

# **Introduction**

## **National Centres of ASSITEJ**

The National Centres have been the primary mechanism for membership of the organisation since the beginning of ASSITEJ in 1965.

Although ASSITEJ has expanded the membership to include Networks and Individual Members, National Centres are still the most important form of ASSITEJ membership, and this is because of the function they are able to play in supporting Theatre for Young Audiences in their own country and region, and as vital components of the international network.

This document is to provide a Toolkit for National Centres to use, to support their establishment, maintenance and renewal.

### **Why do we need National Centres?**

The question is sometimes asked, “Why do we need a National Centre? Can’t we just all join ASSITEJ International independently?” and the answer is no.

The Association is interested in people working together, sharing their knowledge and their work in their local context. A National Centre can more easily recognise and reach out to practitioners in their own country, and make the link for everyone at once. It can promote the message of ASSITEJ and ensure that local artists understand the value of international and local networking.

If more than two independent artists or organisations from a country tried to join ASSITEJ, they would be asked to form a National Centre and work together in order to support the development of TYA in their country and region.

Coming together ensures that the broader goals of the organisation are met. Some goals can only be achieved through collaboration; for example, the idea that all children and young people in a country should be able to access theatre cannot be achieved by one artist or company alone; rather it is an objective that all those working in the field may be able to achieve in time, if they work together. To lobby for theatre for young audiences to have greater representation in theatres, in festivals, in award ceremonies etc, also requires a national network in order to be effective.

Having a National Centre is a strong action you can take to ensure your part in the global association. You will receive the benefit of connection in your own country, as well as connection to the world. Once the sharing begins, people see the benefit and support that is possible, for the sake of a stronger TYA community, wherever you are.

This handbook is designed to outline the role that National Centres can and do play, the possible contexts and structures that may affect the way they work, and the kinds of programmes they may implement. It is designed to be a guide to new centres and a means for established centres to review their operations and refresh their ideas.

It contains seven chapters:

Chapter 1: What is a National Centre?

Chapter 2: Philosophy

Chapter 3: Advocacy

Chapter 4: National vision, contexts and structures

Chapter 5: Common challenges in being a National Centre

Chapter 6: What does a National Centre do?

Chapter 7: What now?

# Chapter 1: What is a National Centre?

National Centres are networks of the theatre companies, organisations and persons, working in that country in the field of theatre for children and young people. All National Centres must use the acronym "ASSITEJ" either in the name of the centre or network, or in the description in the subtitle.

There are two types of membership for a National Centre and they have different fee scales:

**Full members** have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings, to put forward someone for election to the Executive Committee, and to vote according to the rules in the Constitution. To be a full member, the National Centre must have at least 3 professional members, or 5 members with at least two 2 professional members and three 3 non-professional members

**Corresponding members** have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings and to vote according to the rules detailed in the Constitution. Corresponding members do not have the right to put forward someone for election to the Executive Committee. To be a corresponding member, the National Centre must have a minimum of 3 theatre companies, organisations or persons working in the field.

The focus should be on creating a nationally representative network of all those who work in, are engaged with, support or are interested in theatre and the arts for children and young people.

## How is a National Centre composed?

The constitution of ASSITEJ says that a National Centre is a network of members, which comprises the following categories:

- **Professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people:** Individual artists or theatre companies who work

*only or partially* for theatre for young audiences. “Professional” should be defined within the context of the country where the centre is based. It can mean “trained either through study or work experience/internship”, “working within professional theatre spaces”, “employed permanently or semi-permanently”, “making a primary living from theatre”, “considered professional through significant engagement in professional work, the bestowing of awards or other acknowledgements”, etc. Professional artists can work in state theatres, national theatres, provincial or city theatres, independent theatres, not-for-profit theatres or commercial theatres. There should be no exclusion based on where artists or companies practise their art.

- **Non-Professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people:** “Non-professional” should be interpreted within the context of the country where the National Centre exists. It could refer to: those who have not studied, trained or been interned to more experienced artists, those who spend only part of their time making theatre for young audiences and hold another job (such as teacher) which is their primary source of income, those working within amateur spaces, those companies that are part of tertiary institutions, those working within schools with children/young people as the artists, etc. Again, there should be no exclusion based on where artists or companies practise their art.
- **Organisations, institutions, associations or persons actively engaged in the work of theatre for children and young people** (for example, actor training institutions, specialist artistic networks in the country, theatre archivers, performing arts educators, university departments, independent researchers, cultural centres, theatre festivals or showcases, theatre producers, choreographers, etc.).
- **Supporting organizations, institutions, associations, or persons interested in theatre for children and young people** (for example, critics, patrons, honorary members, social welfare organisations, literacy organisations, educational institutions, funding organisations, early childhood development institutions, artist unions, teacher organisations, schools, community based organisations etc.) Their primary involvement is not in theatre for children and young people, but there is some connection or potential connection.

There are also additional possibilities for membership outside of the four categories mentioned above, for example:

- Student members
- Child/Youth members (i.e. Children and young people engaged with the arts within school, community-based or professional settings)
- Artistic Advisers
- Patrons, donors, sponsors of the association

These members may have different rights, responsibilities and modes of engagement, as well as different membership fees, within the national association, at the discretion of the National Centre and the laws of the country.

### **Obligations of a National Centre:**

According to our constitution, these are:

- \* to work to achieve the aims defined by ASSITEJ International
- \* to maintain its statutes (as defined in the Constitution),
- \* to act upon the decisions made by the Association,
- \* to pay the membership fees,
- \* to keep the Secretary General informed of their activities regularly - once a year minimum is recommended.
- \* to appoint a correspondent,
- \* to provide a permanent address,
- \* and to communicate to their members the information sent from the Secretary General's office.

### **Communication between the National Centre and ASSITEJ:**

Many of the obligations are linked to communication.

It is required that National Centres communicate with the ASSITEJ International secretariat regularly (minimum once a year) about their activities. This is so the Executive Committee can work properly for the membership, understanding the health of every National Centre. An obligatory National Centre report form will be sent out annually with the invoice for membership fees, in order to get the required information.

Regular updates on what is happening nationally should be sent to the international office of ASSITEJ and news should be provided wherever possible and relevant for the International newsletter. [See more about Communication on page xx.](#)

### **Criteria for a National Centre**

There is a minimum criteria for applying for membership as a National Centre to ASSITEJ (see the Policies & Protocols Handbook). It is assumed that the National Centre will continue to add members as it grows and develops over time.

All efforts should be made to include all artists working in the field of TYA in a given country, to grow membership over time and to raise standards of theatre for young audiences. National Centres should include all those interested in developing the art form, and provide opportunities for growth, exchange and development.

Members should be able to participate in the running of the organisation. They should have an opportunity to give feedback to the leadership of the organisation and to vote for their board, or to otherwise influence the structures of the organisation.

There are different structures that a National Centre can take ([see Chapter 4](#)) However, a National Centre where there is no accountability to the members, or where the members cannot determine the leadership of their organisation or have access to mechanisms by which they can change this leadership over time, would be considered unrepresentative of the needs of the members, and therefore would be ineligible for ASSITEJ membership.

A National Centre whose membership is entirely static is possibly guilty of *gatekeeping* (controlling access to the association), which is the opposite of the representivity and inclusivity that ASSITEJ wants National Centres to make possible. See [Chapter 5 for more information.](#)

## **Functions of the National Centre**

National Centres are intended to cultivate the field of TYA in their own country, while simultaneously supporting international exchange, collaboration and learning.

They are therefore both *looking inwards* and *looking outwards* in their focus. The extent to which they are more one than the other, will rely on their particular national context. **See Chapter 4.**

### **Looking inwards:**

National Centres should be actively engaged in activities, projects or collaborations which reflect the vision, mission and aims of the Association according to the Constitution of ASSITEJ, and which serve to build the arts for young audiences in their own country.

They have a responsibility to serve the artists working in the field of theatre for young audiences and to find ways to stimulate the growth of audiences, access, artistic practices, and new directions within TYA and their own context. **(See Chapter 6 for examples of possible activities, projects or collaborations.)**

However, we recognise that these cover a wide range of potential activities, which may be too much for a National Centre to tackle at any given time. National Centres should therefore prioritise their aims according to an analysis of their national needs.

It is highly recommended that a new National Centre do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of theatre for young audiences in their country and then create a strategic plan, before embarking on a series of projects or programmes. Each activity can then be aligned to the needs of the country's TYA community - from skills building to advocacy with decision makers.

The inward-looking aims include:

- To work for the rights of children and young people to artistic experiences especially designed and created for them in that country. This may mean **advocating** for access to artistic experiences for children/young people to government structures, to corporates, to the education system, to parents and the community more broadly. **See Chapter 3 for advocacy**

It may also mean **devising projects** which can broaden access in the country: Examples of projects which have been created to do this are the #Takeachildtothetheatre campaign and ASSITEJ SA's Theatre4Youth programme.

Your National Centre might devise projects which take theatre into rural or remote areas or low socio-economic areas; you might start crowdfunding campaigns to subsidise theatre experiences for children/young people, or focus on awareness of access for children with disability. **See Chapter 6 for more ideas.**

- To work for the recognition and acknowledgement of theatre for children and young people in that country.

As well as advocacy and projects, the National Centre activity could include, for example, starting national awards for TYA, encouraging TYA criticism and research, and the sharing of these on platforms such as conferences, seminars and other public avenues to achieve greater recognition and acknowledgement of the field. National Centres should lobby those both within and outside of the theatre industry to increase the visibility of the arts for children and young people and raise the profile of artists working in the field.

- To work on the improvement of the conditions of theatre for children and young people in that country

This may involve lobbying theatres to provide more programming for young audiences, or ensuring that artists are given proper contracts of employment, or that artists are given support to better manage themselves and their activities, or that artists are given basic acceptable conditions of service. In this instance, the ASSITEJ National Centre may

work with other bodies such as the unions for artists, or other arts-based associations or lobby groups.

- To improve the common knowledge of theatre for children and young people, thus drawing the attention of international and national authorities to the importance of taking children and young people and the artistic work created for them seriously.

This may involve engagement with the research network ITYARN, or linking local universities and places of higher learning to international ASSITEJ or finding platforms for the sharing of research. It may also involve the creation of online resources for sharing information, whether websites, facebook pages, or listserves. It could involve the creation of national newsletters or magazines, which help make the work happening in TYA visible. ASSITEJ Spain and TYA USA - ASSITEJ USA have done wonderful work in this line.

### **Looking outwards:**

There are also aspects of being a National Centre which are about looking out to what is happening beyond the borders of the country for stimulation, exchange, development and growth. This includes the relationship with ASSITEJ international and the ASSITEJ networks.

There are several aims which can be said to be *looking outwards*.

- To give people working with theatre for children and young people in that country the opportunity to learn about the work of colleagues from other countries and cultures, thus enabling them to enrich theatre for children and young people in their own country.

A simple way of doing this is for the National Centre to provide information to artists and organisations about opportunities within the international network of ASSITEJ. This might include opportunities for exchanges, skills development, touring, involvement in projects, collaborations, publications and more. Much of this information will be available through the ASSITEJ International newsletter and social media platforms.

The newsletter of ASSITEJ international should be circulated to all members of the national network, or members should be invited to sign up individually. National Centres should also actively seek to ensure participation from their country in every ASSITEJ project or event – for example, Next Generation calls, Artistic Gatherings, Directors Seminars etc. This enables the country's work and expertise to be seen and recognised, and for artists to be given opportunities for ongoing professional development.

It is important that these opportunities should NOT be given to the same person or group of people over and over, but there should be democratic methods of selection and transparent criteria which allows for any eligible members within the National Centre to benefit.

In addition, a National Centre may develop and announce their own projects for international exchange, in collaboration with others inside or outside of ASSITEJ. These projects can be announced by ASSITEJ international in order to gain a wider participation if desired, or simply reported on so that other National Centres may be inspired to try similar ideas.

- To participate in international artistic networks to explore different aspects of artistic work for children and young people, to increase the artistic competence of artists and to benefit them.

Members of a National Centre can also be members of ASSITEJ Networks; this is an advantage to the National Centre. The ASSITEJ Network members focus on a particular area of interest within the broader spectrum of theatre for young audiences – currently playwriting, research, early years, inclusivity, dance theatre and opportunities for younger artists. As an example, it is requested that a National Centre interact actively with IIAN (International Inclusive Arts Network) by having a Disability Champion who can advise on increased inclusivity within the association. In addition it is encouraged that each National Centre appoints a contact person for each of the other ASSITEJ Networks should this be possible; for example, a playwright who is a member of

Write Local Play Global, to ensure that there is sharing of ideas and information between the Network and the National Centre.

It is hoped that all National Centres will support their members who have a particular interest to participate in the relevant Networks. Dual membership of National Centre and Network is encouraged where this is possible. The different focus areas provided by the Networks may inspire National Centres to develop projects in response to these.

- To form and sustain a National Centre which functions in accordance with the mission, constitution and policies of the Association. This centre shall unite all theatres, organizations, and persons interested in theatre for children and young people in that country, and participate in the affairs of the International ASSITEJ.

This can take many different forms – for example, a National Centre may be constituted as an Non-Government Organisation (NGO) or Not for Profit Organisation (NPO) able to raise its own funding nationally, or it may be an informal network with no legal status which works through a voluntary elected board, or it may be another kind of entity. (See Chapter 5 for more information on different options.)

It is important that whatever way the National Centre is constituted allows it to participate meaningfully in the international work of ASSITEJ.

Members of ASSITEJ International are expected to attend at least one Artistic Gathering in every three year cycle, or to provide a proxy if they are unable to attend. They are expected to participate in voting for the leadership of the international association, and they are expected to make decisions about the direction the international association takes.

