

2007 EXPLORE

MMI Modern[®]
Montessori
International
(LONDON)
A LEADER in Montessori Pre-school Education
Modern Montessori International Group

The Corporate Newsletter of the MMI Group

Issue No. 01/2007

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From the Editor



Several new and significant developments have transpired since the previous edition of EXPLORE in August. First and foremost, the ever expanding MMI Group has finally acquired its own seven-storey office building along the bustling South Bridge Road, one of Singapore's first and oldest trading hubs since the days of independence.

Moreover, inroads into the Middle East may be a reality in the near future as Singapore President S R Nathan's recent state visits to Egypt and Jordan opened new doors for early childhood teacher-training centers to be established there.

It will be interesting to see how developments unfold over the next few months, and EXPLORE will be sure to provide all the latest updates.

Alan Tan

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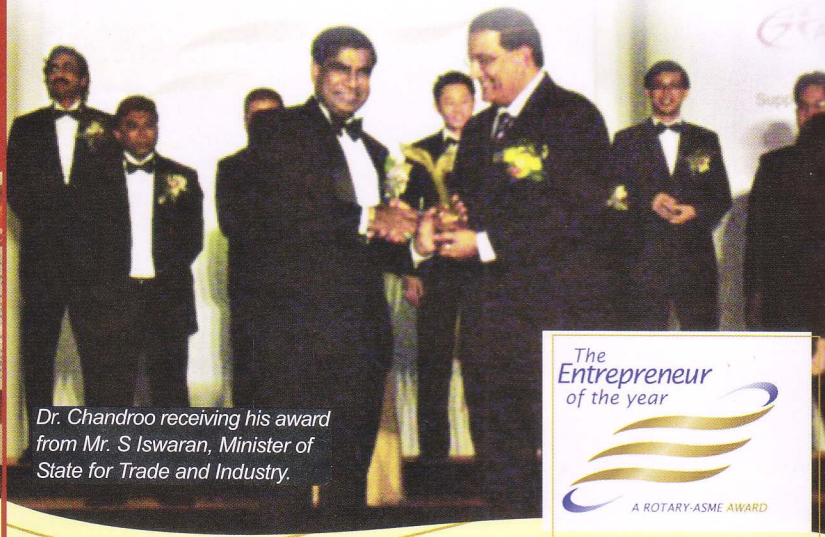
Publisher : MMI Group

New MMI Singapore Headquarters

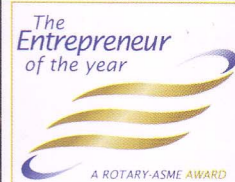


The wholly owned MMI Building, a newly registered building with IRAS, will be the new home to the Chairman's Office and Finance Department. The existing office, occupying the entire 24th storey of Orchard Towers, will continue to function as the Group's second Corporate HQ. It houses the Marketing Department and MMI Singapore's two teacher training subsidiaries.

The MMI Building, standing proudly at 72 South Bridge Road, will be a prominent landmark of the Clarke Quay district.



Dr. Chandroo receiving his award from Mr. S Iswaran, Minister of State for Trade and Industry.



Top Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2006

EXPLORE congratulates MMI Group Chairman/CEO Dr. T Chandroo on being named a Top Entrepreneur of the Year by the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME).

Incepted in 1989, the same year MMI was established, the Entrepreneur of the Year Award is a premier entrepreneurial accolade that highlights and acknowledges local entrepreneurs who have demonstrated excellence in their field of business while significantly contributing to Singapore's economy and society.

This year, 15 top entrepreneurs from 13 local enterprises were selected after several rounds of grueling interviews by the award judging committee to be in the running for the title.

MMI (London) Appoints Franchisee in Nigeria

Modern Montessori International (London) of the United Kingdom and Chelis Education Consult Limited of the Federal Republic of Nigeria have entered a franchise partnership to set up a teacher-training institute in Lagos, Nigeria.

MMI (London) Colledge Manager Ms. Marianne Bourke (right) with Chelis representative Ms. Tina Udoji.



State Visits To Egypt And Jordan

Highlights

(14th – 22nd November 2006)

MMI Group Chairman/CEO Dr. T Chandroo was part of a 21-member business delegation that visited the middle-eastern countries of Egypt and Jordan in November.

