



ASSITEJ Executive Committee Meeting:
Havana, Cuba
22 May – 2 June 2024

Present in Person:

Sue Giles, *President*, Australia (SG)
Louis Valente Sørensen, *Secretary General*, Denmark (LV)
Bebê de Soares, *Vice President*, Chile (BS)
Pamela Udoka, *Vice President*, Nigeria (PU)
Seok-hong Kim, *Vice President*, South Korea (SK)
Cristina Cazzola, Italy (CC)
Emilie Robert, France (ER)
Jon Dafydd-Kid, UK (JDK)
Julia Dina Heße, Germany (JH)
Selloane Lalu Mokuku, South Africa (LM)
Shoaib Iqbal, Pakistan (SI)
Yannick Boudeau, Belgium (YB)
Paulo Merisio, *Counselor*, Brazil (PM)
Christopher Blois-Brooke, *Staff Member*, UK (CBB)
Marissa Garay, *Staff Member*, Mexico (MG)

Guests present during specific meetings:

Rachel García, *National Performing Arts Council*, Cuba (RG)
Rafael Pérez-Malo, *National Performing Arts Council*, Cuba (RPM)
Kenia Rodríguez, *ASSITEJ Cuba*, Cuba (KR)
Nevalis Quintana, *ASSITEJ Cuba*, Cuba (NQ)
Dayana Deulofeu, *ASSITEJ Cuba*, Cuba (DD)
Dailin Anaya, *ASSITEJ Cuba*, Cuba (DA)
Ernesto García, *ASSITEJ Cuba*, Cuba (EG)
Estelle Derquenne, *ASSITEJ France*, France (ED)
Talulah Huyghens, *ASSITEJ France*, France (TH)
Fanny Spiess, *ASSITEJ France*, France (FS)
Jiyoung Bang, *ASSITEJ Korea*, South Korea (JB)
Emilia, *ASSITEJ Korea*, South Korea
Renan Fernández, *Iberescena*, Panama (RF)
Zaida Rico, *Iberescena*, Spain (ZR)



Javier Valenzuela, *Iberescena*, Chile (JV)
Liubov Ramírez, *Iberescena*, Costa Rica (LR)
Yamina Gibert, *Iberescena*, Cuba (YG)
Julio González, *Iberescena*, Spain (JG)



Agenda

1. Welcome and Cultural Talk

- 1.1. Members of ASSITEJ Cuba to talk briefly about Cuba
- 1.2. What EC members need to know to assist delegates to 'land'

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Access Needs

- 3.1. Needs of EC members in this meeting
- 3.2. Short conversation about access in the festival and congress

4. Apologies (Present, absent, number of voters)

5. Conflicts of Interest

- 5.1. Conflicts in agenda items
- 5.2. Conflicts declared around the festival and programming

6. Schedule for the EC

Talk through program and proposed schedule

7. Meetings List

Iberoscena, France, Candidates, Next Generation group, etc.

8. Artistic Encounters

- 8.1. Notice board
- 8.2. Tiny encounters
- 8.3. Community encounter
- 8.4. Global Sector
- 8.5. Encounter

9. Membership Cases for Discussion

10. Narrative for Finance 2024 - 2028

Read the forward plan to present to members at General Assembly

11. Award Ceremony, Opening Ceremony, Closing Ceremony

Plans and next steps

12. Working Group Updates



12.1. Reports and format of these.

12.2. What's left undone – handover for next EC term

13. General Assembly agenda

Roles for EC

14. Honorary Members

Creating the list and rationale for each



1. Welcome and Cultural Talk

1.1. What EC members need to know to assist delegates to 'land'
It is the end of a term for the present Executive Committee.

This Congress was a complex construction, as *ASSITEJ Cuba* does not have its own economy and depends on the *National Performing Arts Council (CNAE)* which is part of the Ministry of Culture and employs all the artists in Cuba through its regional councils.

CNAE has a new president for a few months. 20 people from the *CNAE* worked on the Congress and Festival. They work very well with *ASSITEJ Cuba* and *ASSITEJ International*. *ASSITEJ Cuba* has had a new president for almost a year, Kenia Rodríguez.

Old Havana doesn't depend directly on the State, but on the Office of the Historian when it is about culture and arts. *Pabellon Cuba* depends on the Association of the Young Artists. There will be a small concert of young musicians there each night.

ASSITEJ International supports Cuban and regional artists. BABEL also supports artists from the area. 10 Cuban artists and 10 provincial artists will be supported.

