

Executive Committee Meeting - Harare Zimbabwe - December 8-11, 2000

Present:

Harold Oaks USA President

Wolfgang Schneider Germany Vice-President

Kim Woo-ok Korea Vice-President

Niclas Malmcrona Sweden Secretary General

Helge Andersen Norway

Luiza Monteiro Brasil

Peter Manscher Denmark

Yoshishige Kagawa Japan

Ivica Simic Croatia

Tisa Chifunyise Zimbabwe

Peter Rinderknecht Switzerland

Lou Westbury Australia

Remi Boucher Canada

Alison Turner Canada Executive Assistant

Observers:

Elizabeth Kabasa Zimbabwe

Henri Favory Mauritius

Jackson Ndawula Uganda

Manuela Soeiro Mozambique

Ricky Gitahi Kenya

Vincent Mwasanga Namibia

Philemon Mwasango Tanzania

Mpho Molepo South Africa

Ceela Chilila Zambia

Gertrude Kamkwatira Malawi

Sifiso Mabaso South Africa

Maswati Dlodlu Swaziland

Helen Nordenson Sweden

1. Opening of the Meeting

Harold Oaks welcomed the Executive Committee and all others present to Harare and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Niclas Malmcrona also extended his welcome to the meeting of the Executive Committee.

2. Apologies

Vicki Ireland (England), Kim Van der Boon (Netherlands), Hagit Rehavi Nikolayevsky (Israel), Jan Skotnicki (Poland), Galya Kolosova (Russia), Marjorie Maclean (Canada), and

Eckhard Mittelstädt (Germany), have sent their apologies.

3. Report from the Bureau Meeting

Harold Oaks reported that the bureau met the previous day to review the agenda and make any necessary amendments.

4. Review of the Agenda

Item #20, World Project, was added to the agenda.

5. Adoption of the Minutes from the Dallas Meeting

Ñ Niclas Malmcrona noted that there needs to be an addition of one abstention from the votes for the annual, item 14 c)viii.

Ñ Wolfgang Schneider noted that the meeting of the German speaking countries mentioned on page 5 of the Dallas minutes should read "the coming October (2000)", instead of "last October".

Ñ Luiza Monteiro noted that "Argentina, and all Portugese speaking countries" should be added to the note about her efforts towards establishing partnerships on page 4 of the Dallas minutes.

The minutes from the Executive Committee meetings in Dallas, Feb. 11-13, 2000, were adopted.

6. President's Report

Harold Oaks distributed a report outlining his recent activities as president of ASSITEJ. (see attached)

7. Vice-President's Report

Wolfgang Schneider reported on his recent activities, which included:

Ñ UNIMA World Congress in Germany - efforts towards establishing links between UNIMA and ASSITEJ.

Ñ Harold Oaks, Niclas Malmcrona and Wolfgang Schneider attended One

Ñ World - One Vision Festival in Washington at the Kennedy Centre - there were discussions between playwrights, and the conference was very well attended.

Ñ Travelled to Uzbekistan for one week. Wolfgang noted that he was impressed by the high quality of performance and production which he saw at their festival at the end of March.

8. From the General Secretariat

a) Secretary General's Report

Ñ Niclas Malmcrona expressed his thanks to the Nordic countries for their financial support of the General Secretariat in Stockholm, to SIDA and the Swedish Institute for their help and contributions, and to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for their internship program (YIIP).

Ñ The Report from the General Secretariat was handed out to all present. The report will be sent to all centres.

b) Theatre for Children and Young People World Day Package

Ñ Theatre for Children and Young People World Day information packages were sent out and met with a very positive response from many centres. It is now up to each centre to organize their own activities for March 20.

Ñ Lou Westbury suggested that each country contribute photos to the web site regarding their activities for the World Day.

Ñ Remi Boucher commented that he would have appreciated French translations of the materials in the World Day package.

Niclas responded that Maurice Yendt, ASSITEJ France, has submitted French translations and that they will be posted on the web site.

Wolfgang Schneider thanked Niclas for the work he did on assembling the Theatre for Children and Young People World Day materials, and suggested that an evaluation of the World Day be completed by each national centre so that efforts may be made towards improving it annually.

Ñ Wolfgang also noted that because World Theatre Day is celebrated on March 27 in Germany, they have decided to also celebrate the Theatre for Children and Young People World Day on March 27th (instead of its official date, March 20th).

Ñ Jackson Ndawula also commended Niclas' efforts towards Theatre for Children and Young People World Day and said that they have invited their colleagues from Rwanda to celebrate the event with them in Uganda. He mentioned that they are making much use of the contents of the Theatre for Children and Young People World Day package.