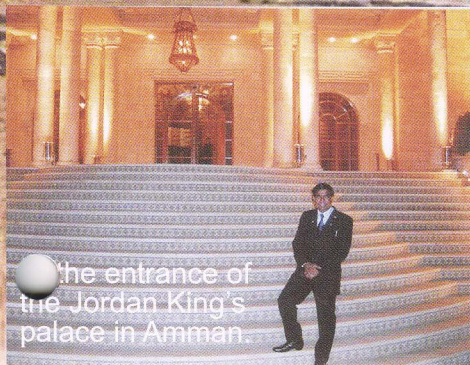
The delegation was headed by His Excellency President S R Nathan of the Republic of Singapore, who was accompanied by Minister for Information and the Arts Dr. Lee Boon Yang, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mr. Zainul Abidin Rasheed, Deputy Speaker of Parliament Ms. Indranee Rajah and Member of Parliament Ms. Jessica Tan.

During his stay in Egypt, President Nathan met

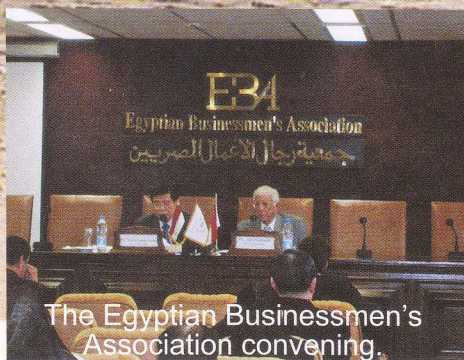
President Hosni Mubarak, Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar University, Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi. He also attended a reception to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between both countries.

President Nathan later visited Jordan and met King Abdullah II, who hosted a state banquet for Mr. and Mrs. Nathan as well as members of the business delegation.

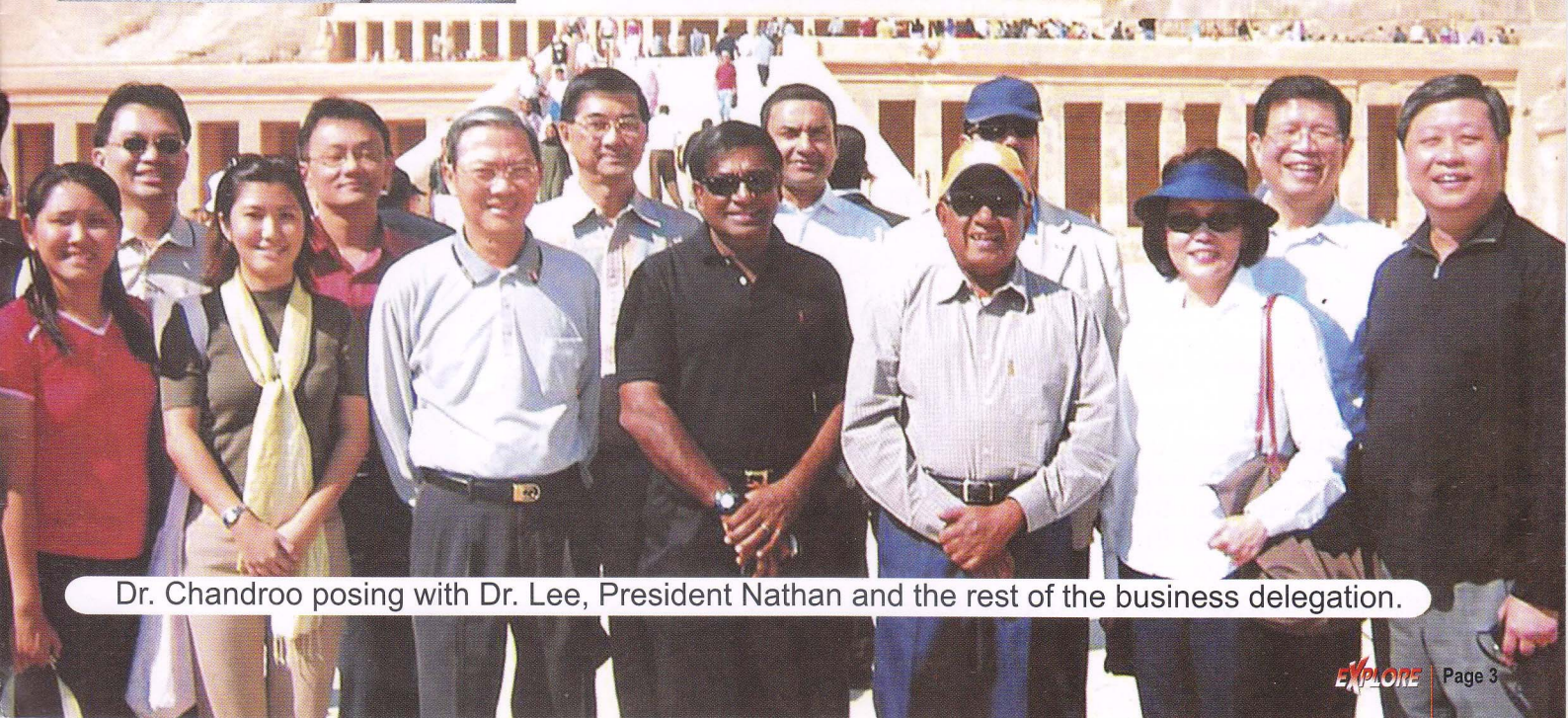
For MMI, the state visits were rare opportunities that opened doors for MMI (London) to set up teacher-training schools in both countries in the near future.