Gasoline and electricity are huge issues. We are waiting for news about the buses due to the lack of gasoline. La Nave is a good app for transportation too (local SIM card needed).

1.2. Members of *ASSITEJ Cuba* to talk briefly about Cuba (this section took place on 23 May)

The Opening Ceremony will be on Friday 24th at 17:30 with the local participating companies and the international ones that are already in Cuba, as well as other local companies that are not in the program. There will be a lot of children, with La Colmenita, who will present a show at the amphitheater at 19:00.

The parade will start at the Plaza Vieja. All artists and delegates are expected. The Opening Ceremony is free access for all. There will be a big water dispenser there, which is to be noted, as it was a big challenge to get it.

Pabellon Cuba will be the check-in space for delegates, to get their tickets and their badges, on the 24th and the 25th, from 9:00 to 16:00. Afterwards, it will be at the *ASSITEJ* office.

2. Apologies (Present, absent, number of voters)

Tatiana Bobrova and Minoovash Rahimian apologize for not being present. SK arrives later in the day and PM will join on Thursday.

This is an official EC meeting, with the right amount of people to take decisions. The staff did a great to make all this happen: MG, CBB, LV, and BS as a volunteer and National Arts Festival: Nicci Spalding, Guy Nelson, Akhona Daweti, Dan Bailey, and Andrew Glanville in South Africa, and Ryan Bruton in the USA.

May 22: 14 present, 4 absent, 12 voters

May 23: 23 present, 2 absent, 13 voters

May 29: 28 present, 2 absent, 13 voters

3. Approval of Agenda

Unanimous approval.

4. Access Needs

3.1. Needs of EC members in this meeting

3.2. Short conversation about access during the festival and congress
Language, transportation, electricity, and wifi will probably be issues. We might face emotional moments. If people are in the right spirit, it will be a great experience. Let's make delegates feel so.

Four people registered with specific needs. There might be others that haven't booked tickets by now.

American phones usually don't work in Cuba. Americans might need help with that. Expectation management is a key point here. The WhatsApp group will be useful for sharing spirit, community approach, and access issues; Marissa will manage it.

Translation is also a subject we have to pay attention to.

Our involvement in making the Congress a "safe space" should be more visible: we should put a link at the top of the home page + pin it in the WhatsApp



groups (English + Spanish). Communication should be slightly different on WhatsApp as it will be shared with anyone coming here. The safe space should be reminded as often as possible.
ASSITEJ Political statement should also be underlined, at the General Assembly.

help@assitejonline.org will be the fastest way to get an answer for the delegates. Explain that the ASSITEJ team is two people only.
Sustainability is very difficult here: they can't recycle or even offer tap water. But actually, it is a sustainable country as people repair and re-use as much as possible.

EN, LM, and SI will look at public information and strategic communication.

5. Conflicts of Interest

5.1. Conflicts in agenda items

ER has one regarding the meeting with *ASSITEJ France* about the Artistic Gathering, as she is still on the board of *ASSITEJ France* and the Head of the theatre co-hosting the AAG.

5.2. Conflicts declared around the festival and programming

BS is involved with several companies selected to come to Cuba, but she didn't take part in the selection.

LV has a family link with Batida company, which is selected in the productions program. Again, he was not on the selection committee. His wife's sister performs in a show that is going to be presented in the Cuban program, which no one from the EC took part in. Furthermore, the Congress in Cuba was decided during an EC meeting in Uruguay and has no link to Louis's wife's family being Cuban.

LM reminds us that in South Africa, the EC decided to have an extension of the call for productions for the Congress due to the lack of applications. But she was not involved in it.

6. Schedule for the EC

The EC will have passes to access the venues.

BS will be ½ hour delayed to the 1st Artistic Encounter.



Some EC members will be at the *Iberescena* session on the 26th, instead of the GA prep session, or the EC meeting with candidates and the GA prep session could be earlier: 14:00 and 15:00.

There are some issues on the 29th and the meeting with EC candidates, so we will have this meeting on the 26th at 17:00, if the candidates have arrived.

Jerry Adesewo can't be in Cuba. We will check to see if it's possible to call him by WhatsApp during the meeting. Sue will propose all this.

Internationalise Your Practice (24 May): CC, YB, BS, SK, ER.

Internationalise Your Practice (25 May): SK, BS, ER, YB.

ITYARN: SG, PM, JH, CC, LM.

Iberescena Session (25 May): SG, ER.

7. Working Group Updates

7.1. Reports and format of these.

Communications' report needs to be put onto slides and needs some data from the Secretariat, apart from the figures that are already in the reports for Europe. ASSITEJ Online report also needs to be put onto slides. LV will send templates for that.