Ñ There were comments from several countries regarding a potential conflict between the ASSITEJ event planned for the 20th of March and the World Theatre Day on March 27th. Different approaches are being taken to avoid some of the logistical difficulties that are arising from the proximity of the dates.

c) Contacts with Centres and Non-Member Countries

Niclas reported that he made a short speech at the ITI congress in Marseilles, and that he, Harold Oaks and Wolfgang Schneider had a meeting with the newly elected president and secretary general of UNIMA at the UNIMA Congress in Magdeburg. A reception was also hosted by ASSITEJ for the delegates of the UNIMA Congress.

Ñ Jackson commended Niclas for his contribution to their work in Uganda saying that it has made a significant difference and had a very positive impact on attitudes towards their work.

Ñ Niclas also reported of the travel in July to Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe where a meeting with representatives from eleven southern African countries was held in Hwange. This meeting is reported in item 11.

d) Membership applications

Niclas invited representatives from the countries applying for membership to make any additional comments they felt appropriate before the decision was made.

Ñ South Africa: deferred until the next meeting.

Ñ Namibia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia were endorsed as full members.

Ñ Tunisia was endorsed as a corresponding member.

Ñ Tanzania's membership was changed from corresponding member status to full member status.

9. Financial Report

Copies of the financial report were handed out and Harold confirmed that ASSITEJ, with more income than expenditures, is in good financial shape.

Budget

Ñ an additional invoice of about \$600 US was added to the financial report, but the accounts are still well balanced.

Ñ the budget for the secretariat's expenses will be available for the next meeting - these expenses in no way effect the budget for ASSITEJ International.

10. Report of Partnership System

Sweden & Baltic Countries

Niclas reported that some members of the Swedish ASSITEJ board have been to Latvia and Lithuania, meeting other practitioners and conducting workshops.

USA & Venezuela

Harold reported that they have not had much success getting in touch with Venezuela, after many efforts, but that things are moving ahead with Mexico.

Norway & India

Helge reported that Denmark and India have been doing a lot of work together, so Norway is ready for a new partner.

Korea

Kim reported that Korea does not have an official partner to work with, but, they have had a successful Asian meeting in Japan and want to hold another one in 2001 in Seoul. If they get the money, their meeting will include 12 members from Asia. Kim mentioned that he finds it very difficult to communicate with the Asian countries and is hoping that these meetings may foster more contact with one another.

Brasil & Uruguay

Luiza reported that Brasil has not received a response from Uruguay, but that responses have come from Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico.

Japan

Yoshishige reported that they have had the meeting with Korea, but not much beyond that. The Phillipines, Thailand and Singapore have come in as observers and there has been a little progress.

Uganda, Rwanda & Kenya

Jackson reported that he has made several trips to Kenya, and Ricky Githai from Kenya commented that Jackson mobilized them into becoming interested in ASSITEJ. Jackson has

gone to Rwanda twice and expects that they will be ready to apply for membership by the next Executive Committee meeting.

Germany & Italy

Wolfgang reported that he tried to meet with the ASSITEJ colleagues in Italy during his visit there in May, without success. He also handed out a list of their membership to Niclas.

Germany, Austria & Switzerland

Together, these three German speaking countries had a meeting in October in Vienna, where Wolfgang Schneider presented, as editor, a book about "Children's and Young People's Theatre in Austria".

Germany & Sweden

Germany awarded a prize given to a young Swedish playwright. ASSITEJ Germany in co-operation with Judith Benedek, Sweden, is compiling a book in German about theatre for children and young people in Sweden.

Germany & Israel

Wolfgang reported that he visited Israel and met with ASSITEJ Israel members while he was there.

Germany & Russia

Have had several meetings at various festivals over the last year.

Germany & Other European Countries

Wolfgang passed out a brochure for a project involving many European countries called Schoolyard Stories.

Croatia & Slovenia

Ivica reported that there has been lots of communication with Slovenia. They have decided to work together on festivals in order to establish a children's theatre movement working in Slovenia.

Ivica observed that the partnership program has caused problems in many cases. He feels that the partnerships should be mutually beneficial and established between countries that have a natural interest in one another.

Denmark & India

Denmark is trying to raise money for Arun Agnihotri in India so that he can build a theatre venue aimed at middle class children with the goal of raising their social awareness and consciousness.

Australia & Singapore

Lou announced that she attended the ACT 3 festival in Singapore, and that they are exploring ways to improve the quality and professionalism of children's theatre work.

Australia & India

Lou said that she received a letter from a company in Bombay that wants to do a children's festival.

11. Report from meeting in Hwange, Zimbabwe

Tisa Chifunyise handed out the report on the meetings in Hwange and commented on them briefly. Niclas Malmcrona added that he also felt the meeting was a success. Separately written minutes from the Hwange-meeting are available from the General Secretariat.