the entrance of the Jordan King's palace in Amman.



The Egyptian Businessmen's Association convening.



Dr. Chandroo posing with Dr. Lee, President Nathan and the rest of the business delegation.

Montessori Europe Conference

Date: 13th October – 15th October 2006 • Venue: Hotel Marriott, Vienna, Austria

"Smell the fresh air, feel the ambience and always place an importance in Montessori education." Those were the words spoken by the parliamentary senator as he warmly welcomed all the academic delegates to the Montessori Europe (ME) Congress 2006.

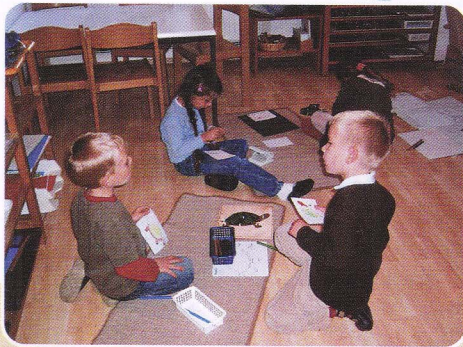
Representing Modern Montessori International at this momentous event were MMI Chairman/CEO Dr.

Chandroo, MMI Director of Pre-Schools Mdm. Sheila and MMI (London) College Manager Ms. Marianne Bourke.

The theme for this year's ME conference was "Democracy in Education – Finding a Way with Montessori". The event was, of course, organized by ME with full support from the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.



▲ MMI Director of Pre-Schools Mdm. Sheila visiting The Children's Home International Montessori Kindergarten at Wien, Austria.



EXPLORE recently caught up with MMI's first franchisee for Indonesia, Ms. Sony Vasandani, who attended an 11-day Montessori workshop at Orchard Towers' teacher-training centre.

1. Why did you decide to franchise with MMI?

MMI is Montessori with a Modern touch, which I feel is practical for today's child. They have also proven it to be a very effective system and have benefited the lives of millions of children with their expanding international network.

2. Can you tell us more about Yayasan Sunshine?

Established in 1992, Yayasan Sunshine has had a magical journey in making a difference to thousands of children by providing a holistic education. Through an integrated, thematic approach, and with the understanding that each child possesses his/her own learning style, we occupy their days with fun-filled, age-appropriate structured activities, which make the learning process fun! Yayasan Sunshine also develops in children good character, a love of work, self-awareness and self-confidence as well as the desire to be a lifelong learner. We now have two branches and conduct workshops and training for teachers (Certificate in Pre-School Teaching).

3. What are your plans for Indonesia for the year 2007?

I am looking forward to my partnership with MMI in 2007, whereby I plan to spread the philosophy and knowledge of Dr. Maria Montessori in Indonesia through MMI's teacher-training program and run the MMI centre for the children too, thereby implementing all that I believe in. I believe that by doing this I will be playing a role in bringing the education of the children in Indonesia up to a higher level.



▲ Mdm. Sheila and Inger Celion (2nd from right) together with some of the academic delegates.

Ms. Sony Vasandani, Founder and Operator of Yayasan Sunshine.



Progressive Developments at MMI Malaysia

Having obtained the necessary approval from the ministries concerned in March 2005, the Malaysian operation has taken on the uphill challenge in increasing the Diploma in Montessori Education students intake. Prompt and vigorous actions have resulted in tripling the intake within the short span of one year.

In addition to this is the continuous growth efforts by MMI Malaysia, which can be seen through the running of 2 enrichment centres based in Valencia, Sungei Buloh and Subang Square, Subang Jaya.