Networks' report needs to be summarized. JH would like to get pictures and some missing numbers. MR's report for Next Generation will be included in this one.

Policy and protocol's report needs a specific treatment because all the policies and the constitutional changes, etc. and belongs also to the president's report. YB and LM will report to the General Assembly. A point should be made about the Friends of ASSITEJ.

Online delegates will get a video and audio version. They will have a special WhatsApp group where we will interact with them. CC offers to take care of this.

The online members will also get the reports before the GA and be able to send their questions. We'll focus on the one on financial and fee issues, as they raise a lot of questions and/or comments.

7.2. What's left undone – handover for next EC term

8. Update on Next Generation

The Next Generation group arrived on Monday and is in Santa Clara. Dorian, the Cuban young artist who was in the NG group in Sweden, is leading the programme. *ASSITEJ International* has been very much involved in their program.

9. Membership Cases for Discussion

Some National Centres haven't paid for two years but have been communicating. LV made a list of those who probably won't be able to pay for everything.

Some haven't paid for years and we could offer to erase a part of the debt.

Cameroon owes 2022, 2023, 2024 = 450 €

Zimbabwe owes 2022, 2023, 2024 = 450 €

Haiti owes 2022, 2023, 2024 = 450 €

Nepal owes 2022, 2023, 2024 = 450 €. There is a new person, who communicated very recently with a report, their intentions and plans. They participate in the Asian meetings.

Same for Lebanon, but three delegates are coming, ready to pay for passes.

Rwanda didn't pay in 2022.

Burkina owes 2022, 2023 = 300 €

Kazakhstan hasn't answered to any email so we are unsure if they still exist.

Sri Lanka owes 2022, 2023, 2024 = 450 € but they participate in meetings.

Latvia paid in 2024 and not last year. They are a very limited group of people.

The proposal is to ask the National Centres to pay a reduced fee within a certain time, but also ask them if they will be able to pay (and want to) in the future, because this won't be possible again. In case they won't, the National Centre can become an Affiliate.

The situation concerns specifically two EC candidates whose centre hasn't paid, at least this year. Their centres need to pay before the General Assembly (or engage to do it in a really short term).

We also need a clear policy for this situation.

Some other centres are still in the process of paying.

10. Update on Congress Finances

The final total income for this Congress is 82 914 € (through *ASSITEJ*), which may be a little more after the final count. The budgeted income was 70 500 €.

ASSITEJ spent 47 425 € on travel support for performing companies. 304 passes were sold, 105 to high-income countries, 74 to low GDP or freelancers, in addition to the group passes: 91 for high GDP countries and 34 for the others.

That makes 488 international delegates from 66 countries. The top ten in numbers of delegates are USA 44, Brazil 40, Germany 37, Mexico 34, Korea 32, Denmark 31, Spain 19, Czechia 17, Italy and UK 16 each.

There is a lot of unique representation per (small) countries, and many newcomers, especially from the region, which is a great success.

11. Narrative for Finance 2024 - 2028

SG read the forward plan to present to members at the General Assembly.

The EC approved the presentation of the plan to the association, proposed by the president.

12. Artistic Encounters

8.1. Community Encounter

The first encounter will be in a community area so it will be a community encounter rather than an artistic encounter. The main idea is to play, and have an open mind and imagination. People should leave the encounter with new buddies.

It will start with a 45-minute introduction made of songs from our different cultures and then a serious (non-verbal) game will be proposed, the audience being divided into groups for it. After the game, we will unpack what happened, and different peace images will be shared to relate to each other, brought by several people to the Congress.

It will be about value and professional impact (art happens everywhere), rather than theatre on stage. Details will be on the website so that people know what they are invited to.

We need to check how many people the community is able to host regarding space, toilets, water, and transportation.

8.2. Global Sector Encounter

The second encounter is focused on the working plan. It will be more of a serious moment. It will be for the members but open to all delegates.

The 3-5 central missions in the EU applications will be focused on, through keywords that every delegate, who may not have read the application, can understand and feel connected to. How does each person connect to these missions, as an individual but also as a National Centre? The EC will host groups, take notes, report, and document the encounter.

The communication will be changed so that all delegates can attend the encounter.

It is a big change for the members as this time, because of the EU application, the working plan has already been written. However, the application is entirely drawn from the feedback from the members. This is an opportunity to share more and to be more precise and efficient in our work, even to add suggestions. It is not about giving the centres extra work for their missions. It is more about integrating them into our plan if they are not already.