12. Other Reports

Remi Boucher mentioned that he knows some people in Singapore that other members interested in working in that region may be interested in contacting. He said he would pass along the names.

13. Nomination of New Counsellor

Peter Manscher, Denmark, was endorsed as a new counsellor, to replace Bjarne Thanning, Denmark.

Marjorie Maclean, Canada, has resigned from her position as counsellor.

14. UNESCO Membership

Niclas Malmcrona said that he had sent another letter to UNESCO after the meeting in Dallas regarding ASSITEJ International's membership with them, but they are yet to respond. Different approaches to getting their attention were suggested and discussed briefly.

15. Country Reports

Tisa Chifunyise presented a key note address about the formation of the Zimbabwe ASSITEJ centre and the topic of Arts and Education for Development.

Helen Nordenson from SIDA gave a brief presentation about SIDA and her work in Africa.

Representatives from the countries present gave short summaries on the theatre for children and young people activities in their countries.
(see attached)

16. Discussion

Peter Manscher introduced the topic of How to define quality in children's and young people's theatre, using the Danish model as a guide line.
(see attached)

17. Commission Reports

a) Congress Report

Kim Woo-OK read through the current plans for the Congress in Seoul, 2002. The discussion following Kim's report addressed the following issues:

• concern from some countries about their ability to meet the application deadline.

Ñ the fact that performers are not paid at the festival, and concern regarding how ASSITEJ could hope to be taken seriously and how it could grow if it can not afford to pay a minimum fee to the companies performing.

It was also suggested that companies selected for the fringe performances may not feel that the limited exposure would be enough to justify the expense of participating if they are not being paid to perform.

It was decided that this issue will be addressed in full at the next meeting.

Ñ concern that the program suggested for the congress is too large and will not leave enough time for seeing and discussing performances. Kim was sympathetic but felt that this wouldn't be a significant problem.

Ñ the possibility for representation of performances from every continent and factors that make this logistically challenging for African and Latin American countries, including: expenses

the theme of the congress - Newness - which was considered by some to be essentially equivalent to technology - a resource not readily available to many companies

The issues raised were acknowledged and considered as legitimate concerns to be addressed by ASSITEJ, but it was also noted that more pressure was being put on the host country than has been the case in any other congress.

A special bureau meeting was held to address the concerns of those representatives who felt that their region's participation may be limited by the proposed requirements and deadlines.

It was decided that the Congress Commission will rephrase the theme for the festival to avoid the possibility of disuading potential applicants. Harold told the EC that he and Niclas would be visiting Seoul in the first half of 2001.

The discussion on "technology" continued and some points were given to Kim.

The EC endorsed the report from the Congress Commission with the following re-phrasing of the theme:

Ñ The five from other parts of the world will be selected on the basis of experimentation in the play. Experimentation here means either experimentation using technology, such as media, etc., or experimentation in the general sense of the word. The primary choice however, will be given to the first category.

b) Finance & Statutes Commission

Subscriptions

Ñ it was decided that Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Latvia, India and Mexico will be excused from paying their fees for 2000. The General Secretary will tell them they have to pay next year. Another letter will be sent to the other countries who have not paid yet.

c) Communication & Publication Commission

Annual

Ñ Wolfgang gave a brief description of the contents of the upcoming annual and reminded

everyone that if they wanted to edit their submissions regarding the events in their countries they have until the end of December, 2000, to do so.

Brochure

Ñ changes to the brochure include simplifying and modifying the language, in accordance with the constitution

Ñ the new brochure will now direct people to the website

Ñ there was some discussion about the possibilities of translating the brochure text into different languages. These ideas are being considered and different possibilities will be explored.

Website

Ñ Changes to the website was discussed. The aim is to make it simple for any machine to use, and easy to read. Lou and Peter will continue the discussion and work with the web-master until the next meeting.

Newsletter

Ñ people are not responding to the deadlines, so the next letter will include a large reminder.

Ñ up-coming newsletters will have a theme so that people have a better idea of what to submit.

Ñ centres will be asked to inform the Secretariat whether they want the print or digital version of the newsletter.

Ñ a note will be added saying that people are free to copy and distribute the newsletter at will.

Archives

Ñ members were reminded to send all information generated by their centres - minutes, documents, books, videos, photos... - to the archives in Germany.

e) Artistic Commission

Ñ Wolfgang put forth an invitation for proposals from members that they feel will work towards developing the artistic aims of new members through concrete initiatives.