Currently, MMI Malaysia's keen focus has also come to include the pre-school market by acquiring a pre-school by the name of Tadika Mega Kids in Bandar Sunway. Preparations are in gear for obtaining the lease of a pre-school in Klang as a future expansion.

In a nutshell, MMI Malaysia's operations, with the cooperation from MMI HQ in Singapore, is definitely moving forward towards greater and higher achievements in the forthcoming years.



MMI Thailand Updates

- by Ms. Patricia Barber (Head Administrator)

Loy Krathong Event (3rd November 2006)



For Loy Krathong we made our own 'Krathong' from natural fibers with the help of our teachers and parents and then floated them in our pool. Loy Krathong is a Traditional Thai festival where all Thais float a Krathong (as pictured) in the rivers in Bangkok. It is traditionally performed on the full moon night of the twelfth lunar month, which usually falls in November. The floating of the Krathong is intended to float away ill fortune as well as express apologies to Khongkha or Ganga, the River Goddess.

Halloween Celebration 31st October 2006



For Halloween, during our cooking class, the children learned about pumpkins, how to take out the seeds, roast them and eat them (yummy!) and how to carve a face on the pumpkin and light a candle inside!

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM PROUD MMI PARENT



"If asked which school is good for our kids, Modern Montessori International Pre-School is the answer. The Montessori Method, the full Montessori equipment, and a stimulating learning environment there have really enhanced my son's motor skills very quickly, indeed. He has significantly improved his use of English too – and is now really enjoying English music and reading. Our heartfelt thanks to all the teachers and staff at MMI. It is one of the best pre-schools one can find in Thailand. Strongly recommended!"

Wichai Turongpun, Ph.D.
Professor in Economics
National Institute of Development Administration
Bangkok, Thailand

The New Indian Express

Cultivating Child's Natural Desire To Learn

Kozhikode Oct 18: What will the children prefer if they are given an option to select the method in which they should be taught? — the conventional one of classroom.

Teaching or some other parallel method envisaged to develop their natural skills? According to Marianne Bourke manager of Modern Montessori International (MMI) College in UK, the parents will not have a second thought if they have an exposure to Montessori system of teaching. For it envisages the classroom as a nourishing place, designed to meet the child's need for self-construction. Marianne has come down to Tirur in Malappuram to impart training to the teachers who are undergoing a course in the Montessori system at the centre run by the Muslim Education Society (MES).

What is Montessori? It is giving freedom to children to investigate the world around. Hence the theory says, the children will become active learners in future.

"Montessori is not a teaching method, it is giving freedom to children to do whatever they want. The child's self-esteem is central to Montessori education. Montessori theory believes in providing an all-round learning environment which

will help the child to develop physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally. The expressions are being encouraged through various methods including crafts and drama."

Having conducted training sessions across the world, she feels that lot of awareness programme need to be conducted in order to sensitise the parents on this system, as it was found that parents are still hesitant to adopt this system in Kerala.

"Unlike the conventional teaching method, we are promoting a style ideal for children to identify their innate skills at very young age. Dr. Maria Montessori had stated that the goal of early childhood education should be to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn. That is our mission," says Marianne, who is making her first visit to Kerala in this regard. Principal of MES centre, Vasantha Arvind said Montessori Method is slowly gaining prominence among the Kerala society.

"The attitude of people is slowly changing, as they are now willing to adopt this unique way of teaching. This has prompted MES to enter into an agreement with MMI," she said.



Kozhikode Oct 18: Marianne Bourke - Manager; Modern Montessori International College, UK

"Montessori is not a teaching method, it is giving freedom to children to do whatever they want."

MMI'S NEW PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES

MMI's three new additions to the already extensive pre-school network aim to bring about even more child development amenities to the central heartland of Singapore. At the same time, it also inches us closer to fulfilling our ultimate Corporate Mission and Vision.



MMI Tampines (Childcare)

Second time sweeter: Ms. Jan and Evon Liow, our MMI franchisees at Woodlands, return to open a childcare centre at Tampines. Well done!



Jumping Beans

MMI subsidiary CSD Consultants has just inked an agreement with Mr. Roger Cheong, a franchisee at Bukit Merah, to start a children's physical programme under New Zealand's Jumping Beans International.



MMI Katong

The latest franchisee to join the big MMI family. The operators Mr. Jimmy Tang and Ms. Mae Yim were at MMI HQ to sign the agreement contract with Dr. Chandroo.