They do this on behalf of their members from the National Centre, and therefore it is anticipated that there will be communication and where possible, consultation with these members, so that ordinary members of the National Centre feel connected to the international ASSITEJ and understand the broader, global vision. Also, it is important for those who do have the international contact, to report back to the members who

were not able to have the experience, to share lessons learnt, or interesting new ideas that have been encountered.

## Chapter 2: Philosophy

There are various philosophical principles and approaches that we suggest are important for ASSITEJ National Centres in how they organise and practise as a centre.

### **GENEROSITY**

ASSITEJ is underpinned by a philosophy of **generosity** - a belief that we are stronger together than apart, that sharing resources, time and expertise is more powerful than competition, that through a generous and curious approach to others - their artistic histories, traditions and approaches - we are more likely to grow and develop ourselves as artists and to have genuine collaborations and exchanges.

We encourage a frank exchange of views, expressed with respect and humility, and a desire to understand the other, in their particular context. We resist notions of imposing our own perceptions of artistic practice, process and product on others, but rather look for a way to share these with openness and a desire to learn from one another.

In ASSITEJ we often express this spirit of generosity through the notion of “family”; that we are all part of one continually growing and expanding family, the theatre for young audiences practitioners, who need to live together and learn from one another.

Generosity may be expressed in many ways, but most often it can be said to be the desire to give without looking for a specific return.

It reflects an openness and willingness to share our 'gifts' (both emotional and material) freely and humbly with others. It is the understanding that we all benefit from a generous exchange, and that in being generous to others, we encourage their generosity and will be enriched through this process.

In this respect we are able to ensure that everyone within ASSITEJ feels that they have something to offer the rest of the association.

## **REPRESENTIVITY:**

**The National Centre** is intended to be representative of the field of theatre for children and young people, as it exists in that country.

### **What is Representivity?**

Representivity is not the same as representation.

Representation means when one person speaks or acts on behalf of an organisation, idea, or group of people.

Representivity is rather a measure of how well a deliberative decision-making process or body represents the various constituency groups which it is intended to represent.

Thus a National Centre may have a representative (a person who represents the centre for purposes of communication or voting), but it may not be practising “representivity”.

When a National Centre practises *representivity*, it means that:

- All the artists/organisations involved in theatre for children and young people within the country feel that they have access to becoming members of the National Centre should they desire to do so;
- The National Centre is constituted in such a way that diverse members and interest groups have a voice within the whole; a diversity of approaches to making theatre, to becoming a member and to working together should be encouraged; the centre should actively seek out opportunities to include as diverse a range of artists and organisations in the work as possible;
- The National Centre should actively seek out partnerships and collaborations with others to extend its reach, wherever these are likely to contribute positively to the growth of the field. This will

allow for representivity beyond the narrow confines of the TYA scene;

- No artist or organisation should feel excluded from the National Centre on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or ability, sexual orientation, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction.
- Artistic notions of quality should also not be used to exclude members. (Should a member not qualify for “professional” status in the view of the board or leadership of the National Centre, they could be included as a different type of member, e.g. “non-professional”, “supporting” or “interested in...”.)
- Economic standing should not be used as a tactic to exclude people. All efforts should be made to include all those who are willing and able to make a contribution in the field. This can mean different models of membership - for example, some National Centres have included the capacity to volunteer hours of service to replace monetary payments for membership, where members are not able to afford the fee. (Some structures will depend on the legal requirements of a particular country.)

Representivity demonstrates the values of ASSITEJ, which are about inclusion, diversity, and the rights of all children and young people to the arts and to their own cultural traditions and expressions.

ASSITEJ National Centres should be seen to practice representivity in the make-up of their membership and in the way they go about seeking the participation and engagement of their members in decision-making processes.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

The transparency of a National Centre helps to develop a positive relationship between members and the governing body of the National Centre.

An adequate level of transparency guarantees access to essential information relating to the life of the Association:

- how it functions,
- the activities it carries out,
- current and ongoing projects
- the resources that are found and how they are used
- the functions of the governing bodies or persons

When there is an "adequate level of transparency", the relationship can develop in a balanced way "from and to" the members and "from and to" those in charge of the management of the National Centre, as well as "from and to" ASSITEJ and the National Centre.

For these reasons it is important for every National Centre to equip itself with some essential tools:

- 1) A contract between members (statute, constitution or simple agreement) that accepts the objects, aims, means and relevant points of the ASSITEJ Constitution and in compliance with the laws of the country, clearly defines and establishes relations between the members, specifies obligations, highlights the procedures for electing the leadership, describes the functioning of the association and the specific objectives of the National Centre;
  
- 2) Timely, comprehensive and effective communication concerning the management of the National Centre, its activities and projects, for example, the release of Annual Financial and Narrative reports, monthly or quarterly newsletters, reports of projects etc. These should be open to members and the general public (in accordance with the laws of a country) and to the international ASSITEJ;

3) Involvement of the Members in the creation, development and realization of projects and in the overall planning, with the creation of useful tools for shared planning;

4) Simple and clear regulations on everything that entails the granting of benefits, economic or otherwise, direct or indirect, to members or officers of the governing bodies, in order to avoid any improper conflicts of interest or any inequality of treatment;

5) Clear procedures governing the financial transactions of the National Centre to assist the work of the officers and the members, following simple and easy procedures to facilitate all the transactions (fees, income, expenditures and reimbursements);

6) Capacity to track every transaction, avoiding as far as possible the use of cash or undocumented operations;

7) Using the Double Entry Accounting System to track all the account movements (Costs and Profits, but also Assets and Liabilities) to permit a better checking of the financial situation (by Members, Officers, and Auditors).

*"People did not want to get receipts for the sums they paid, but we insisted, and recorded every cent. Almost certainly, the accounting books for the year 1894 are still intact in the archives of the Natal Indian Congress. For any kind of organisation, to accurately keep the accounting books is a sine qua non, otherwise you get more its primitive purity" (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as the Mahatma)*

# Inclusivity

## Who is not in the room and why?

Inclusion is about enabling the participation of marginalised people through acknowledgement, identification through consultation, development of strategies, removal and ongoing monitoring of barriers.

For ASSITEJ International it relates to theatre makers, participants, and audiences; working with the understanding of theatre as a broad term including performance of all kinds. No theatre, organization or individual can be refused admittance to membership of ASSITEJ on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or ability, sexual orientation, professional status, socio-economic status, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction.

Through the ASSITEJ Network IIAN (International Inclusive Arts Network) there is a focus particularly on disability and access with the aim of enabling people with disability to be fully engaged in the National Centres and part of ASSITEJ International. Each National Centre is asked to identify and establish a Disability Champion who can make sure that inclusivity is always considered and in the conversation.

Inclusion means proactively making changes to the current modes of operation within organisations and events, and making *attitudinal* and *physical* changes in order to engage with the broadest reach of people. Inclusion encourages a deeper engagement with the diversity of our global communities. This will result in a richness of experience and expression that will enable the ASSITEJ events to move toward true community representation.

Importantly, Inclusion means opening ourselves to new frontiers of theatre making. ASSITEJ is developing a statement around Universal Access and IIAN is in the process of developing an Inclusivity Tool Kit that will be available soon.

We acknowledge that each National Centre will have very different challenges in this regard, as situations differ widely around the world. Sharing experiences, barriers to inclusion and ways of creating access is a vital part of the on-going work of the Association and therefore the National Centres.

## **CHILD RIGHTS AND CHILD SAFETY**

Every ASSITEJ National Centre is required to commit to the statutes of ASSITEJ that explicitly endorse the 1989 United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child, including Article 31, as well as UNESCO's Cultural Policy, calling for the rights of children and young people to cultural participation and activity and the 2005 UNESCO Convention about Cultural Diversity, that children and young people must be allowed a cultural identity and to be visible everywhere in society.

This means that no policies or practices of an ASSITEJ centre may be in opposition to the principles contained in these conventions. This also means that ASSITEJ National Centres should try to hold their members accountable to the same standards and may reject membership, suspend or expel members who do not meet these obligations. It should be noted that the Executive Committee may decide, by a majority of two-thirds, on the rejection, suspension, or expulsion of any member whose work conflicts with the fundamental aims of this Association.

In addition, ASSITEJ is committed to **Child Safety**:

**Promoting** the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. We believe in the power of the arts to transform children's lives, fuelling imagination, ambition and creativity in a safe and supportive environment.

**Creating** an organisational culture of child safety by ensuring robust practices and policies that support our elected officials, staff and volunteers in keeping children safe.

**Ensuring** all safety concerns and allegations of suspected child abuse are treated seriously and are guided by our legal and moral obligations.

**Welcoming** all children, their families and carers. We are committed to the cultural safety of children from diverse backgrounds, and we provide a safe and secure environment for children with disabilities.

We encourage all National Centres to create a code of conduct within their organisations that is tailored to work for their cultural and legislative frameworks.

## Chapter 3:  **ADVOCACY**

### **So what is ASSITEJ *for*, anyway? Why do we care?**

ASSITEJ is an *advocate* for the promotion of theatre for young audiences in principle and in practice. ASSITEJ proposes to *unite* theatres, organizations and individuals throughout the world dedicated to theatre for children and young people. It recognizes the right of all children and young people to enrichment through the arts and their own cultural traditions, especially theatre culture.

ASSITEJ believes that every child and young person deserves access to the arts, and especially to live theatre, from the earliest possible age. Theatre is a transformational force in the lives of young people, inspiring imaginations, shifting perceptions, teaching empathy and building our future.

Theatre respects its young audiences by presenting their hopes, dreams, and fears; it develops and deepens experience, intelligence, emotion, and imagination; it inspires ethical choices; it increases awareness of social relationships; it encourages self-esteem, tolerance, confidence, and the free expression of opinions. Above all, it helps future generations find their place and voice in society.

Some specific reasons why theatre is so important:

- Theatre allows us to explore perceptions different from our own. It deepens our capacity for empathy and enhances and develops emotional intelligence, hence providing a powerful platform for behaviour change.
- Theatre arts enhance learning – they reach a diversity of children and young people through multiple learning modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, musical and kinaesthetic). This supports learning and builds confidence in their own capacities.

- Theatre can make abstract concepts or ideas more concrete and understandable. It communicates in memorable and entertaining ways, bringing complex ideas to life.
- Theatre arts develop lifelong skills of communication, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, reflection, and perseverance.
- Theatre develops appreciation of a child's own cultural heritage, while also building a sense of commonality and diversity across cultures which can result in deepening tolerance.
- Theatre employs a range of aesthetic languages, which like all languages, provide a new way of seeing and experiencing the world. All children should have access to understanding and employing these languages.
- Theatre helps children and young people connect to themselves and to one another. It develops their ability to express a personal vision and communicate it, while appreciating, responding to and collaborating with the visions of others.

Once we say that theatre for young audiences is worth fighting for, then we can make the kinds of arguments that will make access to theatre more possible for those who are missing out. Advocacy is about making the *value* of TYA obvious to more people.

**Message:**

It is good to create a central message for your National Centre - a vision or mission statement that you can share and work towards. This will assist in any activities that further the aims of ASSITEJ - lobbying decision makers, communicating with the media etc. Making your members aware of the issues you face in your country is a huge part of advocacy and members can be asked to become involved. It should not be just up to the National Centre to do the work for the members - strong advocacy means everyone can play their part. In order to get your members to agree on the message that will make the most difference, we would suggest that work on strategy is required. **See Chapter 4 for developing a vision and strategy.**

## **Advocating for membership:**

Growing the membership, and retaining membership, is vital to ensuring that a centre maintains its vibrancy and relevance. It is very important to identify the benefits of becoming a member, especially if there are membership fees involved.

Reach out to all those who are working in the field and encourage them to become members - this may depend on the criteria you use to attract members but be aware that the ASSITEJ Constitution stipulates *that no one can be refused membership on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or ability, sexual orientation, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction*. The constitution also makes it clear that *perceptions of professionalism* should not stand in the way of those wishing to join.

The more people who know about the network that a National Centre can provide, the stronger your centre will be and the more voices there will be for the *message* you wish to put out into the world.

Find ways to value each member's contribution and to celebrate your members' achievements. This will help build a supportive atmosphere within the organisation.

### **“Why should I be a member of a National Centre of ASSITEJ”?**

You may often be required to motivate to theatre for young audience practitioners why they should join your centres. Here are some thoughts.

If you are with others in your fight, you will have more power to make change possible. Value and recognition, respect and support, are more likely when you are great in numbers. Being a member of ASSITEJ gives you: **Connection - Visibility - Support**

Connection to others in the same field helps us understand our own context: our own funding challenges, the expectations and demands of

those buying or presenting our work, and our aesthetic and cultural intelligence, the barriers to participation we and our audiences face.

Being part of a National Centre allows access to information to all including those who are isolated, marginalised or who are new to the arts community. It allows knowledge of the TYA work to be spread and shared, to enable strong advocacy for the continued funding and support of work and exploration.

A National Centre has the possibility of drawing people together, of speaking with one voice, and of making the argument for everyone: for support for the work we all create and for the young people for whom it is created.

If you are a member of a National Centre of ASSITEJ, you are automatically a member of the International Association and can access all the information, opportunities and knowledge that ASSITEJ can give.

There are over 100 different countries in the Association, all with activities of their own; festivals, workshops, internships, residencies, exchanges, shows and events. By being a member of a National Centre you can access all this and share your own work far and wide.

