

MEMBERSHIP POLICY AND PROTOCOLS: National Centres

CONSTITUTION	EXPLANATIONS
1. Underlying philosophy:	
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, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction.	National Centres must therefore apply a policy of inclusion and representivity in their admission policy for membership of the National Centre.
2. National Centres: Criteria for membership	
2.1 Description	
National Centres are networks of theatre companies, organisations and persons working in that country in the field of theatre for children and young people.	The National Centre is intended to be representative of the field of theatre for children and young people as it exists in that country. All efforts should be made to include all artists working in the field and to raise standards by engaging with artists in exchanges and other activities, rather than by limiting membership to a select few. National Centres should be actively working to grow their membership over time.
2.2 Categories of membership within National Centres are:	
Professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people.	The term “professional” is understood to mean professional within the context of the National Centre. Each National Centre should determine for itself what constitutes “professional”. Theatre companies or artists who work partially for children and young people and partially in other contexts, may also be admitted. Possible definitions include one or more of, for example: trained, full-time, earning a living from theatre, employed in a company, having had some professional experience.
Non-professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people.	The term “non-professional” is understood to mean non-professional within the context of the National Centre. Each National Centre should determine for itself what constitutes “non-professional”.
Organizations, institutions, associations or persons actively engaged in the work of theatre for children and young people.	These may include actor training institutions, specialist artistic networks in the country, theatre archivers, theatre educators, university researchers, cultural centres, festivals etc.
Supporting organizations, institutions, associations, or persons interested in theatre for	These may include critics, patrons, honorary members, social welfare organisations, literacy organisations, educational institutions etc.

children and young people.	
2.3 Criteria for full or corresponding membership:	
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).	These are minimum criteria; ideally a National Centre will comprise more members than is described here. The focus is on creating a national network of professional members, first and foremost, but it should be noted that contexts for professionalism differ from country to country.
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.	The term “network” implies a minimum of THREE theatre companies, organisations or persons working in the field.
3. Rights and Obligations of Membership	
3.1 Rights of Membership	
Full members have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings, to be elected to the Executive Committee, and to have THREE votes in the General Assembly.	A full member that is not present at a General Assembly may give their proxy (3 votes) to another National Centre that is a full member of ASSITEJ. This proxy must be given in writing and communicated to the Secretary-General at least 12 hours before voting is due to begin. Only one person from a National Centre may be proposed for election to the Executive Committee.
Each elected Executive Committee member must come from a different country, with the exception of two members only, provided that one has been proposed by a National Centre and one by a network. In this case two candidates from the same country may be admitted, provided that both make the minimum number of votes (50% of the votes)	Ensuring equitable opportunity for representation now that Networks can be full members and should have the same rights as National Centres. Because of the proportion of Networks to National Centres in the association there will always be a limit on the numbers of Networks represented in the Executive Committee. The numbers of network positions can't exceed the proportional number of voting members that are Networks as opposed to National Centres.
Corresponding members have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings and to have ONE vote in the General Assembly. Corresponding members do not have the right to be elected to the Executive Committee.	A corresponding member that is not present at a General Assembly may give their proxy (1 vote) to another National Centre that is either a full or corresponding member of ASSITEJ. This proxy must be given in writing and communicated to the Secretary-General at least 12 hours before voting is due to begin.
3.2 Obligations of Membership	
All members have the following obligations:	
to work to achieve the aims defined by the Association,	National Centres should be actively engaged in activities, projects or collaborations which reflect the aims of the Association.

	<p>National Centres should prioritise aims according to an analysis of their national needs.</p> <p>The aims of the Association (when applied to National Centres) include:</p> <p>To work for the rights of children and young people to artistic experiences especially designed and created for them in that country.</p> <p>To work for the recognition and acknowledgement of theatre for children and young people in that country.</p> <p>To work for improvement of the conditions of theatre for children and young people in that country.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>To participate in an artistic network to explore different aspects of artistic work for children and young people, to increase the artistic competence of artists and to benefit them.</p>
<p>to maintain its statutes,</p>	<p>National Centres should adhere to the constitution and the principles of inclusion and representation that underpin the constitution.</p>
<p>to act upon the decisions made by the Association,</p>	<p>All decisions taken by the General Assembly are binding for all members at the national as well as the international level.</p>
<p>to pay their membership fees,</p>	<p>See notes on membership fees below.</p>
<p>to keep the Secretary General informed of their activities on a regular basis,</p>	<p>National Centres are expected to update the Secretary General at least once a year, but preferably more regularly. This can be done through the website, the newsletter, in person, or by other means. Communication is a key element in networking.</p>
<p>to appoint a correspondent,</p>	<p>This means that in each National Centre there is a</p>