The artistic encounter group will remind all the other occasions we will have to share with the delegates: helping each other, evenings at the Pabellon, etc.

13. Updates on Research Stream and Post-Congress Survey

A team of four people will document the events of the Congress, led by Chris. 20 journalists will also follow the whole event.

The research advisory group will meet on Friday. Lanora Callahan, from Research Stream 1 got a bit derailed: no news from her for a while.

Selina Busby, from Stream 2 is not able to come to Cuba but she is preparing a session.

Nishna Mehta and Caleb Lee, from Stream 3 will be here and ask people to fill out their survey for which they are missing answers.

Small Size, responsible for Stream 4, published their report a few days ago. They will be in Cuba.

Kelly Freebody and Michael Anderson, from Stream 5 can't come to Cuba but they have provided materials.

In the EU project, we have a research symposium in Cuba. It will be split into four sessions outside of the ITYARN session and not overlapping it.

Moreover, a retrospective recording program is in progress but delayed. The team is overwhelmed by the current issues. It will be launched after the Congress finishes, instead of Saturday. It will include Cuba's elements.

14. Awards Ceremony and Closing Ceremony

Awards ceremony:

WLPG: four awards (presented by Ginni Manning and Cleiton Echeveste).

ITYARN: two awards (presented by Claire Mason).

Lifetime Achievement: six awards (presented by EN and Jose Brito), SK made a certificate for each of them – Kim Peter Kovac (TYA/USA & WLPG), Sookhee Kim (ASSITEJ Korea), Vijay Padaki (ASSITEJ India), Zoja Mikotová (ASSITEJ Czechia), Vicky Ireland (IIAN), and Halina Machulska (ASSITEJ Poland).

The jury reports should be on the website, rather than in the General Assembly.

Closing ceremony:

A conversation with *ASSITEJ Cuba* will come later.

15. Honorary Members

A few names occur.

Imran Khan helped to settle *ASSITEJ Pakistan* and was a very inspiring president of *ASSITEJ India*. He has been instrumental in other Asian meetings as well. He did two terms in the EC. He has been very supportive of *ASSITEJ India's* new president and new team, and is still very active. All EC members are in favour. SI will present the nomination.

Stefan Fischer-Fels pushed strongly for the artistic encounters as an EC member, is a fantastic ambassador of *ASSITEJ*, and pushed the association during Covid and collaboration with other countries. He cares for diversity, equity, fair cooperation, he brought these ideas to life several times. He is a strong dramaturge. All EC is in favour. PU will present it.

Daniel Fernandez has made an important movement for the regional workshops in general and the engagement of the Iberoamerican region in *ASSITEJ*. He helped a lot of members to connect with each other. He is very passionate about the arts. He also helped to consider languages within *ASSITEJ*, as he was very courageous about it. Not all members of the EC are in favour, as it has less magnitude and as we haven't heard from him since he left the EC.



Manon van de Water created ITYARN and contributed strongly to the EC work and to its difficult decisions when needed. She also did a lot for the communication of *ASSITEJ*, especially the magazine. All EC members are in favour.

Birute Baneviciute could also be a strong candidate, as she has been doing a lot in the name of *ASSITEJ* for a long time, even if it isn't inside the EC. It would be a strong sign for the community of French-speaking countries.

The question came up if people out of the EC can be nominated.

François Fogel put a lot of hours into the EC communication and in the EC in general. He did a lot as an *ASSITEJ France* staff member, sometimes as a volunteer. He could be nominated at the end of next term.

We may have to define more what should be the honorary policy. Opening regions, opportunities, and collaboration, but also consciousness and changes and more of a long-term impact could be the main focus. *Voices of a New World* is the right frame for that, as long as it can have many meanings.

The honorary members may be non-EC members, but the staff engaged in the EC may not be nominated.

Discussions will continue online, and votes will be organised via email or WhatsApp.

16. Meetings List

16.1. ASSITEJ France

FS gave a short presentation of the association and explained it is a merger of two associations (*Scenes d'enfance* & *ASSITEJ France*) that happened in 2015, with a board of 40 (two people per seat & one vote), and three co-presidents. Economic support from the Minister of Culture. Members pay a fee, and they currently have 250 members.

ED explained they have different missions.

The federative mission is about networking & structuring the sector at local and regional levels. Most theatres are run by non-artists in France and TYA doesn't belong to big national theatres. The idea was to gather the sector to have a place to work together, in every region of France there would be the same structure on a smaller scale. There is a working group dedicated to research,



structured similar to ITYARN (which used to be connected), and an ethics working group dedicated to access, sustainability, and inclusion.