**Advice from National Centres around membership:**

*Before establishment, try to reach out to as many as possible future members - individual artists, collectives, groups, companies - in your country and let them know about how important it is to be part of a global association as ASSITEJ. That is still a challenge in such a continental country as Brazil, though in the past few years we have advanced in connecting with a broader number of artists all over the country.*

*Regular communication is very important along with scheduled events/ opportunities to bring members together. Clear articulated reasons why membership is important and what it contributes towards is also paramount.*

*It is important for a centre to attract new members with a few very interesting activities, like ASSITEJ Pakistan initiated its first Festival named Tamasha Festival in 2017. Due to Tamasha, ASSITEJ Pakistan got a marvellous response and people come to know about this centre. In my view, for attraction and keeping members, regular activities of a centre are essential. If you can, involve everybody to help out as much as possible, so they will keep your members feeling useful and feeling that the organization is doing a good job with the community.*

*There should be a lot of activities to keep the members active most parts of the year. The members should be part of the planning process of the organisation. The activities of the organisation must be publicised for the people to know of its existence. Exchange programs at local and international level must be enhanced*

**You can read more about how to attract, grow and keep membership later in the toolkit.**

# Chapter 4: National vision, context and structure

## Definition of identity and context

As a new National Centre it is important to define your identity and your context.

The first thing to do is to map the landscape of theatre for young audiences in your country. What already exists? Who are your founding members? What work are they doing? Where is the most exciting TYA work that is happening? Who are potential allies or supporters in this work? What systems or programmes are in place that currently work?

Learning as much as possible about one another within the local context will be a good start to exploring what you hope your National Centre will be able to achieve.

Asset-based thinking is a useful way to begin the process of understanding your role as a National Centre. By decreasing your focus on what is wrong, and increasing your focus on what is right, positive, and working, you will start to harness enthusiasm and energy to be able to move people in a positive direction. Do a full exploration of your assets and how these might be utilised. In doing this exercise, you may discover something about your context and therefore also about your identity.

### **Advice from National Centres:**

For example, in the case of South Africa, there was no organisation focusing on theatre for young audiences in the country prior to the inauguration of ASSITEJ South Africa. However, there were many individuals, companies and institutions doing the work and many existing festivals where work was being showcased. These were mostly competing with one another or replicating one another and not working very strategically to make strides for the sector as a whole. By working with these individuals, organisations and festivals as partners, ASSITEJ

SA was able to establish an identity for itself, and provide a networking capacity for the members that had not been present before.

In the case of Denmark, where there was already an organisation called Teater Centrum which takes care of the national theatre for young audiences scene, ASSITEJ Denmark was asked to play the role of being the international connector and mediator for the sector. ASSITEJ Denmark and Teater Centrum have negotiated their relationship over the years to work closely together (they share office space), and to ensure that together they are able to achieve their mutually complementary goals. For example, they work on the April festival which allows for an enormous national showcase of Danish work both for purposes of touring within the country and for finding an international market.

In the case of the UK, where there are four separate country entities, which all represent a different regional grouping of artists, ASSITEJ UK constructed itself as a board made up of regional representatives, ensuring equal representation for each of the four entities: Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland. This has allowed for the organisation to ensure local relevance and capacity, and to access funding locally from the country-specific bodies, e.g. British Council Wales.

## **VISION & STRATEGY**

It is very important that you set goals for your National Centre. Part of your identity is not just who you are right now, but where you would like to see yourselves in one year from now, three years from now, ten years from now...

Often a National Centre will create a Vision statement which will encapsulate their dream for TYA in their country and internationally, and will then work on a Mission which if fully engaged with, will ensure that this Vision can eventually be realised.

Goals may be as varied and particular as:

- Every child will have access to theatre at least once every year at school
- Theatre for young audiences will have the same status as theatre for adults
- Theatre for the early years will be an accepted form of practice
- TYA will be researched and documented in our major universities
- More quality plays for xxx age group will be written/devised etc.
- Theatre artists will collaborate more across lines of difference, whether these are created by economics, culture, language, race, gender etc.
- Parents will value theatre as an important part of family life
- More TYA artists from xxx will be touring internationally
- More intercultural collaborations will take place so that we can develop new kinds of approaches to making work

The ASSITEJ National Centre will then choose to work on projects which will help to make this goal a reality in the future.

What is the vision of your National Centre?

Here are some examples:

*Vision: South African children and young people will have access to quality, performing arts in the next decade, contributing to a more empathic, engaged and creative society.*

*Mission: To build the sector of theatre for young audiences in South Africa through supporting and developing the network of artists, empowering education through the performing arts, creating models and strategies for access to the arts and advocating for the role of the arts as an essential right of every child and young person.*

*Business goals:*

*Short term: Demonstrate success of Theatre4Youth programme by successfully connecting theatre and education through concrete projects, achieving education department buy-in*

*BY: April 2015 (1 year)*

*Financial: achieve funding to continue project for at least 1 more year*

*Medium term: Strengthen key areas of theatre practice in TYA (theatre for young audiences) in preparation for a successful ASSITEJ World Congress to be held in SA  
By: May 2017 (3 years)*

*Financial: Achieve funding and internal generation of funds for World Congress/Performing arts festival*

*Long term: Ensure entrenchment of ongoing systems/programmes to give children and young people regular access to the live performing arts*

*by: 2019 (5 years)*

*Financial: Achieve ongoing sustainability of organization (ASSITEJ) and programs.*

# Strategic Planning

## Why use strategic planning?

An effective strategy:

- translates your vision and values for your National Centre into a series of priorities for action that you implement together over a specific period of time.
- allows you to measure your progress and identify where you have issues and challenges to overcome.
- provides a dynamic and flexible process responding to changes in context, resources and the outcomes of actions taken earlier in the cycle.

## How to plan?

Think about:

- who will be best placed to help you plan - *this might be an outside facilitator, it might be the staff of your National Centre, or the board, or a committee of members.*
- where in the planning cycle you can make best use of them - *when are the key moments for your Centre? Before funding rounds, at the start of the year or the end of the year?*
- how you can best use them - *will it be a day's planning, or a few hours? Will it result in a document, or a workshop?*

## What goes into a plan?

The elements of a good plan can come from the answers to the following key questions.

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know when we have arrived?

The answers to these should be documented within a **written plan** that is shared with all relevant stakeholders and reviewed regularly. It is a working document that guides both the broad direction of travel and every day decision-making and activities.

Below are some of the ways in which you might think about how you can answer these questions.

### ***Where are we now?***

Here, you can think about two elements:

a) What are the goals, values and aims of your centre? You'll already have articulated these in applying for recognition of your Centre. Are those still the same now?

b) What is the context in which you are working? This means having a clear sense of both your own internal resources and challenges and the wider landscape (local, national and international) that your centre covers. The context is often best defined through the creation of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

### ***Where are we going?***

In this section, you can think about what you want to *achieve* to fulfil the goals and values of the Centre. It will be important to prioritize these over the next 3 to 5 years at most. These outcomes should be thought of in broad terms and be relatively small in number (between 4 and 10).

### ***How will we get there?***

Now that you have identified what you want to achieve, break each aim down into specific things that you will do, steps that you will take, or what are called objectives.

Objectives should be SMART, that is

**Specific**  
**Measurable,**  
**Achievable,**  
**Realistic**  
**Time limited**

It will also be important to identify who will do the work to meet each of your objectives and when the work will be started and completed. Make sure you have built in deadlines and milestones by which you will move closer to fulfilling your objectives.

### ***How will we know when we have arrived?***

It will be important for you to have a clear idea at the outset of how you will *measure* the success of your plan and the Centre in the future. What will success look like for your staff (if you have any), for your Board and for your members?

If your objectives are measurable, then you will have some key information about how you are doing as a National Centre along the way and at the end of the period of the plan. Think for example about

- how many members you can recruit in your first 3-5 years.
- How many activities you would like to run in each year
- How much funding you can access to support the work of the Centre each year

You can also undertake reviews of the work of the Centre along the way, gathering oral and written feedback from your members at events and activities, for example.

### **Challenges**

#### *Not having an accurate understanding of the context*

It will be critical to the success of your Centre that you have as accurate as possible understanding of your context. For example, there's little point in deciding you will communicate with your members through an image-rich email if this means that it can't be downloaded due to poor quality internet connections where they live.

#### *Unrealistic goals*

If the things that you want to achieve for your Centre are unrealistic, then planning for them is pointless. This doesn't mean that your goals can't be stretching, just that you have to be able to achieve them in your context. So, don't be setting a fundraising target in the millions, unless you can be pretty certain as to where you might actually get this money. Is it likely that philanthropic giving and membership fees will raise that kind of money?

### *Getting people to engage with the strategic plan*

There can be lots of enthusiasm and support when you are putting your plan together and it gets published in a smart folder. However, making sure that the plan doesn't just sit on a shelf is critical. Your Board should review the plan at each meeting, to see what progress is being made and how past and prospective activities fit with what you want to achieve.

### *Not changing when the situation changes*

A plan is always subject to review as the context in which it was written changes in ways over which your National Centre may have little or no control. So, it's important to review the plan routinely and, if necessary, learn from experience to adjust elements. Some objectives may be reached earlier than you anticipated; others later. Some new challenges will inevitably arise; equally some new opportunities may present themselves. For your Centre, you will have to weigh these up and make a judgment of the cost of both challenges and opportunities against what you wanted to achieve in the plan.

## **Case Studies**

### **External Resources**

Community Partnership for Arts, *Strategic Planning for the Arts*

<https://cultureforward.org/Reference-Desk/Tools/Strategic-Planning>

Byrnes, B. *Planning as an art and craft.*

<http://managementandthearts.com/pdf/StrategicPlanningintheArts.pdf>

Volunteer Now *What is Strategic Planning?*

<http://www.diycommitteeguide.org/resource/what-strategic-planning>

Wikihow *How to write a strategic plan for an organisation.*

<https://m.wikihow.com/Write-a-Strategic-Plan-for-an-Organization>

## **Structural options - NPO, voluntary association, network etc.**

When creating a National Centre, there are certain key issues which should be debated by those involved in the creation process:

- Will this form be *manageable* given our current resources in terms of people, volunteer hours, funding or other constraints?
- Will this form of National Centre be *effective* in addressing the needs of TYA in our own country, and facilitating engagement with the global community?
- Will this form *exclude* anyone who should not be excluded?
- Will this form *allow for growth and development* over time?
- Is this form in *accordance with the mission, constitution and policies* of the Association and
- Does it serve to *unite all theatres, organizations, and persons* interested in theatre for children and young people in our country?

Since there are different regulations in different countries around company laws and fiscal discipline, it is not realistic to direct the choice towards a particular "structure" for every National Centre.

It is worth recalling what has been said about Transparency in Chapter 2, i.e. how useful it is to give the National Centre a statute or other contractual form that clearly defines the association for all concerned, and how the relationship will play out between members and board.

A statute can initially be a simple private agreement between the associates, but with the growth of a Centre, could take a form legally recognized by the state to which it belongs (assumption of a "Legal identity"), to give more certainty and clarity about the agreements, both to the associates and to third parties (institutions, supporters, donations, but also banks, the Revenue Agency, debtors, etc..) with which the Centre relates.

This would be a corporate form defined by a publicly registered act, with a date of registration. It would create a "Legal entity" that may or may not also be a "Legal Person".

A "Legal entity" means that the organisation exists and allows a group of persons to act together as a single entity for certain purposes. The persons who sign on behalf of the organisation are jointly and individually responsible and liable for all the commitments undertaken by the Legal entity.

A "Legal Person" means that the organisation has both rights and responsibilities and has the capacity to sue and be sued. An entity which has become a legal person may be able to protect those running it (the president or Chair, the administrator or Director, the members of the executive committee or board, the associates or members) from being completely responsible and liable for the commitments undertaken.

When budgets and operations are very limited, the simple "legal identity" is functional for a cultural association with a light profile and a low level of risk. It is easier to manage, while allowing access to important calls for tenders such as those of the European Union in support of culture.

ASSITEJ (as an international association) is registered as an artistic and cultural association and has this form of Legal Identity.

To be constituted as a Legal Person allows for the organisation to benefit from a corporate form with limited liability (where the persons - the president, the administrator, etc - are responsible only for the assets of the company). In addition to this, it offers the possibility of sustaining more economically demanding operations, having as a counterbalance a much more complex and costly management (starting from the costs of establishment).

To be constituted as a Legal Person with the characteristics of NGOs and Non-Profit companies, allows for the possibility of being a beneficiary of donations, thanks to the tax benefits provided for these types in many specific legislations.

Several countries provide tax benefits for donors who support associations and companies operating in the field of Culture and Art, if they are a Legal Person, sometimes extending this opportunity to those who have only a Legal Identity. Please check the legislation in your country to see what is relevant.

It may be useful to present the company forms of ASSITEJ International and some National Centres and Networks, to which you can refer, as well as consulting the different statutes, once you have chosen your Associative agreement.

