

ASSITEJ MANIFESTO

Children and young people have the right to access and participate in the arts, even and especially in times of crisis.



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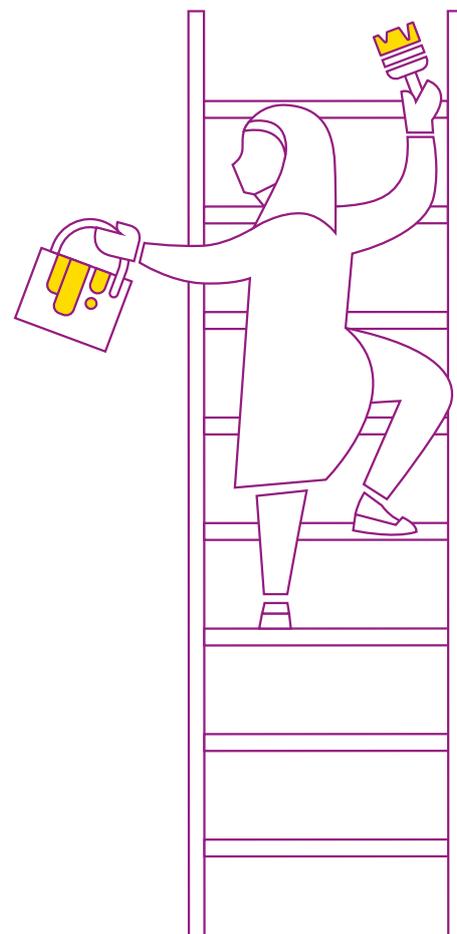
ASSITEJ, the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People¹, believes that much more needs to be done to meet all countries' obligations with respect to Articles 13 and 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This is especially true in light of the current pandemic, and the urgent need for equity and equal opportunities for every child to live in a sustainable and healthy world. Arts and culture allow us to imagine the world we wish to create for and with our children and young people, and are therefore crucial as we take action to ensure better conditions for our societies.

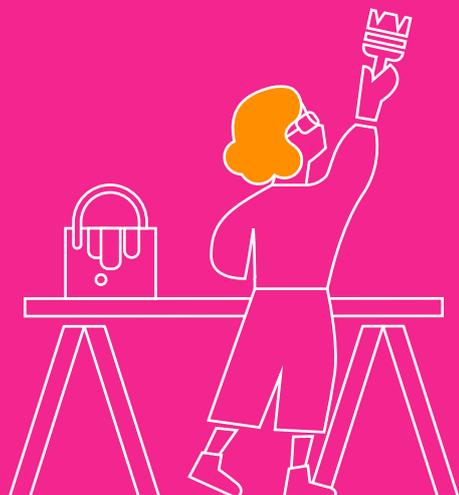
The arts are particularly vulnerable at this time, having been deeply impacted by COVID-19, and the subsequent economic conditions. Arts (and the artists that produce it) are a vital part of humanity's expression, critical reflection and health and well-being. Children and young people have the right to access and participate in the arts, even and especially in times of crisis.

While we accept that each country or region may have its specific contexts, systems and concerns, ASSITEJ endorses the following manifesto as a universal expression of the actions necessary if our children and young people are to flourish through engagement with the arts.

ASSITEJ recommends involving children and young people through consultation and collaboration and ensuring inclusion of their opinions and perspectives, at every possible level (Article 12, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).²



- 1 ASSITEJ is an association dedicated to theatre and to the performing arts for young audiences more broadly, reflecting an interdisciplinary sector.
- 2 We invite national centres to adapt the language used in this document to the cultural context in which they operate. For example, the phrase "children with disabilities" can be replaced by "disabled children" or "children with special needs", depending on what is considered the most appropriate within your cultural context. If there are questions about inclusivity in particular, we suggest that national centres speak to IIAN (International Inclusive Arts Network) to open dialogue about the language of inclusivity.



