



ASSITEJ Executive Committee Meeting: Montreal, Canada 9 - 16 November 2025

Present members of the Executive Committee:

In person:

Susan Jessica Giles, *President*, Australia (Sue)
Louis Valente Sørensen, *Secretary General*, Denmark (Louis)
Émilie Robert, *Treasurer*, France (Émilie)
Selloane Mokuku, *Vice President*, South Africa (Lalu)
Gonzalo Moreno, Spain (Gonzalo)
Julia Dina Heße, Germany (Julia)
Maria Luisa Labuhn, Young Dance Network (Bebê)
Stavros Stavrou, Cyprus (Stavros)
Theis Håvard Fincekhagen Campbell Irgens, Norway (Theis)

Online:

Yannick Louis Marie Boudeau, Belgium (Yannick) – 12 and 13.11.25
Paulo Ricardo Merisio, *Vice President*, Brazil (Paulo) – 12.13.25

Absent members of the Executive Committee:

Seok-hong Kim, *Vice President*, South Korea (Seok-hong)
Carole Umuliga Karemera, Rwanda (Carole)
Jonathan Dafydd-Kidd, UK (Jon)
Shoaib Iqbal, Pakistan & New Zealand (Shoaib)

Present staff members:

Christopher John Blois-Brooke, *Staff Member*, UK (Chris)
Marissa Garay Tostado, *Staff Member*, Mexico (Marissa)

Guests present during specific meetings:

Monica Dufaut, *ASSITEJ Canada* (Monica)
Zita Epenge, *ASSITEJ Belgium* (Zita)
Jeeyoung Bang, *ASSITEJ Korea* (Bang)
Suin Jeong, *ASSITEJ Korea* (Suin)
Gilles Doré, *C/NARS* (Gilles)
Anelvi Rivera, *ASSITEJ Mexico* (Anelvi)



Agenda

- 1. Welcome from President and Hosts**
- 2. Cultural Acknowledgement and Access Riders**
- 3. Review of EC Schedule**
- 4. Regularity of the Meeting**
- 5. Present, Apologies and Absent Members, Number of Voters**
- 6. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting**
- 7. Proposal and Approval of Agenda**
- 8. Conflicts of Interest**
- 9. Reports / Updates**
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 - Partnerships and Research
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 - Green Team
 - Open Door Team
 - New Voices Fellowship
 - Babel Creative Europe Cooperation Project
 - Impact of Crisis
 - Inclusive Pathways to Participation

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- 10.1. Online Votes
 - ASSITEJ Montenegro application (13 in favour)
 - ASSITEJ North Macedonia application (12 in favour)
 - Second EC Meeting 2025 (1 vote Cameroon, 13 votes Canada, 1 abstention)
 - ASSITEJ Slovakia reincorporation (12 in favour, 1 abstention)
 - Support for Creative Europe campaign (13 in favour)
 - Dates for Congress in Korea (10 in favour)



- Ratification of RCP selection (12 in favour)
- ASSITEJ *Burundi* application (14 in favour)
- Letter for Festival of Ecological Theatre for Children and Youth (12 in favour)
- Employment of Beatriz (13 in favour)
- EC Meetings 2026 (12 in favour)

11. Updates from ASSITEJ Events

- 11.1. Update from 22nd World Congress (ASSITEJ Korea)

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- 12.3. Review the [Policy for Public Statements](#)
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13. Memberships and Member Requests

- 13.1. Letter of Support (*Bamboo Theatre*, Mongolia)
- 13.2. Letter of Support (ASSITEJ *South Africa*)
- 13.3. *University of Exeter*
- 13.4. Update from Sri Lanka
- 13.5. Update from India

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- 14.1. Confirm dates
- 14.2. Meet Anelvi
- 14.3. General Assembly 2026

15. Representation of ASSITEJ at Upcoming Events

16. Reporting Back from Working Groups & Committees

- 16.1. General Update on Progress
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17. Any Other Business

- 17.1. Newsletter openers during 2026
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1. Welcome from President and Host

Sue Giles opened the meeting and welcomed Monica Dufaut, president of *ASSITEJ Canada*.