- ASSITEJ International, ASSITEJ Italy and Small Size Network are all *Associations with Legal Identity, without being a Legal Person. They are registered in Italy as an Association Body, pursuant to Law n°2 of 28 January 2009.*
- ASSITEJ South Africa is a *Non-profit organisation constituted in SA as a Voluntary Association, with tax benefits for donors and funders.*
- 5-15) Check the shapes of the Centres in the EC
- ASSITEJ Australia, France, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Argentina, Chile, Russia, USA

*NOTE: In our recent survey of National Centres (2017) 83,3% of National Centres were formally registered in their countries, and 83% were registered as Not for Profit organisations/associations*

## Case studies: Registration of centres

*In Australia, our National Centre is now hosted by a network with formal and legal registration which auspices our finances and provides advocacy.*

*This form of Registration is Membership based and enables us to apply for public funding. ASSITEJ Germany is not only a registered charity, but also a registered youth Institution (Traeger der Jugendhilfe). Because we are a charity, we do not need to pay taxes, unless we generate a high income through activities that can be considered business i.e. selling books or advertisements.*

*In Pakistan, it is really tough to get registered as Not For profit Organization due to Govt laws. A big disadvantage is that we cannot get funding from those organizations which only fund for NPOs.*

*As a non-profit organization, ASSITEJ Korea is exempt from tax. Also, we have received the governmental funds to organize our festival, programs, and so on.*

*We need to go through a vicious bureaucracy and as a non-profit organization need to have an actual address and a furnished office only for the use of the NGO; we have to afford having this office. Therefore, sometimes we have financial problems.*

*Non-profit public organization RF Theatre Union is the umbrella organization for Russian centres ASSITEJ, AITA/IATA, OISTAT, UNIMA.*

*NZ has only a handful of companies working full time for young audiences - and most of these operate on project-by-project funding. Having no legal/organisational costs is a huge advantage for us. However, a lack of legal/organisational obligations, while saving costs and time, can lead to time slipping by without significant progress towards goals. Lack of formal status means we are limited in what funding we can access.*

*Advantages of being an NPO: Can fundraise, can be a legal entity, recognised by government and corporates, easier to be "national" than if we were simply a volunteer organisation; Disadvantages: onerous in terms of keeping up to date with reporting and other requirements, definitely need to be able to have paid staff to run.*

## **Membership Fees or not**

It's the hope of ASSITEJ International that National Centres will strive for active involvement, maintaining a strong presence through working groups, commissions, representatives on the Executive Committee, participants in projects, and other such involvements, in the life of the Association.

A two-way relationship between members and officers guarantees greater awareness of the Association and its vision and aims.

## **How do Fees make a difference?**

The *contribution* of members is an important resource that can ensure that the National Centre begins its life - it can be through active involvement and/or through the paying of fees for membership.

In the event that the Centre is supported by the financial contribution of its members, not only does it become important for members to pay the approved fees, but also for them to pay them within the timeframe provided for in the association agreement. This enables the Centre to plan the *actions* of a National Centre or Network, for the benefit of all members.

When the National Centre or Network opts for membership fees, it considers the economic contribution of the members to be an essential element for its own life, because the fees may constitute all, or a significant part of the revenue necessary to plan the activities and to guarantee the management of the National Centre or Network.

The payment of a membership fee is an arrangement generally made clear to members when they join the association, and freely accept the statutes and regulations, sharing the aims and the purposes of artistic and cultural promotion.

Payment at the beginning of each year, in addition to being a good democratic practice, becomes an effective indicator of how vital the Centre is and how much the associates take care of its maintenance. (For members, sometimes there are serious economic difficulties, requiring, if provided or possible, solidarity support, or communication around deferred payment.)

It is important to highlight the importance of regular and timely payment of the membership fee because it allows the Officers to plan expenditure, with security about what can be spent. It should be remembered that the Officers have the mandate to manage the budget with prudence and caution, avoiding any improper debt.

The common structure of a National Centre is as a non-profit organisation, therefore an operating *surplus* makes sense only when it is useful to ensure a good level of cash flow.

Each centre, in defining the amount of the fees requested, can identify different levels of contribution, possibly linking them to the different sorts of members (for example, theatres or organisations, researchers or academics, students, the individual artist) or to the different possibilities of contribution (as happens with ASSITEJ), where members can choose their own scale of contribution, depending on what they can afford.

In the latter case, it is hoped that each member will define their own fee, choosing to increase it when possible, to support the spirit of solidarity in the Association.

In the agreement/statute of your National Centre it is possible to define exceptions to paying membership fees, to protect the membership in case of economic difficulties.

Although some forms of society allow it, ASSITEJ stipulates that a difference in the level of contributions should not be accompanied by differences in conditions in membership (particularly as regards to the right to vote).

Legitimate differences would relate to the different sorts of members, as with ASSITEJ, whose statute provides for three major categories: Full, Corresponding, and Individual members. These are characterized by structural elements (the number of members, professional and non-professional members, supporting or interested members, the number of continents for the Professional Networks, etc.)

Some centres have Entrance Fees, as well as ongoing Annual Fees. The Entrance Fees are used to create a common fund for the cash flow of an organisation. The Annual Fees (or member fees) are then used to support the ongoing activities.

In the Small Size Network, when a member pays Entrance Fees, their Annual Fees are suspended for the first two years of their membership.

There are also National Centres that replace a financial contribution with a contribution in kind (generally a donation of time, or volunteering). This can be a proactive way to engage members who have very limited financial circumstances, but who want to be active in the association.

***NOTE:** Currently 85,7% of centres have Membership fees. These range widely in size from 1 USD to 2500 USD a year.*

A National Centre also has the responsibility to pay its membership fees to ASSITEJ International. Historically and to the present day, some National Centres have difficulty in paying fees to the International Association, despite the sliding scale of options for payment of full membership. Currently, the membership fees range on scale from the minimum fee of 150 USD a year to 750 USD.

Here are some suggestions of different mechanisms by which National Centres can manage the payment of the ASSITEJ International membership fees:

A: Through your own membership fee collection.

B: If you collect no membership fees -

- make a specific campaign for collection of fee monies through your members who can best afford it eg: funded companies

- seek donation support through board member connections
- ask all members to contribute a small amount that will enable their access to the International Association - many members contributing a small sum or what they can afford.
- seek support through the Solidarity Fund (\*\*description of fund here? )

Advocacy is vital in the communication around membership fees: members need reminding of the importance of the National Centre and its work and also the importance of belonging to an international association that connects and works for us all.

### Case studies:

Since the Centre's structure was ended due to loss of funding, the projects of the centre had lapsed. We removed the membership fee in favour of a free and automatic membership to encourage people's ease of access and involvement. Our members are encouraged to pay a fee of membership to our hosting network. It has resulted in much broader membership and more active participation.

A fee scale seems the most appropriate, so larger organisations can contribute more compared to unwaged individual artists (for example). We use a sliding scale membership, taking into account the financial challenges of being a student, an artist, or a small theatre company.

(Membership fees) are important in order to maintain an office and to create complementary funding, which makes it easier to make successful fundraising. One problem regarding fees is that it can create the question from the members "What do I get out of this?"

We suggest making the membership as accessible as possible, especially for artists. We apply the following rule: organisations who receive subventions pay more, freelance artists and organisations without subventions pay nothing.

Membership fees ensure buy-in from the members, and hold you accountable to them. You have to make sure that you have something to deliver. However, this then means that there is far greater engagement. We always try to keep a balance between staying open to people (if they can't afford the fees, they can volunteer time instead) and ensuring that they do invest in the organisation, even if only in a small way.

It is a good thing to bring the fee to a minimum to allow members to have access to your activities. Not many people are able to pay.

## **Roles and responsibilities in the National Centre**

### **Roles of the board**

All ASSITEJ National Centres should have a board, since this body is a part of the application to become a member. It is important that the roles on the board are defined. Often the board is the only participation that members are able to have, and many ASSITEJ National Centres operate solely through their boards. Not all boards have hierarchical structures; some have flat structures, where every role is considered equal and where the Chairperson role is rotated from meeting to meeting, or year to year. Some National Centres prefer to have every person on the board having a defined role within the association.

Typically the following roles are essential for good governance, and are necessary if the organisation is to be formally constituted as a Legal entity:

- Chairperson or President
- Vice Chairperson or Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Other roles that are possible, even regular, include:

- Membership recruitment
- Fundraising and sustainability
- Project leaders
- Promotion / Publicity / Marketing
- Award panels
- Disability Champion
- Liaison for Networks
- Provincial / State / Regional Representatives (elected by their region, province or state), etc.

### **Roles of staff**

Many ASSITEJ National Centres do not have any staff at all. Some have one paid staff member, and some have a number of staff members. The

major advantage of having a staff is the increased capacity of the organisation.

Typically organisations with staff can also fundraise more successfully for projects, and can work on larger projects over longer periods of time.

The relationship between Staff and Board needs to be clearly articulated in the constitution of the organisation. Typically the Staff will run all executive functions of the organisation with the Board providing guidance, vision and oversight. Of course, once a National Centre employs staff, then it needs to be guided by best labour practices in that country, and adhere to the laws regarding appointment, contracts, dismissals, working hours, leave and all other aspects of conditions of employment.

Staff members may include:

- Executive Director
- Marketing and Communications
- Fundraiser
- Finance
- Project heads
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Logistics
- Research

Centres with no staff (59,5% of centres)  
e.g. TYA UK, ASSITEJ Argentina

Centres with 1 staff member (23,8%):  
e.g. ASSITEJ Australia, ASSITEJ Germany, TYA USA, ASSITEJ Norway, ASSITEJ Denmark

Centres with several staff members (16,7%):  
e.g. Scenes d'Enfance - ASSITEJ France, ASSITEJ South Africa, ASSITEJ Korea

**Sharing responsibility:**

National Centres have the responsibility to reach as widely as possible within their countries. This is sometimes difficult because management can be under-resourced and people are stretched.

In many countries National Centres have developed the positions of regional representatives of ASSITEJ so that they can assist in the communications and local activities of the country. In this way all members are more able to be part of the National Centre and communication where there are challenges of distance or time.

For example: in Brazil there are regional representatives who assist with the communication and activities within their regions.

Some boards are made up of a certain number of delegates that represent each of the regions of a country, in order to ensure that everyone is represented. However, equally, there may be a decision that different language groupings within a country require representation, or there may be other models, which reflect the particular diversity and make-up of the country. As far as possible, an ASSITEJ National Centre should represent the diversity of the residents of the country in question.

## **Roles of volunteers**

Attracting and retaining volunteers can be a source of great strength to an organisation. Generally all projects have scope for volunteers and often board members volunteer their services to run National Centre projects. However, there are also opportunities to enlarge the capacity of organisations by for example, attracting volunteers or interns from local and international universities or recruitment programmes, through the Next Generation placement programme, or through a National Centre's own processes of advertisement and recruiting.

Volunteers may help with all manner of activities, for example:

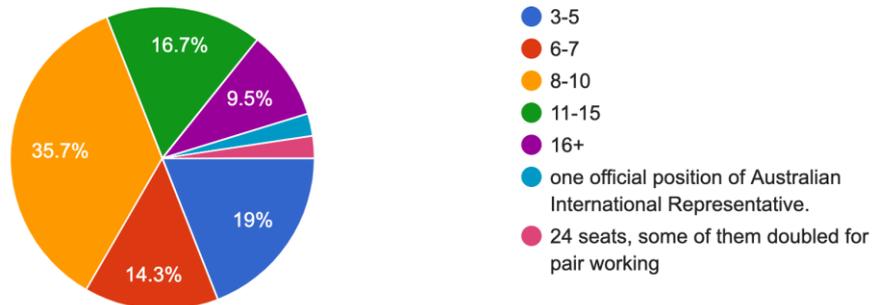
- Following up on membership fees
- Doing front of house or backstage work for events, festivals etc.
- Handing out brochures or talking about the organisation at events where the National Centre is trying to raise its profile

- Doing administrative work for the association
- Providing services, such as workshops for children, free of charge

### Responses from National Centres (42 responses):

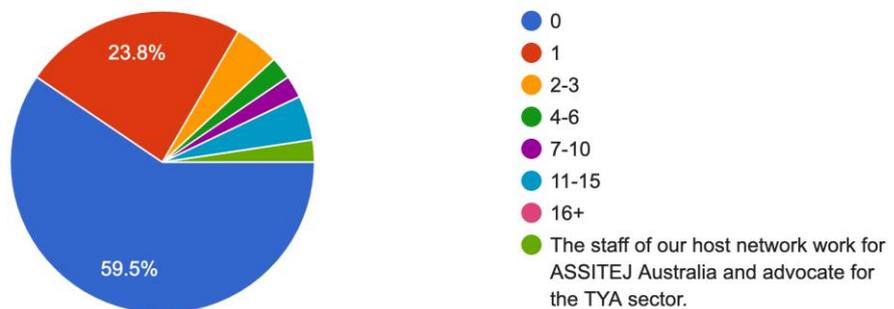
#### What is the size of your board?

42 responses



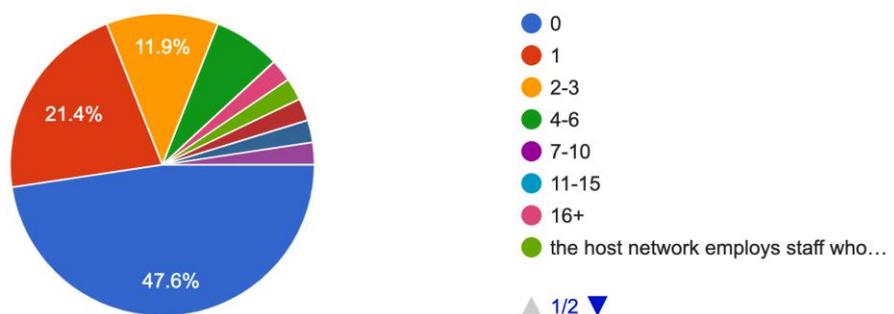
#### How many paid, full-time staff/ project managers does the centre employ?

42 responses



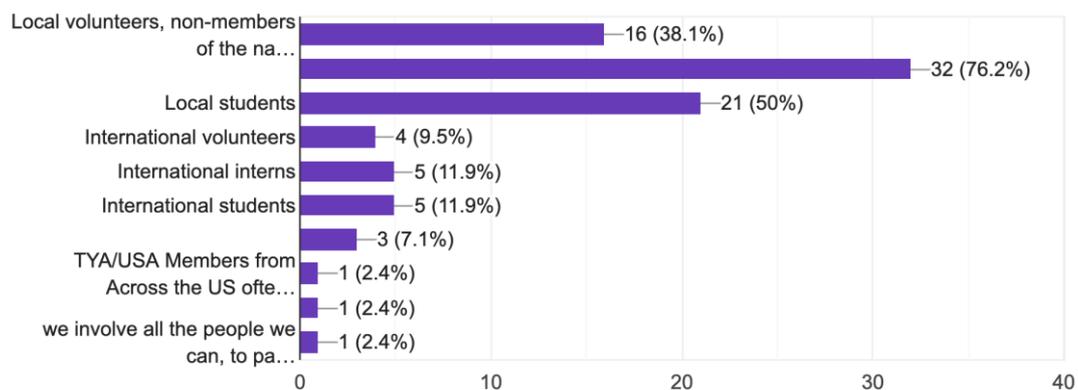
#### How many paid, part-time staff/project managers does the centre employ?