1

Citizens are urged to

- 1.1** lobby for the right of all children and young people to take part in Arts and Culture and connect with each other across the world;

- 1.2** build partnerships between artists and organisations that service children and young people with disabilities or those who are vulnerable and/or at risk to ensure arts access across all contexts e.g. refugees, children in hospitals, orphanages and care homes, young offenders; and

- 1.3** spread the Manifesto across a variety of settings and adapt the Manifesto for use in particular environments.

2

National governments are urged to

- 2.1** develop cross-governmental strategies for cooperation between departments to support whole child development and well-being for children and young people through access to the arts (e.g. Ministries/Departments of culture, health, education, environment, social development, tourism, entrepreneurship and business development); and

- 2.2** commit to policies that include cultural rights for children and young people as central to the well-being, recovery and resilience of societies.



3

Political parties are urged to

- 3.1** make detailed and specific reference to Articles 13 and 31 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in their own manifestos, programmes and priorities;

- 3.2** adopt consistent, inclusive, long-term policies with regard to Articles 13 and 31, and make financial provision to support these policies;

- 3.3** design guidelines for educational institutions to include and access the arts as part of their curricula; and

- 3.4** involve children in decision making and policy development.

4

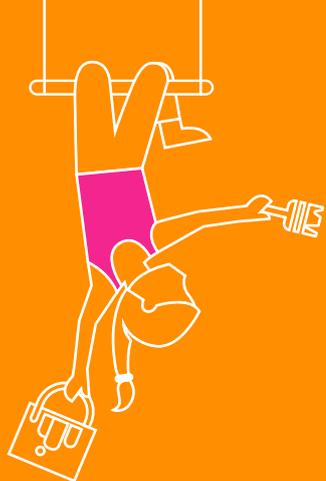
Ministries/ Departments for Education are urged to

- 4.1** make creativity, play and the arts an integral and essential part of the curriculum throughout schooling, including pre-school children and children with disabilities;

- 4.2** ensure that the arts have a full place in the training of teachers;

- 4.3** ensure that teaching artists and arts practitioners are integrated into school programmes as valued professionals; and

- 4.4** remove economic, social, geographical and other barriers to the access of cultural experiences.



5

Ministries/ Departments for Culture are urged to

- 5.1** provide consistent, long-term and sufficient funding and strategic support to ensure that all children and young people have full and equal access to the arts;

- 5.2** ensure the provision of high quality, inclusive programmes for children and young people;

- 5.3** guarantee equality of payment for all those involved in arts programmes no matter whether they aim at young audiences or adults;

- 5.4** ensure proportional funding for arts for children and young people, reflecting their demographics; and

- 5.5** commission, seek out and share research into international models of support for arts by and for children, young people and their families and take steps to bring national standards to those of best practices, globally.

6

Local authorities are urged to

- 6.1** value the role of the arts for every child and young person in the community;

- 6.2** provide accessible resources, facilities and public spaces to enable all children, young people and their families to participate in the arts; and

- 6.3** encourage and support partnerships between schools and arts organisations in their community.



7

Arts Councils are urged to

- 7.1** promote inclusive and culturally diverse work in their programmes;

- 7.2** ensure that work for children, young people and their families has equal status with work for adult audiences;

- 7.3** develop specific policies for the arts for children and young people from 0 to 18;

- 7.4** make arts for children and young people a key focus of their partnerships with local authorities, nationally, regionally and globally; and

- 7.5** provide sufficient funding for arts aimed at children, young people and their families, proportional to the demographics of the country and so that access and standards can be kept high and ticket prices low.

8

Arts organisations and institutions (theaters etc) are urged to

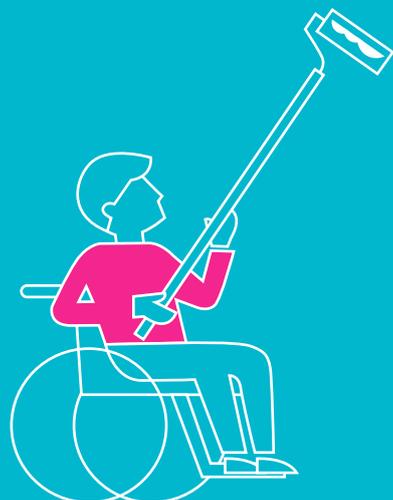
- 8.1** aim for the highest possible standards in their work for children and young people;

- 8.2** make work for children, young people and families a key strand in their programming;

- 8.3** ensure that the education department is seen as a partner and addressee of their work;

- 8.4** ensure that children and young people are represented at board level or wherever decisions are made; and

- 8.5** remove barriers to access for their programmes and buildings for children, young people and their families.