	person who takes responsibility for corresponding with the Secretary General.
to provide a permanent address,	Both email and physical addresses should be provided. Most communication will occur by email, unless the National Centre (in rare instances) is unable to use this medium.
and to communicate to their members the information sent from the Secretary General's office.	All newsletters and other information sent from the Secretary General's office should be forwarded to the membership of the National Centre. No centre should be seen to keep information to itself, which could be of benefit to its members.
All full and corresponding members must use the acronym "ASSITEJ" either in the name of the centre or network or in the description in the subtitle.	For example, "ASSITEJ Rwanda" or "ARTEJ – ASSITEJ in Rwanda" are both acceptable titles for a National Centre. Wherever possible, the logo of ASSITEJ should be displayed alongside the logo of the National Centre.
3.3 Payment of Membership fees	
Membership fees, which are determined by the General Assembly, are due on 1st January of each year and must be sent to the Treasurer. Members more than six (6) months in arrears lose the right to vote in the General Assembly.	Membership fees are determined by the General Assembly for a three year period, or until such time as the Executive Committee sees fit to propose a change to the fee structure. Currently Full Members pay 750 USD annually. Members who have financial difficulties may pay less than this, provided it is equal to or more than the minimum amount of 150 USD annually. Invoices are sent out by the Treasurer in November/December requesting payment. If a centre wishes to pay less than 750 USD, they need to request an invoice for the amount concerned. Payments should preferably be made by electronic transfer directly into the ASSITEJ bank account. Other forms of payment are also acceptable. The payment will be acknowledged by the Treasurer with a receipt. Members who are unable to pay the full fee in a given year, may apply in writing to the Executive Committee, giving specific reasons, requesting for their fees to be reduced or waived. These reasons will be considered by the Executive Committee, and if the reduction or waiver is granted, no rights of the member will be compromised.
	Currently Corresponding Members pay 75 USD annually. The same rules of payment apply as for Full Members.
4. Procedures for Membership	
4.1 Application for membership	Process of applying for membership:
Written applications for membership shall be addressed to	Typically, an individual or individuals wishing to launch a National Centre makes a call to, or

<p>the Secretary General. These applications will be considered, approved, or denied by the Executive Committee. In the case of a denial by the Executive Committee, the applicant may appeal to the next General Assembly.</p>	<p>approaches directly, the artists working in the field of theatre for children and young people in that country. A national meeting is held to bring together these companies, organisations and persons. Already existing companies, institutions and organisations of relevance to the field should be included in the network wherever possible. At this meeting, a board of representatives for the National Centre should be elected democratically. Ideally National Centres should be formally constituted, according to the laws governing such associations in the given country.</p>
	<p>Once the board of the National Centre has been established and membership of the association has reached a point considered sufficiently representative of the field to constitute a National Centre (and the minimum requirements of the ASSITEJ constitution have been met), an application form for membership of ASSITEJ should be completed.</p>
	<p>This application form is submitted to the Executive Committee and the request is discussed at one of the physical meetings of the EC, or via email.</p>
	<p>If the request is granted, then the National Centre will be notified by the Secretary General, and the Treasurer will send an invoice requesting payment of membership fees for the first year. Once these fees have been received into the ASSITEJ account, the membership is considered active.</p> <p>If the request is rejected, reasons for rejection will be given by the Secretary General, and the group will be given the opportunity to reapply once conditions for membership have been met.</p>
<p>4.2 Resignation from membership</p>	
<p>Any member that wishes to resign from the Association should inform the Secretary General in writing. The resignation will take effect from 1st January in the following year.</p>	<p>We urge members to engage with the Secretary General about their problems before taking the step to resign from the Association. When resigning from the Association, National Centres should give reasons for their resignation, so that the Association may have a stronger sense of what its membership needs and wants.</p>
<p>4.3 Suspension or Expulsion from membership</p>	
<p>The Executive Committee may decide, by a majority of two-thirds, on the suspension, or expulsion of any member whose work conflicts with the fundamental aims of this</p>	<p>Suspension of membership implies that the member will not be acknowledged as a member of ASSITEJ until such time as certain criteria have been met.</p> <p>Suspension is usually for a set period, say 6</p>

<p>Association, or who has failed several times in one of the obligations mentioned in Article 6.4. Any centre which has been suspended, or expelled loses the right to use the acronym "ASSITEJ".</p>	<p>months, in which a National Centre is asked to reorganise themselves to meet their constitutional obligations or to deal with other issues identified as problematic by the Executive Committee. Expulsion implies that the member will no longer be considered part of the association. Expulsion is usually a last resort after a period of communication with the centre. Reasons for expulsion include but are not limited to: non-payment of fees for three or more years; non-communication and non-responsiveness; exclusivity, lack of representation or gate-keeping activity; refusal to adhere to the constitution of ASSITEJ; bringing ASSITEJ into disrepute. Once expulsion has occurred, the Executive Committee should wherever possible work towards finding theatre companies, organisations and persons in that country who might form a new centre.</p>
<p>Any rejected, suspended, or expelled member may appeal to the next General Assembly.</p>	<p>Notice of the appeal must be given in writing to the Secretary-General so as to be included in the Agenda for the General Assembly. The General Assembly will hear both the appeal and the reasons of the Executive Committee for the decision. They may overturn the decision of the Executive Committee by a majority vote.</p>