42 responses



## Do you work with volunteers from the following categories?

42 responses



### Case studies:

#### What advice do you have to offer a National Centre about structure?

That it can happen in many ways - ours was once a formal and legal entity with executive officer, staff and paid membership and now has become a free network of members who contribute through campaign approaches. Communication, connection and shared information are the drivers for this new form. We are hosted by the national Theatre Network of Australia which is an advocacy body and we have formed a close relationship with them to provide for our needs, including our own staff member.

Having only one full-time staff member is challenging. Consider additional part time or contracted employees for various duties; be sure the working board is indeed a working board.

Mixture of voluntary and paid staff seems most effective. Sub groups (regional) are a good way of developing and supporting activity.

To make sure that all its members are really interested in children's theater. To be an umbrella organization for all of them. To keep creating and developing new ideas, new projects that as many members can be involved. To meet during the year and share ideas and knowledge.

Structure of National Centre should be very clear. Every board member should be clear about the objectives of the centre and also his/her responsibility. All the major decisions in a centre should be taken with a consensus of all the board members and centre should be open for everyone interested in TYA.

Our organization benefits from a balance between a paid staff member managing the organization alongside a devoted board of field leaders from across the country. The board members use their experience to steer the organization and ensure its connection with the membership base. With limited resources, this model helps make growth and robust programming possible.

To have as many volunteers as they can to support the work of the board, the more people truly involved the more work that actually we can accomplish with a good distribution of tasks for all... We are aiming to become an incorporated society (not for profit organisation) with an elected board offering broad representation (puppetry, young dance, geographical spread, funded companies, independents, etc) - a grassroots network rather than a hierarchical structure.

I firmly believe that having paid staff is a major advantage to being able to function successfully and to run exciting projects. It is not impossible to do without this, but it requires intense dedication and sacrifice. We started as a volunteer committee running projects but 10 years on, it feels that having all the advantages of being a registered NPO and being able to claim tax benefits for donors and refunds on VAT, means that we can achieve a lot more. We would not have been able to host an enormous event like Cradle of Creativity without having a formal constitution and paid staff.

We strongly recommend getting the commitment of theatre schools and universities, so as to have a broader reach for possible staff - either part-time or full-time, paid or not. Students and young professionals are a great source of the necessary enthusiasm and energy we need for our projects.

Volunteers and interns are definitely worth cultivating, and if you work with them in a way which makes them feel valued and engaged, and give them meaningful things to do, you can achieve a tremendous amount. Continuity of staff is hard to manage with funding in SA being project based, not organisational and ongoing. However, where possible we have managed to retain staff over a long period through investing in their growth, giving them time off when they need it, and supporting them in their own creative journey. This has built a kind of 'family' for ASSITEJ SA, where I know that we can call on people who were involved a few years back to be involved again when the occasion arises. We have also worked hard to give our staff some travel and other opportunities as incentives. Finding what makes each person get up in the morning, and playing to their strengths, is definitely the way to go.

## **Roles of members**

Members should always be expected to play an active role in the organisation. It is generally a good idea for all members to feel a sense of ownership and engagement with the National Centre.

Ask members to host events, publicise ASSITEJ activities, include a paragraph about ASSITEJ in their programmes, collect monies for ASSITEJ at their events/performances, speak about ASSITEJ at public forums, conferences or other events, provide their news and information about their activities to other members, share any opportunities of which they may be aware, provide professional development to younger or emerging artists within the organisation, host the office of ASSITEJ, provide Next Generation opportunities to international members of ASSITEJ, or contribute in other ways to the life of the association.

## **Case Studies:**

We address the needs of each campaign or event as it comes up and ask for membership support and interest to help with the organising or contribution towards these. It always requires the effort of a central person to energise the staffing and organisation.

Core members of ASSITEJ Pakistan are four cultural organizations, so major staff also participate from these core members organizations. ASSITEJ Pakistan mainly works with volunteer students, so it is always open for fresh blood with experience.

Get all the community to be involved and participating as much as you can in the organization; festivals, talks, workshops and round tables should reflect the needs that the National Centre can try to cover also with new projects.

To work with local members AND local and international students is important. Reinforcing the function of the association not only internationally but also nationally is helpful. Secondly, giving priority to the members on ASSITEJ events or projects is found to be attractive. Also, we have studied TYA, shared any information, and gave opportunities for networking to the members.

## Expectations of members

Expectations of members should also be managed. It is a good idea to say what members will be “getting” for being part of a National Centre.

However, it is also important to ensure that whatever you promise, you are able to deliver on. People should be encouraged to understand the intrinsic value of being a member of ASSITEJ as well as the specific benefits of membership that they may have access to.

Here is an example of a Membership form which spells out what Membership means for this National Centre:

### WHAT DO YOU GET AS A PAID-UP MEMBER OF ASSITEJ SA?

- Monthly newsletters and regular updates on what is happening in South Africa, across Africa and the World in theatre for children and young people;
- Contacts and networking opportunities for exchanges, skills transfer and development, touring, involvement in projects, collaborations, publications and more through regional meetings, and both ongoing and once-off projects;
- Access to practical support, training, mentorship and advice for your organization as you deliver quality theatre for children and young people;
- Free registration in Theatre4Youth, the Interactive Education and Theatre Catalogue and related promotion and marketing, for productions touring to schools (see [www.theatre4youth.co.za](http://www.theatre4youth.co.za)) ON REQUEST;
- In collaboration with members, assistance in touring productions to schools, crèches and festivals, as well as opportunities to apply for support and mentorship;
- Showcasing opportunities for your productions at one of the ASSITEJ SA showcases, platforms or festivals;
- Reduced rates on workshops, theatre productions and other skills-development opportunities;
- Access to shared resources, including human resources, educational resources, and physical resources, where possible;
- Visibility and opportunities to participate within ASSITEJ SA, the African Children and Youth Theatre Arena (ACYTA) and ASSITEJ (the international organization);

- Information about festivals, touring opportunities, workshops, collaborations and development opportunities across the continent and across the globe, and support in taking up these opportunities where possible, including endorsements and references where appropriate;
- The opportunity to submit press releases via ASSITEJ SA's Artslink account for a discounted rate;
- Opportunities to share your skills, experience and knowledge with the ASSITEJ SA community.

NOTE: ASSITEJ SA is not an agent or employment broker. ASSITEJ SA is also not a funding agency, although at times ASSITEJ SA may be able to provide direct support to members through specific projects on an ad-hoc basis. ASSITEJ SA reserves the right to not support a member with a particular project or production should it not be possible or appropriate to do so.

#### HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR MEMBERSHIP

- Keep us updated about your activities so that we are able to market them in the newsletter, on social media and in other places.
- Let us know about your goals and strategies. If there are ways we can partner with you to help you achieve your goals, we will do so where appropriate and possible.
- READ THE NEWSLETTER and apply for the opportunities. We can't stress this enough! Every month there are a host of opportunities. If you are not sure whether something is relevant to you, ask. You need to be a paid-up member to make use of ASSITEJ SA opportunities.
- Create high quality DVD materials, online links to videos of your work and professional print materials so that we are able to market your work internationally.
- Invite us to your productions so that we are able to engage with you, give you feedback and get to know you better as an artist.
- Provide us with all the necessary details for your registration to the Theatre4Youth online catalogue, or update your details yourself – it's easy. Your Theatre4Youth Administrator will be happy to assist with the process.
- Attend ASSITEJ SA events so that you can see other theatre for young audiences, meet other artists and share with others. It's a NETWORK after all!
- Acknowledge ASSITEJ SA when we assist you, partner with you, market your work or otherwise help you. This way we build awareness of ASSITEJ SA nationally and globally, allowing for better buy-in from partners and supporters and ensuring that we are able to do more for you and for theatre for young audiences in South Africa generally!

## Case Studies:

### What advice do you have about attracting and keeping members?

Face to face conversation and personal approach to members to enlist them in the ideas of the association and their place in advocacy and the big picture.

Interest in children's theater; the seriousness of the board for the artistic and pedagogical problems; educational offers proposed to the members

Regular communication is very important along with scheduled events/ opportunities to bring members together. Clear articulated reasons why membership is important and what it contributes towards is also paramount.

Developing and keeping on activities for the benefit of the members. Open doors for young artists, new ideas and challenging projects.

Less membership fee and sharing information translated into Japanese

Organising of training programs, performance opportunities, International exposure, publications in India where members given priority over non members in most of the cases. There are some programs which are specifically reserved for members, or there's a reserved quota for members. When we have paid training programs, members are given discounted rates.

Make sure that they know how they can benefit and how they can contribute, make sure that their topics and questions are discussed in accessible ways and in a variety of places and formats - it's not easy when Membership is so diverse.

It's important for a centre to attract new members with a few very interesting activities, like ASSITEJ Pakistan initiated its first Festival named Tamasha Festival in 2017. Due to Tamasha, ASSITEJ Pakistan got a marvellous response and people come to know about this centre. In my view, for attraction and keeping members, regular activities of a centre is essential.

You must have something to give back to the members, mainly financially I'm afraid. Like travel grants or international co-production funding.

Focusing on membership engagement in every aspect of your work helps attract and keep members. Members should be involved in the direction of the organization, and can participate as volunteers on committees or project teams to contribute to the overall work of the organization. This allows them to feel invested and continue to support the work of the National Centre.

Make your National Centre visible, especially on the web. Publicizing projects and spreading news from ASSITEJ International is a great way to arouse and keep interest in the association. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, Youtube, every social media matters. It might be a good idea to get a professional to take care of these and feed them on a regular basis.

To make trainings for members (with aim to share practices from international ASSITEJ partners); To create conditions to go to big International events (as Congress, Artistic Gatherings) at least 1-2 members every year (in rotation)

Regular activity through the year, involving maximum members. Residencies and opportunities for training are also much sought. Opportunities and platforms for performances would also improve member engagement.

There should be a lot of activities to keep the members active most part of the year. The members should be part of the planning process of the organisation. The activities of the organisation must be publicised for the people to know its existence. Exchange program at local and international level must be enhanced.

Making sure that we communicate about what we are doing as widely as possible so that people become excited and want to participate. Making the benefits of membership concrete (e.g. members can be on our online platform [www.theatre4youth.co.za](http://www.theatre4youth.co.za) or can apply for our National Arts Festival platform etc.) Engaging with members as volunteers or as paid part-time staff on projects so that we get to know them and work with them and understand their contexts Partnering with our members on projects in their communities or spaces, helping them by adding value to what they are doing.

# Chapter 5: Common challenges in being a National Centre

Apart from attracting and keeping membership (see Chapter 3, Advocacy), there are a number of challenges that you might find when you start a National Centre. These can be very particular to your own context, but are also often the same challenges that we face all over the world. These issues can be solved in various ways and members of ASSITEJ International provide examples of excellent and inventive solutions to particular challenges in their own contexts.

We recommend that when you are struggling with a particular issue, you let the ASSITEJ EC know about it so that we can advise or connect you with other members who may be able to provide assistance.

**Mobility:** This is a challenge for almost all National Centres. As an international association, to participate fully requires the capacity to travel, and for many artists and countries, this can be difficult if not impossible. Some nations do not have possibilities for funding for travel, although these should be explored wherever possible. There are international mobility funds available through resources like [www.onthemove.org](http://www.onthemove.org) and the Prince Claus Fund, which can be applied for. Each National Centre should explore all possibilities for mobility and share these with their members. National Centres can also support their members' applications for support by writing support letters or otherwise providing guidance. We should also consider seriously how to make available other forms of connection, for example, through livestreaming, virtual and online communication and new technologies as these emerge.

**Communication:** Connecting with people and keeping them informed is a challenge in any circumstance, because communication relies on a two way relationship - you may send out as much information as you can but if no one reads it or hears it, communication has not occurred. You may have geographical distance to combat, or time differences. You may have

slow internet or none at all. You may have members who live remotely and can't get to events. Keeping up the flow of information that is part of collective strength is vital and will take time and many different modes. What forms of communication can you use? **Note: See Chapter 6 for more on communication.**

**Work:** Who ends up doing all the work in your National Centre, or for the TYA community? How do we coordinate sharing of effort, or be able to call on people when we need? Who thinks the work is necessary and who really doesn't want to be involved? Are our members equal in the way they engage? In order to deal with the challenges of this particular area, we suggest you look at **roles and responsibilities, in Chapter 4.**

### **Advice from National Centres:**

*When we created our centre, 2 years ago, it was very important to us that it would be flexible and dynamic. We did not want it to become a vehicle for its own sake, with people holding on to their power positions. Therefore, we created some rules, for example: a president can be re-elected only once. And every 2 years, the board is renewed. The board (which is also the 'staff' for now) works in a horizontal, non-hierarchical way, I would say as a collective. Maybe a bit chaotic sometimes, but that is how we like it in Belgium ...! If you want to know more, please do not hesitate to contact us: Marijke De Moor - [marijke@kunsten.be](mailto:marijke@kunsten.be)*

*Self assessment format can be made so that each National Centre can periodically review its work and overcome specific challenges to increase impact of ASSITEJ and the spread of TYA.*

**Gatekeepers:** How welcoming and inclusive is your National Centre? Who makes the decisions and how? Who is not in the room and why? Who has the final say? How do you define your members and what are your criteria for admitting them? If you are leading a National Centre, are you a gatekeeper (controlling access) or a gate opener (inviting people in)...?