9

Schools and early years settings are urged to

- 9.1** seek support from Departments/ Ministries for inclusion of arts and culture as an essential part of the school curriculum;

- 9.2** give children and young people time to play and take part in accessible creative activities;

- 9.3** give children and young people access to the widest possible range of cultural experiences;

- 9.4** encourage parents and carers to value their children's artistic achievements and experiences; and

- 9.5** make creative activities and the arts integral to all learning across the curricula.

10

Media is urged to

- 10.1** increase the amount of critical attention given to arts and culture for children, young people and their families in the national press;

- 10.2** ensure that programming for children, young people and their families is accessible, of the highest quality and reflects their own lives, languages and cultural diversity; and

- 10.3** recognise the special responsibility that public service broadcasters have for children, young people and families.

ASSITEJ will

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- 11.1** engage with professional artists and all relevant role-players to debate and collaborate on concrete actions to support the arts for young audiences nationally, regionally and globally;
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- 11.2** collect best practices from different countries that reflect collaborations between arts/education/government to create a catalogue of political and independent success;
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- 11.3** present evidence of the connection between arts, well being and mental health;
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- 11.4** host panels of cross-cutting experts to explore how the arts can make a difference in specific sectors (for example, social development, education, health, etc.);
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- 11.5** create templates of letters to governments and other entities, and write in support of members (national centres, networks, and individual members) of ASSITEJ to further this manifesto; and
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- 11.6** support members to amplify the manifesto, and to ensure the rights of all children and young people to access the arts and culture.

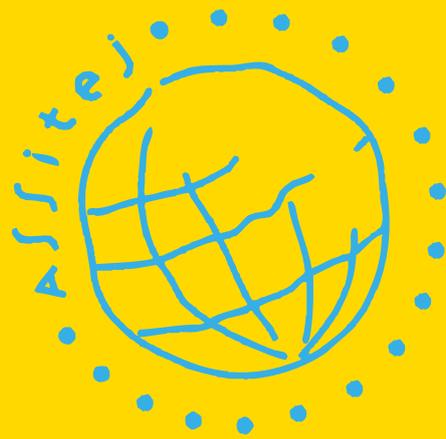
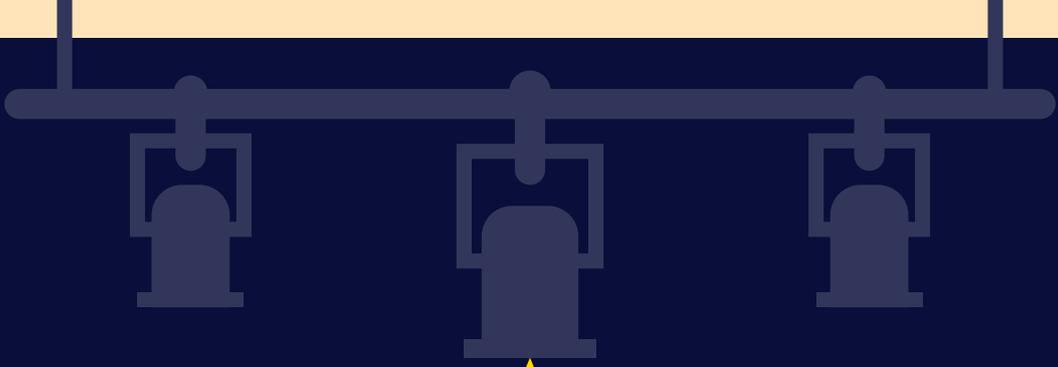
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 13

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

Article 31

Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.



www.assitej-international.org