Ñ the discussion on "How to Define Quality ?" was part of the work of the Artistic Commission

Ñ The Artistic Commission will send a letter to the Congress Commission proposing the following for the congress: three workshops, creating a discussion atmosphere during the congress, to select a number of performances to discuss

Ñ The discussion of "How to study theatre for children and young people ?" will be taken up at an international conference (in English) in Zürich. This is a cooperation between the Theatre Academy and the theatre for children and young people in Zürich. It will be November 1-4, 2001. In January, 2001, ASSITEJ Germany and Switzerland will make up the plans and send a questionnaire to get interesting seminar leaders and keynote speakers.

18. Honorary President's Award

Niclas has discussed the selection jury with Nat Eek, and proposed that the jury consist of 5 people - 3 from the executive and 2 others. Niclas suggested that Michael Fitzgerald chair the jury, Helge Anderson, Tisa Chifunyise, and Wolfgang Schneider could be the Executive Committee representatives and Yohei Hijikata from Japan was proposed as the final member.

There was some discussion following the proposal of the jury about its composition. It was

pointed out that there is only one woman on the jury and that there are no young people. These issues were explored with some discussion, and possible solutions to the matter were suggested.

Harold Oaks invited the members of the Executive Committee to vote on the proposed jury. The jury was endorsed by 11 votes in favour, 1 opposed and 1 abstention. It was suggested that the process of selecting the jury start earlier next time.

19. Honorary Membership

Niclas directed everyone's attention to the criteria for Honorary Membership.

Wolfgang introduced the application from Israel to endorse Orna Porat as an Honorary Member. Wolfgang said that he had the opportunity to meet with Orna recently while in Israel. She is very popular there and well known to older members of ASSITEJ International. She is largely responsible for garnering support from the Israeli government for children and young people's theatre in Israel.

Harold Oaks proposed that the Executive Committee recommend Orna Porat for Honorary Membership to the General Assembly, and the suggestion was endorsed.

20. World Project

Wolfgang Schneider presented a proposal for a new ASSITEJ World Project - the International Director's Seminar for Children's and Young People's Theatre, June 14-19, Nuremberg, 2001. The proposal was unanimously endorsed.

21. Dates and Place of Next EC Meetings

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be in Tokyo, Japan, July 19-24, 2001.

Those EC members making presentations at the next Executive Committee meeting were asked to have the papers for their presentations finished by the end of May, and to limit their presentations to 15 minutes.

22. Letter regarding Executive Committee Meetings

Wolfgang introduced the letter from Jan Skotnicki as part of a discussion some members of the EC were engaged in after the meetings in Dallas, Texas.

Jan is discussing the status of ASSITEJ International - what is ASSITEJ? what does ASSITEJ do? why the travelling, the commissions and the congress? to what end is all this done? This isn't only about money, but how ASSITEJ International can have more status, authority, to enable the organization to support some projects that support the theoretical basis of ASSITEJ International.

Wolfgang said that we should take this letter seriously and consider changing some of the organization's procedures and structures. Open discussion for the whole EC, from meeting to meeting, is another thing that needs to be developed. But these two small things are not

enough, so let us use this letter to inspire ideas for change that can be discussed at the next meeting.

Wolfgang added that he was very happy with the meetings in Harare as they were very well organized, and the EC members had several opportunities to meet people, relevant to ASSITEJ's goals, in the region.

Niclas has written the following proposal for an amendment to item #3 of the Requirements for hosting an Executive Committee Meeting (adopted by the EC in December 1-5, 1993) as the guidelines with this amendment can better serve the intentions of the discussion:

Item 3. Planning. (Amendment in italic)

The inviting centre should be in close contact with the Secretary General during the planning phase of the meeting. The EC normally needs much time for the meeting, but highly appreciates the opportunity to attend performances (at the cost of the host centre).

./. Possibilities to meet with the ASSITEJ board of the host centre should also be included as well as possibilities to meet with other theatre people of the host country.

Members of the Bureau in particular and the EC in general are also happy to attend press conferences and other ways of media coverage concerning ASSITEJ and theatre for children and young people.

If notified before, the President and the Secretary General are happy to attend meetings with authorities (e.g. ministers of culture, mayors, representatives of arts council etc) on the invitation from the host country. ./.

In co-operation with the inviting centre the Secretary General will work out the time schedule for the meeting.

For practical reasons the inviting centre is kindly requested to minimize the time used for transport between hotel/meeting venues/theatres/restaurants etc.

The amendment was unanimously endorsed.

23. Closing of the Meeting

Harold Oaks commended and thanked the Zimbabwean colleagues for the Harare meeting and the great work they did in organizing the meetings. Harold also expressed the gratitude of ASSITEJ International to SIDA, for their support, and to Helen Nordenson for taking the time to join us for the meeting.