One of the issues that ASSITEJ international encounters often is receiving complaints of so-called "gatekeepers" within National Centres. These

may be people who have a wonderful track-record of work in the field, and may have been very productive at some stage. They may be the founder of their centre. They may have many great qualities, but for whatever reason, they have been at the head of their organisation for a long time, they have become resistant to change or to hearing what artists in their country actually need or want, and they have started to allow some people in, while keeping others out.

In some instances, where ASSITEJ centres are State-funded, gatekeeping is supported by the State which wants only certain people - with certain views, or demographics, or politics - to be engaged with an ASSITEJ centre. This - it must be stated clearly - is in direct opposition to the constitution of ASSITEJ.

Gatekeeping can take a number of different forms. Some common examples:

- New members are not admitted on some pretext - they are not professional enough (despite the ASSITEJ constitution allowing for non-professional members), they do not speak the same language as the majority in the centre, they are too far away geographically etc.
- The same people or person or company gets all of the opportunities within a National Centre, again and again.
- The centre is viewed by some as a closed club.
- New ideas are not pursued and the same programme is followed year in and year out.
- The centre never grows - the number of members remains static.
- Members complain about not knowing about ASSITEJ international projects or programmes, and communication of available opportunities is poor

### **What can National Centres do to avoid Gatekeeping?**

- Create a process of rotational leadership in your constitution, by limiting the number of terms that the Chairperson can hold, or by rotating leadership on a regular basis;
- Hold democratic elections, where the members can vote for the leadership - [best practices in terms of elections](#)

- Allow for greater autonomy of regions or provinces within a National Centre; some large or very populous countries may want to design into their structure a regional or provincial or local leadership layer, which allows for greater freedom for those operating in spaces well away from the “centre”; these structures may have representation on the national leadership as a way of ensuring the involvement of all. [Regional character of National Centres could be described](#)
- Encourage and be open to dialogue between individual members and the National Centre. The ASSITEJ EC is happy to act as a mediator where this is practical or useful, or centres can look for an objective mediator within their own country who can help to ensure that individuals are heard and that the centre is seen to be inclusive.
- Every National Centre should present a report at each Congress (these can be posted or shared in such a way as to make the activity of the centres more visible). ASSITEJ international will endeavour to find appropriate spaces for this either on the website and/or at Congress.
- National Centres are encouraged to use the Regional networks that exist (for example, Nordic-Baltic, Ibero-American, Asian, ACYTA etc) as a good place to discuss gatekeeping problems: issues may be better discussed at this level.
- Where there is a conflict between the constitution of the National Centre and the constitution of ASSITEJ (perhaps for legitimate reasons), this needs to be declared and the situation should be debated in order to resolve the conflict. National Centres need to be transparent about their strategic reasons for lack of inclusivity, where these exist. [Informal debate - about membership of Italy; how we can](#)
- [Legitimate exclusions.](#)
- [Examples of ways to include](#)

**What can ASSITEJ International do to avoid Gatekeeping at the National Centre level?**

One of the ways this issue is currently being addressed is through the process of *Individual Memberships*, where it is possible for artists or companies to apply directly to ASSITEJ for membership if they feel excluded from their National Centre.

The process is not perfect and can be difficult, but it is a way for misunderstandings to be brought to light, for National Centres to become aware of unhappiness that may be present in their country and for these issues to be aired and discussed. This is not to say that every time someone applies for individual membership in a country where there is already a National Centre, the reason is Gatekeeping. However, we have found that this is a recurring theme, and we try as the Executive Committee to encourage open dialogue and inclusivity.

If centres persist in being Gatekeepers and there is no response from the National Centre to the concerns raised by ASSITEJ EC, membership of the international association can be revoked after due processes have been followed.

### **Funding and sustainability**

Fundraising is easy to say, but much more difficult to do.

The different constitutions of each of the National Centres makes it difficult to generalise about the complex issue of the economic sustainability and fundraising useful for the life of each Centre. Each Centre will have its own landscape of funding or resourcing cultural activity within which it must survive.

In the absence of funding for organisations, self-financing through membership fees becomes a key factor to support a low profile maintenance of the association. This can then be used as a basis for research around how to attract the necessary resources.

We believe that a concrete approach to fundraising should start from an analysis of the different problems related to the characteristics of a National Centre, such as:

- the difficulty of *supporting* fundraising; finding adequate resources to pay a professional fundraiser and also accepting the economic risks of failure, or supporting voluntary fundraising within the Board and the demands of such a role.
- the difficulty of participating in public tenders (such as EU projects), due to a lack of human and economic resources;
- the difficulty of defining research objectives, creating realistic and operational fundraising plans.

The National Centre should undertake an analysis of who among the members might be able to provide the Centre with real professional skills in Fundraising in its various aspects, for example:

- direct collection of funding,
- crowdfunding projects,
- income-generating projects,
- institutional financing,
- participation in national public and private grant processes
- participation in international public tenders

If the Centre decides to engage someone with professional fundraising skills, this generally cannot be at zero cost. The Centre will need to understand fully the costs of fundraising and will need to define these in advance:

- 1) Compensation for whoever activates the fundraising, regardless of its outcome, successful or otherwise;
- 2) Percentage costs for the fundraiser, in the case of success.

Fundraising needs to be approached creatively, like everything else. Again, your SWOT analysis will be very important to understanding where possibilities for funding may lie. Depending on the nature of your organisation, the possibilities will be different. However, it should always be possible to raise some funding if you spend time doing the analysis.

Consider:

- Identifying partnerships for raising funds - who shares a vision with you? With whom can you partner?

- Identifying priority areas in your country which are currently being funded and seeing whether the ASSITEJ National Centre might align a project with these, for example, perhaps there is funding available for education, rather than the arts - can you create a project which could connect with this? What about early childhood development? If there are funds available in this area, could a project be created to support several ASSITEJ members working in this area, and benefit the ASSITEJ National Centre as well?
- Identifying activities which may be income-generating, and can be used as ways for members to get to know one another and to work together on a concrete project; these could include performances, corporate functions targeting families, activities such as workshops or training, creating and selling merchandise, or advertising, running a small business on the side, etc;
- Identifying champions and ambassadors who can support you, write reference letters and who understand the importance of what you are doing;
- Identifying international funding opportunities and partnering with other members of ASSITEJ to achieve a project together;

When you receive funds, ensure that you report properly to the funder, doing the necessary monitoring and evaluation, as well as financial oversight, and that you communicate with the funder as a respected partner in the project.

### **Case Studies: What advice do you have about securing funds?**

Establish a track record of funding smaller projects through government agencies in order to build a case for continuing support.

Our host network has funding from government and membership fees. We have run specific campaigns among our membership to raise money for ASSITEJ International membership. This can be done again for specific outcomes. We have successfully approached government bodies for specific funding around projects including delegations and hosting gatherings.

A contracted grant writer is helpful; require your board to contribute and fundraise.

Align the funding ask with the priorities of the funder. Articulate unique characteristics of ASSITEJ and the National Centre as a body with specific aims and outcomes.

To do all you can to be recognized as a high standard organization and do all you can get support from government and/or Cultural agencies.

In our case where government doesn't invest a lot of money in art and theatre programs is not a great attraction for private funders, the help of International cultural organisations like Goethe, French institute, Korean Cultural centre are great support and we try and keep those relationships going.

It depends on each country's economy, but we recommend keeping up-to-date reports on every activity. They may be the best "proof" sponsors need to maintain sponsorship. In Brazil, governmental bureaucracy may make this an endless task, but that is how things work here.

Centres must also open up businesses to realise some extra income for the centre. (some examples: a photostat/computer centre; writing press releases for companies for a fee, providing services to corporate clients such as workshops in public speaking or presentation skills)

We are largely driven through project funding not organisational in SA, so we have to create projects with fixed time frames, e.g. 6 months to 1 year to secure funds. This means a lot of work in preparing applications, reporting on funding spent and ensuring a good relationship with funders. Building a relationship with a funder over several years is great when possible. Remembering that funders are people too (!) and being as understanding of their constraints and pressures is helpful. Always try to over-deliver if you can. Give a funder something more than what they expected to receive. This helps impress and keeps you on their radar. Publicise your funder and thank them publicly - this is also very helpful to keeping them engaged and reminded of you and your work. Keep good records and M&E so that your reporting can be useful to them in plotting how to give funds in the future. If you don't get funding, keep the relationship going wherever possible, keep them informed and hopefully they will come around eventually.

**What innovative strategies have you used to secure funds?**

Personal requests to donors with long relationships with individuals. Personal approaches to individuals within arts funding bodies to share information about the sector, about specific opportunities to inspire interest.

We sell ads for our magazine and look for unique sponsors for One Theatre World

Organising programs and events which serve the needs of our members and TYA in India as a whole, plus it will connect us with an InterNational Centre. Like focussing our annual festival to a country like France, Korea etc

We sell advertising and sponsorship opportunities for our publications and events, as we reach a wide network of the theatre community. We look forward to finding more ways to expand this area of funding.

Along with hard work and efforts of ASSITEJ Korea staff members, inviting outstanding international performances to our annual festival for Korean young audiences has improved the status of ASSITEJ Korea and the festival. Enhanced ASSITEJ Korea's prestige was helpful.

We are improving several Erasmus+ projects to make use of EU funds

Making big festivals for school children so we can sponsor some of the tickets for the public schools, and have a higher price for private schools. This way people pay what they actually can and we can help everybody to be able to come to the theater even if they cannot afford it

We have tried hosting activities in collaboration with educational and cultural institutions

We are speaking with different kinds of cultural agents to obtain funds to support our association and to increase projects and visibility.

We are running a business centre with a full time employee.

We have done crowdfunding drives for particular things like bussing children to the theatre, or community based festivals. We have partnered with members and worked with them to secure funding - and then helped them administer the funding so that they are able to do so independently in the future. We have written countless funding proposals, and been dogged about pursuing whatever leads we get.

# Managing Conflict

## The inevitability of conflict

Disagreement and arguments are inevitable within any group of people who care passionately about the work that they do together. The opposite of conflict, after all, is not harmony, but apathy.

Managing processes to channel antagonism to make it productive will be critical to the sustainability and health of your Centre. The following section provides some guidance on how to use the potential for conflict to be productive and to respond to the challenges it raises.

## The benefits of conflict

Conflict is beneficial where it avoids 'group-think'; that is, where the desire for consensus leads the group to make poor decisions.

Conflict indicates an investment in and engagement with the success of the Centre, distributing responsibility between the members.

Conflict is productive when it allows the group to

- identify gaps in the information needed to make decisions;
- spot potential or actual pitfalls;
- tease out alternative approaches and actions.

It requires an agreed process for making and respecting decisions between different courses of action. This may be set out as a **Code of Conduct** ([sample templates needed](#)) for the members of your centre and/or your Board.

While agreeing together how you intend to govern your working practices at the outset is necessary, on its own it is not enough. You will need to train your Board members in effective practice and refer regularly to the agreement during your work together.

## How to make disagreement productive

- Identify together as many different dimensions of any proposed action or activity.

A **SWOT** analysis ([guidance/template needed](#)) may be useful in this.

Edward DeBono has also proposed a **Six Hat Method**. (See for example,

[https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED\\_07.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm)).

This allows a whole group to take different perspectives on any proposed decision through a sequence of taking specific roles.

- Develop multiple channels and regular opportunities for gathering and listening to feedback.
- Respond to this feedback when you review decisions and activities in as transparent a way as possible. For some activities, using an **external evaluator** can be a valuable contribution in this process.
- Have a reporting cycle that lets everyone know what you did with the feedback in reviewing decisions and actions and any changes that came about or will be introduced as a result.

## How to manage destructive conflict

Conflict is destructive when it

- is focused on personal differences or prejudices;
- arises from individuals or groups acting in their own interests or the interests of a section of the members, rather than the mission, aims and values of the Centre;
- concentrates on past behaviours and actions, rather than on what can be done now;
- does not lead to actions to progress the work of the centre.

To manage this destructive potential, it is important to

- demonstrate transparency in decision-making and the operation of the centre and its activities;
- have a procedure for dealing with Conflicts of Interest;

- agree with your membership how you will allow members to raise concerns and/or make complaints and how these will be investigated and resolved; ([Samples of a Complaints Process?](#))
- have a process for mediating between individuals and groups. This might be something you can do within your National Centre or be provided by an external organisation.

## **Challenges**

### **What happens if the conflict is because of bullying or harassment?**

Where your Centre includes paid staff, there may be specific legal requirements that you must meet when there is an allegation of bullying or harassment.

Even where your Centre involves only volunteer members, it may be useful to agree a policy and procedure to handle any such allegations.

[Sample templates needed](#)

### **What happens when the conflict is because of personal relationships?**

It isn't always possible to separate out personal issues from professional relationships, particularly where the two are intertwined in individual identity.

It may be possible to separate out the different factors that have given rise to the issues and address these separately. These might be because the people involved have very different goals or approaches or different styles of working or communication, for example.

See the material at Workplaces that Work [online] at:  
<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/workplaces-conflict.cfm>

## **Case Studies**

### **External Resources**

*ACAS Managing Conflict at Work* [online]. Available at:

[http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/h/5/Managing\\_Conflict\\_at\\_Work\\_December\\_2009.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/h/5/Managing_Conflict_at_Work_December_2009.pdf)

# Chapter 6: What does a National Centre do?

## Importance of Communication

Perhaps the most important task of a National Centre is to spread and share information. Members should have access to information at every level. At the same time it is vital to hear the voice of the members and look for concrete actions to serve the community.

