



Leadership Philosophy and Practice

Munir Shivji

My philosophy of leadership is both innate and shaped by life experience, and reflects a career spent championing the fundamental principles of Montessori pedagogy.

I believe that **every individual deserves the opportunity to be a lifelong learner and an effective leader**. This belief is informed by the importance Montessori places on nurturing an intellectual, stimulating, and social environment where team members learn from and with each other in collaborative arrangements. This environment fosters a culture of learning and sharing which, in turn, energizes community; and, as a Montessori leader, I express this belief by creating energetic working environments where people can develop and strengthen the full range of their skills.

I believe that **humility is a key trait for a successful leader**. I therefore recognize, seek out, and develop others on my team who have knowledge and experience in areas that the group needs. Through careful observation and effective communication, I also provide direction and support based on the abilities and needs of every employee. This respect for individual contribution creates a safe and trusting environment that allows all stakeholders to function effectively, benefit the organization, and grow.

I believe that **an organization's mission is strengthened by examination from multiple perspectives**. This is just one of many reasons why I advocate for diversity of identity, experience, and thought; invite dialogue; listen intently—both to what is said and what's not said; and consider all viewpoints. Understanding the contributions of others, and showing appreciation for their unique perspectives, gives everyone a sense of ownership in the organization.

I believe in **the accountability of leadership**. Though I take all perspectives into account when reaching decisions, I believe that, ultimately, a leader must shoulder the burden of acting in the best interests of the organization and take responsibility for the outcome of his or her decisions.

I believe in **teamwork**. My goal is to surround myself with a team of experts who embrace each other's strengths and weaknesses and collaborate for the good of all, while maintaining a steady focus on excellence and striving for continued improvement.

I believe in **the future**. As a visionary leader who is committed to the exciting possibilities that await for the future growth of Montessori education, I embrace positive, pro-active change based on current research and best practices in the field of education. The future's endless possibilities must, of course, be assessed, analyzed, and planned for in a solid and sustainable way.

I believe that **organizations are more than their employees**. Developing meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders—including children, families, school members, community members and kindred organizations—allows the mission of the organization to come to life. I continually express this belief by nurturing relationships and pursuing new partnerships that can further the impact of an organization.

And finally, I believe in **integrity**. I am authentic in my practice. I lead by example and set a tone that empowers others to share in the values and interests of the whole. I prioritize service to others and the organization, follow through with my promises, and strive to consistently embody universal values. I always remain true to myself as an individual while keeping in mind the spirit of the organization and its mission.