Monica provided a cultural insight and introduction, sharing a brief history of *ASSITEJ Canada*.

2. Cultural Acknowledgement and Access Riders

3. Review of EC Schedule

4. Regularity of the Meeting

Sue, in her capacity as President, confirmed the regularity of the meeting, in compliance with Article 10.2 of the Constitution, to discuss and deliberate on the agenda.

5. Present, Apologies and Absent Members, Number of Voters

10 November: 9 voters, 6 absent

11 November: 9 voters, 6 absent

12 November: 11 voters (Paulo Merisio and Yannick Boudeau present online), 4 absent

13 November: 10 voters (Yannick present online), 5 absent

14 November: 9 voters, 6 absent

6. Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting

The EC approved the minutes from the last meeting unanimously by a show of hands.

7. Proposal and Approval of Agenda

Sue went over the official agenda for the meeting, which the EC approved unanimously by a show of hands.

8. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were reported.

9. Reports / Updates

9.1. President's Report



Sue shared her [report](#).

Julia Dina Heße showed interest in Japan and its situation, saying it feels like the region is struggling, and asked to discuss the New Voices Fellowship further.

Sue agreed to talk to with membership group about the situation and get feedback. There is energy in Southeast Asia that is coming from several directions and having the World Congress in Korea is pushing more action. Regarding New Voices, Sue briefly mentioned that four participants from Marseille have decided to stay in touch; Olivier Rousseau, one of those four, will be present in the festival in Montreal.

9.2. Secretariat Report

Louis Valente shared his [report](#).

Regarding the Online Engagement deliverable, Gonzalo Moreno suggested we reduce streaming but make recording content available online.

Émilie Robert asked whether this deliverable should be in relation to the community, or whether it could include meetings with National Centres and membership groups.

Sue mentioned that perhaps it's a year-by-year strategy because the need constantly changes, but it is still very important in terms of access to have online engagement.

Julia suggested thinking of something that's for countries interested in having hybrid/online options, where we know it is useful for members.

9.3. Treasurer Report

Émilie shared her [report](#).

There was some discussion regarding the final invoice for the work undertaken by Roberto Frabetti, to arrange the fiscal and legal matters surrounding the changeover from Italian banking to Danish. Émilie reported that there was a discrepancy between the final invoice and the hours originally expected, which was explained by Roberto to be extra hours taken to achieve the work.

Regarding membership fee exemptions, Louis explained we need to be strict with them, because some centres are struggling but still find a way to pay. We need to have equal treatment for similar situations. We can treat specific situations differently, but with some guidelines.



It was suggested not to increase fees for next year, as agreed at the General Assembly, because ASSITEJ has received more money than expected. It is also clear that people need more time to get used to the new system.

Lalu Mokuku brought up the question of benefits for paying members. There are tensions between countries, and they can affect membership payments—for example, by allowing non-members to benefit from ASSITEJ activities.

Sue asked that we record what we've done regarding non-members when applying/selected from open calls – including informing National Centres of the involvement and asking that people become members of their National Centres. Julia also asked that we be aware of exemptions, where countries have gate-keeping issues.

9.4. Working Group Reports

Management

Sue shared the Management working group [report](#).

Membership

Stavros Stavrou shared the Membership working group [report](#).

Communication

Gonzalo went over the group's main activities, including hiring Beatriz Aguilar, who is employed to work for both ASSITEJ *International* and ASSITEJ *Spain* with a focus on communication tasks especially the World Day Campaign. She is working with a communications agency to develop a communication strategy, and reaching out to members about their needs and ideas for the World Day Campaign. A designer has created 60th-anniversary images we can use across various materials. He is currently contacting designers for the World Day logo and poster, seeking *UNICEF's involvement* in the message, reviewing the ASSITEJ website, and preparing a research dissemination template.