A National Centre needs to find effective ways to communicate with its members and with the International ASSITEJ. This is essential and in the current day and age, much easier than ever before.

Some of the communication strategies that are used by National Centres include:

- Regular email / Newsletters
- Social media: Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Wechat etc.
- Website
- Phone / SMS /Text message / WhatsApp / WhatsApp groups
- Skype/ Zoom / WhatsApp chat / FaceTime and other forms of online “face-to-face” meetings
- Postal mail outs (although these are becoming less common)
- In person meetings: formal meetings, functions, events, festivals etc.
- Livestreaming of events / Video archiving / other forms of documentation

## Communicating through Activities - The importance of Inspiration.

Where is our opportunity to change paradigms, find topics to discuss further and deeper, open new points of view?

*Two levels of action:*

- Ideological; the exchange of ideas, providing inspiration.

Seminars, webinars, or meetings with government or arts bodies. This can inform and influence the gatekeepers and raise the perception of our sector.

- Concrete; Encounters, workshops, showcases.

Share inspiring best practices. Translate articles that inspire. Spread the word about innovative contemporary work done for young audiences around the world. Publish papers online. Gather people together to share work face to face.

Activities that inspire and gather people together also attract talent to our sector:

- University level – professionalize the artists that are already there.
- Create permanent structures that guarantee the sustainability of the companies. (For ex. MAE – month of performing arts in Chile where every child in the public school system has access to a theatre performance. FITA CHILE – a showcase of Iberoamerican shows inviting programmers from all over the world. **MISSION CHILE – send**)
- Look for information about possible partners to pass on to the sector in your region, create a list, and publish online about:
- Cooperation partners - identify Arts Councils, have a presence in festivals, create missions with professionals from the country on international forums, join Networks in ASSITEJ.
- Create forums to explain the role of the cultural institutes, Art Councils, Foreign Policies, Export Agencies.
- Create forums to promote the artists and their work to one another and to possible funders or presenters.
- Create collaborations between Institutions, Organizations and practitioners.

### **Case Studies:**

**What advice do you have about communicating with your members and the broader community?**

It works. People like to be in touch and to know there is energy around the work they do and connection with others. Its hard in Australia to be in touch sometimes - huge

distances and differing circumstances and time-zones make it difficult. We have regular communication every month through our advocacy body and the promise of action down the track, emails to people and conversations wherever they are. The aim with our sector is to emphasise the idea that sharing information is something *everyone* can do and needs to do.

More frequent social media communications and newsletters would benefit members. This is something TYA UK could improve upon

To use all social media.

To secure more staff who can be in charge of communication

We are much decentralized, a lot of the direct communication (meeting with professionals) is handled through regional platforms

Open the meetings of the board regularly for the members to join. Create a part-time job for the communication with the members, to guarantee a regular and reliable basis.

Every social media counts, so keep them up-to-date.

We can focus on a more regular and frequent national newsletter.

We use Whatsapp groups to communicate in between commissions of members a few times a week, and each commission has also their own Whatsapp group to organize tasks and meetings. This way we save money from sms and calling each member... Newsletters, social media and community outreach through NGOs and schools. We think it's fundamental to have a smooth communication with our members and develop other areas of cooperation. Our members are especially interested in opportunities and international calls

Internet is always easy but some of our people do not have internet so we phone call them or use WhatsApp for those connected.

Information flow is critical in any organisation to operate effectively and smoothly. Therefore, the centre must be active in disseminating information to and from members. The members must always know the status of things all the time. Putting word out about what you are doing into the general community - through the press or online media - is really helpful for building a profile of theatre for young audiences and making your members feel valued. Communication through Facebook is very useful for keeping people engaged and keeping things relatively personal. Make sure that you communicate the story as well as the project - the personal touches, responses etc make a difference. Try to keep records of who, how, when you engaged with and keep some consistency in this communication. People don't like to feel that you have forgotten about them.

## **Ongoing Activities:**

ASSITEJ National Centres engage in creating and administering a range of ongoing activities, linked to the needs of their particular TYA communities.

These may include, on an International, Regional, National or Local level, any of the following:

- Meetings
- Annual General Meeting
- Festivals
- Seminars/Forums
- Conferences
- Workshops
- Collaborative projects
- Exchanges
- Artistic Development opportunities
- Internships
- Publications - magazines, journals, books
- Exhibitions
- Promotional Opportunities
- Competitions and Awards especially in the area of TYA
- Showcases - inviting producers or promoters to see work
- Livestreaming of events
- Hosting an ASSITEJ Executive Committee meeting, ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering, ASSITEJ World Congress
- Hosting a Next Generation Opportunity at an existing or new event

Some of these events and activities may require very little effort to arrange, while others may be very ambitious and require years of planning and preparation. It is a good idea to look carefully at what already exists and can be harnessed in your country, before re-inventing the wheel, so to speak.

Can your ASSITEJ National Centre become the linking entity between those who are already doing what needs to be done? Can your ASSITEJ National Centre provide a platform and more international

connectedness for those who are already doing excellent work in the field? How can you partner with those who are already doing the work, and what value can the ASSITEJ brand add to what is already being done.

## **Case Studies: What advice do you have about National Centre activities?**

Activity for us has to be started by need and desire from members. Currently we have a focus on the Australian Theatre Forum in October 2017 where the ongoing work can be re-defined and re-energised.

Don't stretch yourself too thin. Note all above "once every two years" answers are for our One Theatre World event.

Sub groups are a good way to develop regional activities. Working with partners who are already running events/ festivals etc which the National Centre could work within is a good way to supporting initiatives and increase engagement

More international creative projects such as workshops

Again, the National Centre is not organising many events by itself, but the regional platforms do. Nationally, we are mainly handling the political aspects, and national projects.

One person of the board (part-time paid) should be responsible for exchanges, internships and next generation.

It is important to make sure your programs and activities are clearly communicated to both members, and in the community beyond the membership, to increase the impact of the programming. More awareness of the programming can lead to both increased participation and increased funding support.

We are still learning a lot, we just think that with more involvement of volunteers and more involvement of the community in general we can make more and more activities and create new opportunities for the artists that are our members as well as the new artists that start to get involved with us each year...

Sharing of ideas for annual calendar would help in planning activities.

No advice at this stage. NZ has a small population and small number of practitioners spread across a large country. Our main goal over the past few years has been to forge a community of practitioners, despite the distances (and differences) between

us. Regular sharing of news has helped develop awareness of and respect for each other's work, and strengthen our connections with each other and with the global community of practitioners. The next step for us is to formalise our structure and status and to find our public voice.

It is important that a National Centre be viewed as one that brings members together, involves member groups in national activities and if necessary, to regional and international organisations like ASSITEJ International.

There is a need to increase both local and international collaborations. The centre must engage its membership through creating a number of activities such as festivals, workshops and meetings.

National Centres need to offer concrete activity. In a large country, like SA, we try to move that activity around so that it benefits different people at different times. We move our AGM to a different location each year, and we have workshops in different provinces, particularly those which have less theatrical activity. We also make sure that the festivals we engage with have a good geographical spread. We try as far as possible to make opportunities possible for a diverse range of artists - the amateurs, the emerging, the professionals - and across cultures... this is difficult at times, but the more activity we generate, the more engagement and involvement there is from the members.

## **Collaborations and Projects (National and International) - Fair collaboration**

ASSITEJ is all about collaboration. The organisation was born to build collaborations between people from all over the world who share the same belief in the value of the performing arts for children and young people.

We need to be sensitive in our organisation to the fact that our National Centres come from vastly differing social, cultural and economic paradigms and to recognise and actively resist the power-play that may be present in collaborations, as a result. Ideally the function of collaboration should be to empower all those involved in the collaboration and to ensure that there is equality in decision-making and that all parties reap benefits from the collaboration. The notion of “fair collaboration” has been explored extensively in conferences and in

books, and it is recommended that members refer to some of the available resources before embarking on collaborative partnerships.

### **What advice do you have about collaborations?**

Collaboration is the best way to enlarge the activities and to bring more people and promote the organization.

Collaboration is the best for us because our centre couldn't organize festivals and production by ourself. We should work together.

When there is collaboration, members grow by interacting with different partners and creativity is enhanced.

Collaborations are important as they help in understanding of what other people are doing be it national or international level and must be encouraged.

It is really important to know who your partner is and to be able to trust them. Spending time dealing with expectations is very important, particularly in instances where there is a lack of balance of power. Collaborations are often the best way to get things done. We are more likely to attract funding where we demonstrate that we are working with others than when we keep the benefits to a few... Don't assume anything. Ask questions. Don't be afraid to seem stupid. you need to understand one another if the project is to work. Make sure that you have a clear idea of where you are going and what you hope to achieve.

### **Who do you work with?**

We collaborate with other associations of professionals from art / culture in education fields and popular education.

We collaborate nationally with Unima and Astra-Agita (other associations focused the theater for and with children ); Internationally Network Europe 8+ and the participation to ASSITEJ activities

We work with the American Alliance for Theatre & Education on our Young Playwrights for Change program; we collaborate with a member theatre organization and the Kennedy Centre on our One Theatre World and OTW Sessions events.

We try to establish collaborations with other national organisations so as to make the output stronger.

This is the best way to be active in activities. ASSITEJ Pakistan normally collaborates with Government Cultural organizations like arts councils and other international

cultural organizations for logistics of its events. About International Collaborations, I must say is very important, although ASSITEJ Pakistan has not collaborated yet internationally but hope to do it soon.

Especially in developing countries as Brazil, we suggest collaborations with social-educational associations and institutions, either governmental or private ones.

**Describe a project, which your National Centre runs which you consider very exciting/ productive/relevant/useful... on a national level:**

We create gatherings around particular ideas in different regions of our large country where the local sector members are invited to take part; as keynote speakers, firecracker reports, panel discussions and as audience and participants.

ASSITEJ Italy: In-Forma, an Annual Training Project - administrative, organizational and artistic - for ASSITEJ Members only

TYA USA: One Theatre World is the most significant gathering of theatre for young audiences professionals in North America presented by Theatre for Young Audiences/USA, featuring performances, juried breakout sessions (workshops and discussions), master classes, a keynote address, special events, and networking opportunities. One Theatre World 2017 will take place starting the evening of Wednesday May 3 and ending the afternoon of Saturday May 6, 2017 in various locations in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland, California. Bay Area Children's Theatre is hosting this year's gathering. This year's theme is Innovate/Activate.

ASSITEJ UK: Historically, a Partnership with Rose Bruford College to run an artists residency project. The annual workshop week allowed mid career artists space and time to work with an industry expert Working towards the AAG 2016 in Birmingham, in partnership with TYA Ireland

The Children Theater Award. Takes place at the National Theater every August with around 30 productions that compete. It creates a unique wonderful festival "The Theater Dream" where in two weeks Children and families can enjoy the best productions of the year.

ASSITEJ Japan: Next Generation Asia in collaboration with JIENKYO

Scene d' Enfance: Avignon, enfants à l'honneur : inviting 500 children to the Festival of Avignon for 3 days. Performances, workshops, ball, leisure times.

International TYA festival, Storytelling programs and tour which runs almost every 4 months, Training programs, Opportunities for International exposure.

For the past 5 years ASSITEJ Iceland has held a theatre festival for young audiences in Reykjavik called UNGI. UNGI is a growing festival that started with only few performances and workshops. Now it has turned into an international festival with 2-4 international performances and up to 6 Icelandic performances. All of the events are free and ASSITEJ Iceland focuses on making the festival accessible for everyone. ASSITEJ manages to do that with Icelandic government funding.

ASSITEJ Denmark: We are partners in the organization of the yearly national festival (Aprilfestival) which is an important place for selling performances, for national and international exposure, networking, artistic development and engagement in the professional TYA environment.

Shadowland which was about how racism and racist structures are reflected in performing arts for youth.

Topic oriented Workshops connected to Festivals, A Festival of Theatre by children and for children organised in cooperation with several other theatre associations, A Programme supporting new approaches to theatre for children and Young People who normally do not have Access to theatre (Wege ins Theater)

This might be of interest specifically for countries that consist of different (language) communities: we organised a 'bus tour' to the other side of the country, to discover 3 theaters/cultural centres and their inhabitants. This was very interesting on the level of knowledge sharing, networking, and basically crossing borders, getting to know each other ... So we will for sure continue this.

Festival EJUMEKLĚT! collaborate with Cultural Bag program, which provide access to schools pupils.

Tamasha Festival (performing arts For Young Audience) This is an annual performing arts festival which contains theatre, dance , puppet ,& Music. From this year ASSITEJ Pakistan is going to start a Next generation Program which will be also part of Tamasha festival.

El Festival Internacional de Teatro para la Infancia y la Juventud, FITIJ GUAGUAS DE MAÍZ, es un festival anual que tiene 13 años de vida y que puede tener un impacto mayor en cuanto a la población beneficiaria a nivel nacional y a la posibilidad de involucrar no solo a niñas y niños sino también a familias, escuelas y maestros.

Project "Sherlock" - a biennial advanced training and workshop for theater workers in the field of theatre for young audiences. Project "Boxenstopp" - a subsidy program for authors of theatrical text for young audiences

Every two years, we host a national festival and conference called One Theatre World, featuring performances, keynotes, workshops and events. Our members cite it as one of our strongest offerings, creating a national network of TYA artists and practitioners.

With the support of government, ASSITEJ Korea organizes children's theatre tour programs to culturally alienated areas.

That would be the STELLA-Performing.Arts.Award for young audience. It is the only award of that kind in Austria. Awards are presented in six categories. For more, visit [ASSITEJ.at/stella](http://ASSITEJ.at/stella) (German only).

