



DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES, IIT MADRAS

Symposium-Workshop on

**Multi-Grade Multi-Level Pedagogy
and SDG 4 Quality Education:
Possibilities and Challenges**

12th and 13th February, 2026

Venue: Mahatma Hall (HSB 356)
Humanities and Sciences Block

About the Symposium

Children and young people around the world are exposed to multiple vulnerabilities and risks of exclusion from the education system. While the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025 notes the modest progress made over the past decade in achieving SDG 4 Quality Education, it also highlights the fact that hundreds of millions of children still remain excluded from the process due to several factors. India's national education policy (NEP) 2020 explicitly aligns itself with SDG 4 to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

It is in this context that this Symposium-cum-Workshop proposes to discuss the Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) methodology, a systematic pedagogical approach developed in India and widely adapted and used across the world, and to examine the possibilities it offers to foster self-paced, self-directed learning through a decentred, democratic approach to classroom teaching-learning.

MGML acknowledges the multi-dimensional diversity and heterogeneity in millions of classrooms across the world and turns the perception of this situation on its head by looking at such diversity and heterogeneity not as a crisis but as an opportunity to help the child ‘learn how to learn’ and acquire the skills and the disposition for self-directed life-long learning.

The Symposium part is intended as a forum to introduce researchers and teachers to the basic concepts and the evolution and spread of the MGML method, and go deeper into the possibilities it offers – and the challenges it faces – with reference to specific aspects such as:

- Self-directed, Peer and Cooperative Learning
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Education in the Arts / Aesthetic Education with MGML
- Science Education and MGML
- The dynamics of Education towards Global Citizenship, Reliability, Trust and Solidarity.

The Workshop part will offer the participants, through hands-on experience, the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the different kinds of Teaching-Learning Material (TLM) developed for and used in MGML classrooms in India and across the world. Handled by researchers working on MGML TLMs, the Workshop will also be a forum for participants to discuss and experiment with the possibilities and challenges of innovating and adapting such TLMs to local socio-cultural contexts without losing sight of the basic principle of MGML – which is to empower and enable the learner to learn independently at their own pace, as well as in cooperation rather than competition with peers.

Symposium Schedule

Day 1 – 12th February, 2026

9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. - Inauguration

10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - **Session 1: Learning with Ladders of Learning – Learning in Uneven Steps: Teaching with the Multi-Grade Multi-Level Methodology – Thomas Müller**

11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Tea break

11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - **Session 2: Potential of the Mixed Age Classroom – Jayashree Nambiar**

12:15 p.m. to 12:45 pm - **Q & A, unstructured sharing by attending teachers/scholars**

12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. - Lunch break

1:45 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. - **Session 3: Concepts and Methods of Cooperative Learning – Christine Schmalenbach**

2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. - **Session 4: Multi-Grade Multi-Level in the Age of AI - G Gautama**

3:15 p.m. to 3:35 p.m. - Tea break

3:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. - **Session 5: Art education from a global perspective – Christian Römmelt**

4:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. - **Q and A, unstructured sharing by attending teachers/scholars**

Day 2 – 13th February, 2026

9:30 a.m. to 10.15 a.m. - **Session 6: MGML in Public School systems – Realities and Perceptions – Merlia Shaukath**

10:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. - **Session 7: Examification, Learning, Net Zero, and the Aims of Education – Steven Puttick**

11:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. - Tea break

11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. - **Session 8: Global Citizenship Education - Indo-German considerations – Gregor Lang-Wojtasik**

12:15 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. - **Q and A, unstructured sharing by attending teachers/scholars**

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. - Lunch break

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. - **Session 9: Socio-emotional skills with Ladders of Learning – Discussion and Workshop – Citka Ashouri**

3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. - Tea and wrap up

Speakers and Discussants

Guest of Honour for Inauguration:

1. Prof. Prathap Haridoss
Dean Academic Courses, IIT Madras
2. Iwan Siemens
Head of the Culture and Science section,
Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Chennai
3. Prof. Rajesh Kumar
Head, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras

Speakers:

1. Jayashree Nambiar
Educationist, Secretary, The School KFI, Chennai
2. Merlia Shaukath
Founder & CEO, Madhi Foundation, Chennai
3. G Gautama
Director, Palar Centre for Learning - KFI, Chengalpattu
4. Dr. Müller Thomas
Professor of Special Pedagogy, University of Wuerzburg, Germany
5. Steven Puttick
Associate Professor of Education, St Anne's College, University of Oxford, UK
6. Christine Schmalenbach
Professor of Education, University of Hamburg, Germany
7. Christian Herbert Römmelt
Professor of Teacher Education, Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten, Germany
8. Gregor Paul Lang-Wojtasik
Professor of Teacher Education, Pädagogische Hochschule Weingarten, Germany
9. Citka Ashouri Pour Moghaddam
Ph.D. Research Scholar, University of Hamburg, Germany

Discussants:

1. M Suresh Babu, Director MIDS
2. Milind Brahme, Professor, HSS, IITM
3. Sreenath VS, Assistant Professor, HSS, IITM
4. Subhra Shankha Chakraborty, Ph.D. Research Scholar, HSS, IITM
5. Shania Kariappa, Ph.D. Research Scholar, HSS, IITM
6. Utkarsh Upadhyay, Master's Student, HSS, IITM
7. Abdulla Sarfraz, Master's Student, HSS, IITM