Lalu has been pushing ACYTA (African Children and Youth Theatre Arena) to write articles for the newsletter.

She mentioned that the Communications working group is supposed to be handling tasks that Beatriz will now take on, so we need to revisit what the group does.

Louis suggested scheduling meetings between the group and Beatriz so she can gain the knowledge and perspective of EC members, and then have Beatriz handle the hands-on work, so that the Communications Working group becomes an advisory process with an overview.



Gonzalo said the idea is to have a space/tool where people can make comments without needing a meeting, because time zones make it difficult. There is a Teams chat now, but it hasn't been used.

Julia brought up the idea of having a corporate logo option.

Gonzalo replied that it will be very difficult to have all the Centres change their logo. We need to define the logo's use; we could provide guidelines for centres on how to use it.

Theis agreed that the idea is to offer it, and then people can decide to use it. We have elements available, and members can play around with their logo.

Zita Epenge (meeting guest from *ASSITEJ Belgium*) expressed that it would be wonderful to have an online brand identity with downloadable elements to implement.

Lalu suggested talking about Children's Rights Day (20 Nov) and the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence (25 Nov-10 Dec).

Partnerships and Research

Bebê de Soares shared that Louis has taken the lead on most of the EU & PAC activities happening at the moment.

Louis mentioned the working group could start looking into other partnerships (UNESCO, Iberescena, etc.). He added that for the moment, research should not be part of this group's tasks because Chris Blois-Brooke is driving that. Bebê will be working on the application for ASSITEJ to apply for membership of *On The Move* (an application that has previously been approved by the EC).

Items from the External Evaluation Report not covered by the working groups

Sue shared the [Baseline Evaluation](#).

Working groups were asked to review the evaluation and the relevant sections. The issue of AI was raised and it was identified as an important policy discussion.

9.5. EC members who represented ASSITEJ

Bebê at O/STAT

Bebê shared her [report](#).

Gonzalo in Portugal

Gonzalo had a meeting with the company Teatromosca, who is one of the driving forces in the establishment of an ASSITEJ National Centre in Portugal. One of the concerns are about budget and time sustainability, but they have decided to proceed and are working on the statutes. They work very closely with municipalities.



Other

Lalu has been supporting ASSITEJ South Africa in the *National Arts Festival (NAF)* and would like to have an international production every year. ASSITEJ Ghana was present at *NAF*.

9.6. Regional Reports

Nordic-Baltic

Theis shared the *Nordic-Baltic ASSITEJ Network report*.

Asia

Sue shared the *Asia Network report*.

She mentioned that communication with India needs work because they have not been in touch for a while.

Louis suggested sending Sri Lanka a “warning letter” because they have been very silent for a long time, and this would help clarify their situation. (Stavros later shared a letter from *ASSITEJ Sri Lanka* expressing their situation and their plans to re-engage.)

Louis asked about the challenges in engaging the Asian TYA network more directly (which is different from the Asian Network of ASSITEJ Centres).

Sue explained that there are a lot of people involved who want to be affiliated with ASSITEJ. They are gathering next year at *BICT*, and Sue will have a conversation with them. We need to engage with the region to see how we break it down to specialisations as the geographical spread is too large to manage as a single network.

Small Countries:

Stavros shared that the network held successful Small Talks in Marseille.

ASSITEJ Montenegro has joined the network, and they had a meeting in Luxembourg in June. Their next meeting will be in Iceland in April; The Nordic-Baltic Network will also be there.

The network has made centres feel they contribute more to *ASSITEJ International*.

Ibero-America

Paulo is currently attending the COP-30 in Belém, Pará, in northern Brazil. He attended a meeting at the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes), which is responsible for evaluating postgraduate programs in Brazil. He is responsible for evaluating postgraduate programmes



in the arts. He was part of a Working Group that was responsible for preparing a study on the Impact of Brazilian Postgraduate Education on the 2030 Agenda. Paulo coordinated a chapter on complementary SDGs—in Brazil, SDG 18 is implemented.

