking, and nature as teacher, guide, and healer.

In this keynote, ***Flourishing: Learning from Nature and Ancestry***, Shaun invites reflection on how ancestral knowledge and relationships with the natural world can reshape the way we teach, lead, and care.

His work is grounded in regenerative leadership and the philosophy of Ubuntu, asking how a deeper recognition of interconnectedness might transform education and leadership practice.



SPEAKERS

YUMNA HOOSAIN

With over two decades of experience in Montessori education, Yumna has worked with children aged 0–12 and trained educators across Europe and parts of Africa. She runs a Montessori training centre in South Africa, affiliated with Waterpark Montessori (now European Montessori College), and is committed to expanding access to quality Montessori education, particularly in underserved communities.

Her work focuses on empowering educators to create meaningful change, grounded in the belief that each lesson supports a child's growth and each child carries hope for the future.

In ***Flourishing Begins with the Adult: How Each Fold of a Lesson Shapes the Child's Becoming***, Yumna explores how each lesson, gesture, and moment of awareness supports the child's unfolding, and how the adult's own preparation shapes this process.



The graphic features the EMC logo (a red and blue cube with 'EMC' inside) and the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education logo (a green and white square with a pink circle). The text 'European Montessori College' is in large blue and red font, with 'In Africa' written in a red script font over a blue and white circular graphic. Below the title, it says 'Study Montessori with us' and lists four benefits: 'Online and hands-on', 'Flexible study program', 'Internationally accredited', and 'Global community of learners'. At the bottom, it says 'More information at www.europeanmontessoricollege.com' and 'Contact Yumna Hoosain 069 344 3223'.

SPEAKERS



JOELENE DRAPER

Joelene brings over 15 years of Montessori experience across the 0–3 and 3–6 environments. An AMI Assistance to Infancy Diploma holder, she lectures at the Montessori Early Learning Foundation, serves as a CoRE Facilitator with the Indaba Institute, and works with the PEACE programme. As the owner of Moonrise Montessori in Paarl, her work is deeply rooted in inclusive education, early intervention, and supporting children with additional needs.



SHAMIEMAH JASSIEM

Shamiemah is an experienced Montessori educator, trainer, and assessor with over two decades in the field. She has worked in school leadership, facilitated workshops across South Africa and Ghana, and has been involved in Montessori teacher training since 2010. She holds a Master's degree in Social Science with distinction, with research focused on Montessori and religion. Her work is driven by a passion for accessible quality education and empowering women in early childhood development.



SINÉAD FEELY

Sinéad is a Montessori and primary educator with over a decade of teaching experience in Ireland, Canada, and South Africa. She holds a B.A. and B.A. Honours in Montessori Education and a Bachelor of Education Honours. Currently Head Directress for the 6–12 age group at Shereens Primary and Pre-Primary, Sinéad specialises in literacy development and positive psychology, creating engaging learning environments that support confidence, resilience, and a lifelong love of learning.

Joelene, Shamiemah and Sinéad are presenting
Practical Life Across the Ages (0–12): From First Movements to Meaningful Work



MANAGEMENT DAY

Penny Tainton



Penny is passionate about creating meaningful change in areas of society where improved standards, equity, and opportunity are most needed. A central focus of her work is addressing inequality through innovative, systems-based approaches to leadership and organisational development.

Unlocking the full potential of leaders and organisations.

With over 4 decades of experience across corporate, political, government, and state-owned sectors, she brings expertise in governance, systems design, facilitation, and leadership development.

Her work spans public sector reform, policy implementation, and the design of programmes that build capable, reflective, and resilient leaders.

Through her consultancy **Evolve**, Penny works with governments, NGOs, and businesses to deliver transformative leadership development solutions. Her approach fosters continuous growth, supporting leaders who are curious, committed, and able to navigate complexity in a rapidly changing world.

Her previous roles include Executive Director of Policy and Governance for the Democratic Alliance, where she designed performance monitoring systems for government and developed leadership programmes for public representatives. She has also led strategic initiatives within the Western Cape Government, applying Harvard's PDIA methodology and Michael Barber's Deliverology framework to address complex challenges in education and governance.

Penny continues to work internationally, facilitating programmes on governance, coalition building, and leadership development, including through the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's International Academy for Leadership.



evolve 



Evolve

- to develop gradually, especially from a simple to a more complicated form; to develop something in this way;
- to develop over time, often many generations, into forms that are better adapted to survive changes in their environment

– Oxford Dictionary

Organisations have always faced complex challenges of steering their people through change, and never more so than in the past couple of years as a global pandemic forced us all to re-evaluate what we do, how we do it, when we do it and where we do it. Organisational leaders have grappled with new ways of motivating and managing their teams. For many, this has been exceptionally difficult, while some have adapted quickly and easily, adapting to survive changes in their environment – and to thrive!

With over forty years experience in a wide range of organisations, including corporate, political parties, government and SOEs, and expertise in systems design, facilitation, leadership development, tools and methods for political campaigning, as well as cutting-edge methodologies employed in public sector reform, evolve offers support to leaders and organisations to navigate this complex environment.

Working with you, we will design and deliver bespoke leadership development programmes, facilitate strategic thinking sessions for your teams, and tailor training modules to meet your objectives. Whether delivered through in-person or virtual sessions, the key to successful programmes is to ensure that participants are actively engaged, with content that is relevant, shared in a manner that sparks creativity, curiosity and collaboration.

Inspired by the impact of purpose in both individuals and organisations, each evolutionary programme journey will start with understanding the culture, challenges and needs of the client in order to work towards clear objectives and outcomes.

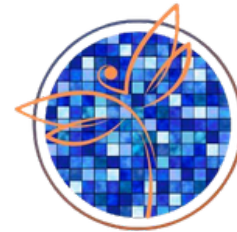
Evolve is uniquely placed to support organisations wishing to implement change programmes using Deliverology (Sir Michael Barber, Instruction to Deliver) and PDIA (Problem Driven, Iterative, Adaptive) methodologies (Harvard University, Building State Capability), with years of experience leading teams in both of these systems.

In addition, evolve offers facilitated strategic workshops using the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® materials and methodology.



SPONSORS

With sincere gratitude to our sponsors, whose support nurtures the growth of our Montessori community and the unfolding of each child's potential.



Blue Moon
MONTESSORI SCHOOL





Flourish

Each Fold a Lesson, Each Child a Hope

Together, we flourish.