Since 2014, CBTIJ/ASSITEJ Brasil grants the CBTIJ Theatre for Children Award. It has been gathering more attention from the media, and even from the artistic community. Though it is based in Rio, every national production touring in the city may be eligible for any of the 24 categories. By the way, this is the only major award to acknowledge the work of such professionals as technicians, graphic designers and photographers. We invite Turkish theatre for children and young people groups to exhibit their performances once a year in a showcase and they exchange ideas and build collaborations.

National festival "Theatre goes to children". Every year ASSITEJ Lithuania members organize National festival to go around Lithuania regions to reach children who have no possibility to attend professional theatre events.

Workshops with international Masters annually. We want to recuperate our national festival and it has been impossible, because we have no support from Government. We consider useful our workshops and festivals in a national level. Now we are starting a project to make many workshops outside of the Capital, so we can reach artists that are in need of more opportunities to learn new techniques. And we are thinking that this project will teach the students to become teachers of their local areas.

Our annual festival has been in a different town every year to give opportunity for local children and teachers to participate.

Tell A Tale - storytelling performances in collaboration with the Korean Cultural Centre has been going on since 4 years. It has created a good viable platform for

artistic exchange, spreading awareness of TYA among schools and also providing work opportunities for artists.

We have many projects running at the same time and we are very proud of all of them. (Publishing house, Library, Awards, Research Portal) We have four different collections of publications: - THEATER COLLECTION Plays of consecrated and novel authors. The combination of both makes it possible to contribute, on the one hand, to the recognition of historical cultural heritage and, on the other hand, to the discovery of current authorship and their promotion. The collection includes premiered and other unpublished works on the stage at the time of its publication.

-TEST COLLECTION Research texts related to some aspect of theater for children or youth. This collection was born with the spirit of promoting the development of a theoretical corpus on theater for children and young people as a fundamental work for the dignification and development of a quality theater.

IBEROAMERICAN BULLETIN In 1973, ASSITEJ-España began the publication of the Ibero-American Bulletin of Theater for Children and Youth with the purpose of gathering information on the dramatic activity for children and young people of both national and international companies, research and reflections on this in Spain, in Ibero-American countries and in the rest of the countries with ASSITEJ centres, and theatrical texts. This Bulletin, therefore, is born with the aim of being a vehicle of dissemination, a means of knowledge and communication of all those who in one way or another work in theater for children and young people.

-INTERNATIONAL COLLECTION Plays of foreign authors translated into Spanish. With this collection we intend to disseminate works with international recognition and difficult or impossible to find in Spanish

We are doing theatre workshops in school of Kathmandu which are beneficial for children and we can show productions in their respected schools. Later we can create a group of a new theatre artists and can work in TYA.

The meetings have been organized within theater conference on 2016

Last year our 'Big Dreams Gathering' brought together about 30 practitioners for a few hours to identify shared goals for performing arts and young people over the next few years. The volunteer board organised and facilitated the meeting and a well-funded company provided the venue, paper, pens, post-it notes, etc, so the cost to participants was just a few dollars to cover the cost of a shared lunch. The positive focus of the meeting resulted in renewed energy and optimism, relationship-building and sense of community among practitioners, expression of strong visions for the future and some first steps towards action-planning.

The library and Art learning projects are always awesome.

Festivals are always exciting as there are new things to learn each time from other parts of the country.

PROJET STEY FINANCE LA REGION EMILIA ROMAGNA ITALIE

Theatre Award

Theatre4Youth is an innovative online and print catalogue along with a staff which provides admin capacity and networking, which brings theatre into schools and creches and takes children to theatre... it is a way of creating a national database of who is doing what, what they are presenting and interesting the schools in this work...and also of the schools who want to receive the work. This project has raised the profile of TYA in SA over the last 5-7 years and is the basis of many other projects

**Describe a project which your National Centre runs which you consider very exciting/ productive/relevant/useful... on an international level:**

Working towards the AAG 2016 in Birmingham, in partnership with TYA Ireland and before that supporting the Gathering (festival and showcase) in Ireland.

Every two years we are producing The International Show Case where we welcome many directors of theaters and festivals to share our best theater work.

Shaping stories. A regional workshop in Africa, and the perspective to contribute to an African network

"Tifli-International TYA festival". International Youth Residency with Theatre Minduelle in Korea which happens Annually. Participation in next generation program by young Indian artists and follow up projects of them.

Every year ASSITEJ Iceland collaborates with international performers and brings them to Iceland to teach at workshops. This year we are bringing two professional hospital clowns from Norway to help us build up a hospital clown knowledge and hopefully within a year have 5-10 working hospital clowns in Icelandic hospitals. Many projects throughout the years with exchange of performances, seminars, workshops with the Nordic, Baltic countries as well as countries in the Middle East and Africa.

ASSITEJ Germany: International Directors' Seminar

Danish-Turkish Encounter: This project will run the date between 22-26 th of October 2017. The aim of the project is to bring together Danish and Turkish practitioners to share their knowledge.

We are still a young centre, so we did not realize that many international projects. However, we consider our delegation in the international gathering in Cape Town as very successful. This meant a lot to all of us, it created awareness for the TYA in Belgium because of press coverage, and we were able to make an important step on the policy level, as our minister of culture was there.

Korea-Nordic Connection Project for future cooperation, networking and international productions.

Advanced training courses with a focus on theatre for young audiences at the University of Arts. One for theatre professionals, one for teachers. The aim to provide a CAS (Certificate of advanced studies) in future.

We offer an international travel fellowship called the Ann Shaw Fellowship, which allows a member to travel and see TYA work in action abroad. We also publish TYA Today Magazine, twice a year in print and now increasingly available online.

Annually, ASSITEJ Korea holds International Summer Festival. Also, we are organizing K-PAP 2018 (Korean Performing Arts Platform for Youth) to present and promote Korean performances for youth to invited international delegates. Since last year, we have a masterclass: authors running, which targets people who want to write plays for young audiences, but never did before. 3 were chosen and tutored by three experienced Austrian playwrights.

Since last July, CBTIJ/ASSITEJ Brasil engaged in an exciting collaboration with the other BRICS National Centres. For five years, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa will be sharing information and expertise in the TYA field in a number of projects. Right now, we are supporting the curatorship of 2018 ASSITEJ International Artistic Gathering, to be held in Beijing, China.

International festival JÈGA/COOL! Run by National ASSITEJ centre of Lithuania every three years. Next – October 2018.

The international workshop or the Taller Regional is a project that we did last year and became quite an amazing experience for people from all parts of Latino-america because of the learning and the exchange experiences...

Workshops between Nordic-Baltic National Centres (for playwrights, set designers, actors etc)

Next Generation has been hosted alongside our international festival Tifli. It has been helpful in providing exposure to young Indian artists.

We do an interesting project with mediators where we provide role play for mediation learning materials.

Though past, there was a project that ran from 2013 to 2015 that was funded by the Swedish Institute bring together Mozambique, South Africa, Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It comprised workshops and theatre productions which were performed at the Harare International Festival of the Arts in 2015. There was a lot to learn from one another as ASSITEJ centres.

PROJET STEY FINANCE LA REGION EMILIA ROMAGNA ITALIE

K-PAP(Korean Performing Arts Platform )

We have had a number of international co-productions, but I think our Inspiring a Generation project, which allows 3-4 younger practitioners to engage with us intensely over a year as they make a work, and we organise some kind of international exchange opportunity for them during the year, has been extremely valuable. The Danish exchange with 3 Danish companies worked extremely well and was a good example of reciprocity with Danish work travelling to SA, and SA artists going to Denmark. We hope to work with this into the future.

# Chapter 7: What now?

## Induction, Renewal and Growth

### **FOR NEW CENTRES - Induction process:**

On completing your membership form and sending it to the Secretary-General, you will then be told whether or not your membership is accepted. You will officially become a member of ASSITEJ, once you pay your membership fee. You will then be added to the website and your contact details will be shared with other members.

### **NOTE: Comment from a National Centre**

A lot of National Centres are not properly updated on the ASSITEJ website; there is no email address or they don't respond on any email. This should be addressed by all National Centres because this is what ASSITEJ is. If we will not talk with each other, then what ASSITEJ is offering us?

We know that the first year of membership can be hard, so we ask that you consider the following:

- Is there a National Centre which is close to you, with which you could start a twinning arrangement? If not, the Secretary-General will discuss this with you and see if we can match-make you with another National Centre for the next 6 months to a year. This is to help new members find answers to questions or find more practical solutions to the problems they face.
- Can you ensure that an individual from your Centre goes to the first possible ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering or Congress in order to learn more about the association first hand? Consider how you might assist this person to attend. What routes are there for fundraising for travel in your country? Could they participate in an aspect of the programme which would ensure that certain of their costs are covered (e.g. Next Generation)?
- Connect with an EC member who will advise you over the next year; again, if you can see a natural fit with one of the EC members, please suggest this to the Secretary-General. Otherwise an EC

member will be allocated to your centre. In some instances, we may ask past-EC members to assist us in this mentoring process.

- What activities or calls that are already happening through ASSITEJ could you participate in? Use this as a means to achieve attention for the new organisation. Sharing the call for a Next Generation participant for example, can increase excitement and interest in your centre. Some examples include: World theatre day - 20th March and "take a child to the theatre today" campaign; ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering or Congress; Next Generation residencies; Next Generation placements; calls for articles and advertisement for the ASSITEJ Magazine; Festivals of other ASSITEJ centres, networks or individual members; Projects of other ASSITEJ centres or individual members.
- What simple activities can you embark on, that use the strengths of your members, and perhaps link to things that are already happening, to ensure that your centre becomes active as soon as possible.
- What simple communication tools can you use to ensure that all of those who have engaged with the centre, and become members, can be aware of what is happening in the field of TYA in your country and in the activities of your centre?
- What regional networks are operating within ASSITEJ that may be useful to your National Centre either formally or informally? (e.g. ACYTA/ AYTA/ NORDIC / IBERIA AMERICAN etc) These networks can be a good way to learn more about the region and to engage with others around opportunities.
- What is happening in the Network members of ASSITEJ that may be of interest to your members? Small Size, ITYARN, IIAN, Next Generation, Write Local Play Global and new Networks like the Young Dance Network, all allow for different kinds of engagements and activities which may be of interest to different members. Can you link members to opportunities wherever possible?

## **FOR RETURNING MEMBERS - Renewal**

Reading this Handbook, we hope that there have been moments of illumination or challenge, where you have been asked to look at your current practice and have thought, “perhaps we could be doing more”, or “differently”, or “perhaps there are aspects of our work which needs to be looked at again, and revised”?

We would encourage each National Centre to spend time working through the Handbook with their members, and gauging what their members have to say about how effectively your centre is serving the interests of those members. All centres have room for growth and development.

Please be in touch with the Secretary-General or EC, if there are specific things you would like to discuss. We are keen to find ways to support your growth and development.

### **Case studies:**

We are a big work in progress, but each year, ASSITEJ Uruguay grows and learns to become more and more useful for members and community in general. We recommend to start little by little; all the good ideas will become projects one day, and then with lots of effort a reality. So in general we listen to all good ideas and try to apply them little by little in our long term project...

Self assessment formats can be made so that each National Centre can periodically review its work and overcome specific challenges to increase the impact of ASSITEJ and the spread of TYA.

When we created our centre, 2 years ago, it was very important to us that it would be flexible and dynamic. We did not want it to become a vehicle for its own sake, with people holding on to their power positions. Therefore, we created some rules, for example: a president can be re-elected only once. And every 2 years, the board is renewed. The board (which is also the 'staff' for now) works in a horizontal, non-hierarchical way, I would say as a collective. Maybe a bit chaotic sometimes, but that is how we like it in Belgium ...! If you want to know more, please do not hesitate to contact us: Marijke De Moor - [marijke@kunsten.be](mailto:marijke@kunsten.be)

## **Growth and Development of a National Centre**

The growth project of a National Centre should accompany the desire for development with a prudent attitude that allows for small steps to be taken, allowing the Centre *“to start as a small seed that can grow over time”*.

The Constitution of ASSITEJ defines in Article 4.3.1, point 3:

The criteria for full or corresponding membership:

*3.1 To qualify for full membership in the Association, a National Centre must be a network comprising of at least three (3) professional members (2.1), or five (5) members with at least two (2) professional members (2.1) and three (3) non-professional members (2.2).*

*3.2 To qualify for corresponding membership, a National Centre must be a network of theatre companies, organisations and persons, which does not achieve the above criteria.*

This means that a National Centre may never be constituted of a single subject (individual or organisation) only. Starting from the simple minimal condition (three members – individuals or organisations), the growth path of a National Centre can begin, and over time it is hoped that Corresponding members will be able to upgrade to Full members and to continue to grow their membership.

The growth path must follow the criteria of Feasibility, Compatibility and Sustainability.

- Feasible, because the number of individuals or organisations who wish to associate and participate in the activities and mission of the National Centre and that of ASSITEJ is growing, thanks to the positive promotion of the work done and of the cultural objectives of the Centre.
- Compatible, so that the enlargement of the membership contributes to the vision described in the Constitution of ASSITEJ and the Agreement that regulates the life of the National Centre.

- Sustainable, because there are necessary conditions of solid management and planning which allow the real development of the Centre and not its possible implosion.

The continuous reference to ASSITEJ is necessary to remember that the development of the National Centre, besides fulfilling the function of promoting and supporting the Theatre for children and young people in its own country, also aims to do so on a worldwide, trans-national scale, through the work of ASSITEJ, the international association, with which a fruitful and two-way relationship must be created and maintained.

Any development of the Centre that does not take this into account, that forgets the link between the Centre and ASSITEJ, would obviously take the Centre out of the International network of ASSITEJ.

## **How can an established National Centre contribute to the International association? - Louis**