2026 is the China-Brazil Year of Culture and Tourism.

ASSITEJ Spain received the National Performing Arts Award for Children and Young People 2025 from the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

Representatives from Paraguay and Portugal are now attending meetings of the Iberoamerican Network. The network is working on a cooperation project, based on the Regional Cooperation Programme project they presented.

The International Forum of Researchers and Critics of Performing Arts for Children & Youth took place in October in Buenos Aires.

ASSITEJ Cuba is currently having an international performing arts encounter, “Escena Rebelde”, an event that came out of the Congress, which is for teenagers.

TYA/USA

A few EC members met with the centre, and they shared that they have had major budget cuts but seem very resilient. The impact has been mostly around education, and there is a lot of fear about ICE (the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement) impacting the membership.

They are very interested in the idea of ‘pairing’ with another centre and coming to Mexico in March for the next meeting of the Executive Committee of *ASSITEJ International*. The National Centre currently has members in 45 states in the US.

ACYTA

Lalu shared reports from [Ghana](#), [Nigeria](#), [Senegal](#), [South Africa](#), [Zambia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#).

Lalu mentioned that funding possibilities are always a challenge. People are working to pay membership fees; it's interesting to see the awareness of this commitment.

ASSITEJ South Africa has a strong relationship with the *International Association of Women Judges* in South Africa, and the two collaborated to create a play. Lalu asked for a letter of support from *ASSITEJ International*, recognising the kind of work regarding social injustices for children.

Thembiile Tshuma, member of *ASSITEJ South Africa*, has written a contribution in the book, that has been published as part of the Babel project.



German-speaking countries

Julia shared that they are starting to plan activities towards the Congress and World Day.

They have regular online meetings and will try to meet in 2026 in person at different festivals (Germany & Luxembourg). The network may be interested in hosting something together, like an *ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering*.

ASSITEJ Germany is turning 60 next year and plans to hold a party, invite politicians, and do advocacy work.

They were funded through the “fair play” project (basic income for TYA artists). *ASSITEJ Germany* has published a book on queer theatre mediation. They are trying to diversify the board.

9.7. Committees relevant for this meeting

ASSITEJ International Professional Networks

The networks are going to meet in Czechia in May as part of the ‘Creating Cultural Equity’ project activities at the end of May 2026. *ASSITEJ Czechia* is waiting for a funding reply; if there isn’t any additional funding, it will be a shorter meeting of three days only. Honorary member Vígvíð Jakobsdóttir will attend as the facilitator of the process. The EC thought it would be good to be able to offer her a fee, as well as covering her expenses.

Green Team

Will have a peer audit with *Opera Europa* this year.

Creative Carbon Scotland, now *Culture for Climate Scotland*, are leaving the SHIFT project. SHIFT is reorganising, and ASSITEJ has decided we cannot take any leading role but can assist in opening the programme for non-European networks.

The team need to have a conversation with *ASSITEJ Korea* to see what the plans are for sustainability at the Congress.

The next Green Team meeting will need to address how to make our members more aware (knowing that most members still equate sustainability to creative or economic outcomes). We have the Green Book, but haven’t promoted it; we can include it in the newsletter and social media.

Open Door Team

Things are moving forward; the group is working on the toolkit. Ginni Manning and Jon Dafydd-Kidd had a recent meeting on this.

Jon asked if *IIAN* could be involved in access work for the Congress.



There is a small budget to make the toolkit into a publication with design (for this and the Green Book).

New Voices Fellowship

The New Voices Fellowship at the *ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2025* in Marseille was successful thanks to the help of Gaël Hubert-Blanchard. Jon and Sue worked with the local production team and the Next Generation Network team during that time. The participants of the New Voices programme raised the same issues Next Generation had previously, mainly regarding the term 'emerging artists'. The EC feels it is on the right track with changes being made, as the programme can be more open in interpretation for other gaps in our membership that are not necessarily only defined by age.