The major activities are playwrighting, the Avignon Festival (Enfants a l'honneur), and L'enfance des arts (impulse to show other performing arts). This last one is connected to the WDT campaign. Activities always have an international aspect.

The international mission is to have involvement in ASSITEJ dynamic, promoting French creation and francophone writing, and hosting the 60th anniversary.

TH talked about the AAG 2025, Bright Generations. She went over the promotional magazine. The national program will include nine national shows, under the artistic direction of Massalia. There are almost 40 people on the selection committee for international shows, they have preselected 15 shows of over 300, and now *ASSITEJ France* will select around 8-12 shows. Preselected artists will share precise tech info to help finalize the selection. There are shows from Asia, Africa, America, and Europe, we will have at least one show per continent, and different ages in audience, as well as genres.

Working groups inside the board, one is international and has groups within it that are dedicated to subtopics, regional, Professional Exchange Programme, ceremonies, accessibility, and happiness management. The goal is to have around 50 activities on the ground.

The call for the Professional Exchange Programme will be launched around 20 June, until 20 September.

ER mentioned the city of Marseille is twice as wider than Paris, with fewer inhabitants. They offered several theatres to be part of the event, the main place will be *La Friche la Belle de Mai*, and we will have five different theatres hosting. The Minister of Culture will give some money, as well as grants from the city and region, it is very collaborative work.

SG asked if there was a timeline for seeking funding and if it was possible to cut back if needed. ER responded they will likely know in autumn how much the total is, but they have a grant from the city (Marseille) and should receive this again.

LM asked about the opportunity of having the happiness manager look into the issue of visas, which FS was already happening.

16.2. ASSITEJ Korea



JB explained how *ASSITEJ Korea* works. Their members include private members, individuals, and companies, for a total of 200 members. Most of their projects are funded by the government; festivals, professional programs, and building networks. The Secretariat is in the center of Seoul and has 11 staff members. They have two festivals one in July and one in January, and an additional festival is done by children at the national level in November. They have started organizing programs during the Winter Festival called K-pany, designed to build up an international network, and have a budget from the government that they want to spread out throughout the year.

Most people dedicated to TYA in Korea are in Seoul. The pandemic was an important period to develop regionally and had many dynamic changes. Korea has developed a TYA-focused subsidy project collaborating with the Arts Council since 1920 (around 1 million EUR). One new project, is they now have one venue specific for *ASSITEJ Korea*. Another important change is the launch of a Korean national theatre company for TYA.

Korea is rethinking culture and the arts for children. It is the right moment to move on in terms of policy, and lawmakers working on policies. In terms of Asia and Korea, they have been organizing two meetings. Last year they had a two-week Next Generation Programme, and they have found different ways to develop the Asian network. An Asian residency programme will be starting this Winter Festival.

They are currently trying to get funding from the government for the Congress and trying to organize an Asian performing arts tourism programme, combining festivals.

16.3. Iberescena

RF, ZR, JV, LR, YG, and JG gave some background on *Iberescena* and how it works.

In 2006, *Iberescena* was first a fundraising project, to create an Iberoamerican cooperation fund. Now, it is built on a four-year cooperation project with a strategic plan.

There is an annual contribution of resources to build a global fund for technical unity, support funds, and emergencies. Once a year there is an open call for creation in residencies, coproductions, and festivals.



In Iberoamerican countries, fundraising, cultural policies, and mobility are the biggest issues or challenges. The PAYA knows more about how to build cooperation and can be inspiring for the other sectors.

One of *Iberescena*'s goals is to strengthen the relations between the professional sector and politics. *Iberescena* also builds relations between artists and ministries of culture: state policies are important and artists are not always involved and there are different perspectives right now. *Iberescena* is the connection to each government. It proves that governments are interested in the performing arts for young audiences. It is a complex space for discussions about the public policies of all the countries. The network has an influence and a positive impact. It is an example of cooperation beyond diversity.

LM questioned the *Iberescena* representatives about collaboration with the African continent and governance. They mentioned there are some new projects emerging.

There is a large possibility of collaboration between them and *ASSITEJ International*, to build new centres. We need to build a structured process and be really on the ground with them.

Iberescena can't promise anything now. They must refer to the intergovernmental committee. In October this meeting will be in El Salvador and they may come back from there with specific proposals. Anyway, *Iberescena* is changing, reflecting on its future. We will meet in Marseille next year. Children dream, let's dream together.