MMI Graduation Concert 2006

Date: 7th October 2006 • Venue: NTUC Auditorium

It was smiles all around once again as MMI's adorable little graduands donned their robes and hats and got ready to embark on a brand new chapter in their education journey. Parents and family members should feel so proud!



Dancing dudes and divas!



Storytelling and songs



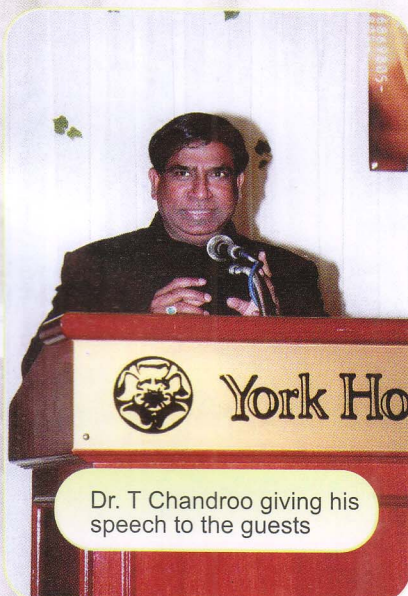
Our proud little Montessorians taking their bow before embarking on a new journey.

MMI Annual Dinner & Dance 2006

Staff and partners of Modern Montessori International convened at the Carlton Hall of the resplendent York Hotel for the company's 7th Annual D&D. As with the previous years, there were a plentitude of gags, games, gifts and - of course - food galore!



The 'Secret Agents'



Dr. T Chandroo giving his speech to the guests



Lucky Draw Winner!



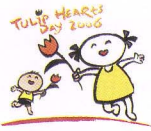
MediaCorp celebrity Abigail entertaining the crowd



Playing Games

MMI CARES - Our Community Contributions

MMI proudly pledges itself to be a corporate citizen. Having achieved its success and stature today, it firmly believes in giving back to the society to benefit the less privileged. Over the past year, MMI has done its part for the Singapore community via the following contributions:



1 Children Cancer Foundation

About 80 MMI volunteers comprising staff, students and parents got together and did our part for charity. Tulip Hearts Day 2006 was a Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) annual fund raising event and we are proud to declare that we have raised, through the street sale of handmade silk-cocoon tulips, a total of **\$103,695.95**. The funds raised will allow the CCF to continue its efforts in the improvement and provision of various programs and services, including financial assistance, counseling, support groups, workshops and therapeutic play.

5 Academic Bursaries

Academic bursaries totalling **\$4,000** were awarded to two final year NUS Civil Engineering students at **\$2,000** each.

Ms. Ye Wan Qing (Singaporean, 23), a former AMKSS and TJC student, who applied for an NUS bursary two years ago but did not get it.

"I think more of such bursaries should be made available so that more needy students can benefit from them."



▲ (Left to Right):

Ms. Ye Wan Qing, Asst Prof. Joshua Kumar, Dr. T Chandroo, Dr. Chew Soon Hoe and Ms. Tiang Kai Ling.

Ms. Tiang Kai Ling (Malaysian, 24), who came to study in Singapore because she felt the education system here is better and the NUS degree is more recognized. Plagued by language problems at first, Ms. Tiang soon assimilated into our local culture and curriculum.

"The bursary really helped me a lot because now I don't have to look for part-time jobs and focus solely on my final year studies."

2 Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund

In support of lifelong learning, MMI has contributed **\$3,000** from the proceeds of its Graduation Concert 2006 to the Straits Times School Pocket Money Fund.



3 MDIS Education Trust Fund

MMI has pledged a monetary sum of **\$50,000** to the MDIS Education Trust Fund, to be paid out over a period of five years.

4 NUS Endowments Fund

A total sum of **\$24,000** has also been pledged to help finance tuition fees for the less well-to-do students. This sum of money will be paid out over a period of four years, the first installment (\$6,000) of which had already been made last December.

In addition to the above contributions, MMI has also donated generously to the following:

6 \$18,000 to SINDA

7 \$6,000 to European Association

8 \$5,000 to Singapore Polytechnic (Top Prize -Young Entrepreneur Award)

9 \$4,000 to Anglo Chinese School (Students Overseas Trip)

10 \$3,000 to Bowen Secondary School (Student Exchange Programme)

11 \$2,000 to Chong Boon Secondary School (Welfare Fund)

To kickstart the year 2007, MMI will be dedicating 5% of all its centres' enrolments to needy families with gross monthly household incomes of not more than \$2000. This way, poor kids can still benefit from top class education.