There are currently still Next Generation projects happening within other festivals and the *ASSITEJ* membership broadly, and they run these independently of the EC.

Sue reported that the Next Generation Network still want to be the conduit as a reminder of the need to include young people, but are happy not to be a formal network of *ASSITEJ*. The New Voices group felt a strong connection together and with their facilitator within the group in Marseille, but not really with the Next Generation Network.

The Impact of Crisis session with this group was very good and useful. Post Marseille, the group have tried to meet online, but it's been very difficult with conflicting time zones, and only four are now dedicated to staying in contact.

Louis suggested not calling it a fellowship anymore, but rather a programme. It is a programme designed for the time they are there, and then they can keep in touch if they wish. It has proven difficult for the EC to manage the work it requires to facilitate an ongoing fellowship after the main event itself.

Stavros suggested using some elements from the Directors' Seminar in Germany, since people from that programme tend to stay in touch.

Émilie shared that she received very positive feedback from the group at the end and suggested the Fellowship could be a proposal; *ASSITEJ* can help with it if they build something, but we don't expect it.

Julia explained that the Directors' Seminar is a programme where they are the sole focus, whereas the New Voices Programme takes place during an *ASSITEJ* event. There are interesting ways to explore, but we should revisit the concept. Theis proposed thinking of something like in Serbia, where it worked well. The group meets before the event, has time to acclimate, and then the rest of the event participants arrive. So a mix where there is work and exchange, and then they can be more involved in the broader event.



Babel Creative Europe Cooperation Project

The final conference in Brussels took place just before this meeting, and the Babel book “The Art of Listening in Theatre for Young Audiences” was released.

Bebê suggested that for future regional workshops, when we shape the programme, we should bring the regions into the talks so there is real ownership. Louis mentioned that the regional workshops had reached stagnation before Babel, so we don't necessarily need to continue them.

Sue shared that there is a real lack of professional development in many regions, so it would be good to consider something related to this.

In terms of learnings from Babel, *Performing Dialogue* has written one baseline and three midline reports and is currently working on an endline report, which can be very useful before writing a new cooperation project application as there are some key action points to note.

Impact of Crisis

There was work in Marseille to draft a workshop which was delivered as a pilot with the New Voices Fellowship group.

Olena Rosstalna from ASSITEJ Ukraine participated and made a great contribution, and it was a good case to use in the workshop, although it was noted that having lived experience in the mix needs thorough preparation and care – for participants as well as those with lived experience.

Stavros created a draft of a form to collect information from around the world that could be sent out to members, with the pilot data base due at the end of next year. We will ask how to disseminate it with the communications team, so members understand it is an important part of this EC term (2024-2027). The hope is to have a practical database so people can see what is happening in their region and be able to connect with practice easily.

Chris agreed to a webinar where people are walked through the form, and it is explained.

Stavros recommended having a conversation with ASSITEJ Korea about creating something there specifically on this topic, maybe with people who are already planning to come, and then using strategic invitations as well.

Lalu asked to make a visible link to the statement created around children in vulnerable situations, so it is clear how this evolved from that.

Inclusive Pathways to Participation



Sue reported that the project hasn't started properly, needs thinking and work. There are many ways to focus on inclusion of children and young people but we need to find the most authentic engagement for our association - what this looks like and how to achieve it is still a question.

ASSITEJ Korea is very interested in child participation, but they don't have expertise at the moment.

Paulo expressed that this topic should be in everything that we do; it is a transversal topic. Everyone can think about this in what we are doing, and how to build it. Gonzalo agreed that we can increase this focus in our communication strategy and outputs as well.

Julia suggested offering professionalisation through webinars and training. Louis said the digital structure can be provided by the ASSITEJ staff, and we can probably find money in the budget to speaker fees. The major challenge is making it happen, finding the right speakers, and promoting it; it was a challenge with Coffee Sessions previously.

10. Ratifications

10.1. Online Votes

The EC ratified the following votes that had been previously made online:

- ASSITEJ Montenegro application (13 in favour)
- ASSITEJ North Macedonia application (12 in favour)
- Second EC Meeting 2025 (1 vote Cameroon, 13 votes Canada, 1 abstention)
- ASSITEJ Slovakia reincorporation (12 in favour, 1 abstention)
- Support for Creative Europe campaign (13 in favour)
- Dates for Congress in Korea (10 in favour)
- Ratification of the Regional Cooperation Programme selection (12 in favour)
- ASSITEJ Burundi application (14 in favour)
- Letter for *Festival of Ecological Theatre for Children and Youth* (12 in favour)
- Employment of Beatriz Aguilar (13 in favour)
- EC Meetings 2026 (12 in favour)

11. Updates from ASSITEJ events

11.1. Update from 22nd World Congress (ASSITEJ Korea)

Jeeyoung Bang and Suin Jeong, from ASSITEJ Korea, gave a presentation to show the location and venues where the Congress will take place. They shared that they are currently dealing with budget changes and that the festival will be held in Suwon instead of Seoul, as originally planned, due to support from the local government.



There will be elections in June 2026 in Seoul, and the mayor is likely to change. The council in Suwon is supporting the festival and the mayor of this city is likely to be re-elected. The Pope will be in Seoul at the same time as the Congress, which is also a reason to move to Suwon.

The Suwon Convention Centre will be the main partner, offering a variety of spaces for different needs, including exhibition halls, event halls (theatres), and meeting rooms.

Other spaces available include the Gyeonggi Library, 10 minutes from the convention centre; the Suwon Youth Culture Centre, with theatre space and flexible seating; and the Gyeonggi Arts Centre, with space for performances.

Suwon has a 50% population of children & young people under the age of 25. There is a direct bus from the International airport of Seoul to Suwon, which takes the same time as going to Seoul (about 1h10min).

The audience will mainly be parents with their children, because it will be summer vacation.

Bang and Suin explained that they are in discussions with ASSITEJ Japan about a plan for ongoing performances in the region after the congress. They plan to hold performances in 3-5 cities in Korea after the Congress. Each company will perform in several theatres in each city.

They are also considering a residency in Guangzhou.

The management working group continued the work with ASSITEJ Korea to work on the last details of the MOU for the event to be signed in the first semester of 2026.

12. Specific Items of Business

12.1. Research projects

Value of TYA

Chris presented a continuation of the previous research and the [Terms of Research document](#). Selina Busby, Kelly Freebody & Michael Anderson will be running the project.

The project consists of demonstrating the value of TYA and mapping evidence so members have access to a repository; it will also show the lack of evidence. It will be more internationally focused, seeking texts beyond English-language literature. There still must be some aspect of children's voices in the impact evaluation to be included in the study.



The material will include a filtered-scale version for ASSITEJ Centres to use. The engagement with ASSITEJ Centres will take place in 2026, as the project ends in December 2027.

The total budget is 45,000 EUR, of which 12,000 is from the University of Sydney. This doesn't include payment to researchers; they will be paid by their universities, but the research assistant will be paid from this budget.

Sue suggested it would be useful to record the funding or monetary amounts behind the researcher's time, paid for by the universities, for our calculations – especially in reporting to our funders.

The call will be in multiple languages. The working language with researchers will be English.

Louis asked to what extent the output depends on the National Centres. Chris said that, in the worst-case scenario, the researchers could still examine published studies. Phase 1 is before Centres are involved, so it could expand to become the whole project if we had zero engagement.

The main concern is how to help Centres participate, making it easier for them and simplifying the application. The idea is to present this as an opportunity for Centres.

Gonzalo mentioned it could be useful for Centres if they could secure funds to work on this and share them with ASSITEJ.

Bebê asked whether there are examples of methodologies, as it is very hard to adapt them for children and to collect information on the impact on young children. Chris explained that the project will indirectly help and support this. This is about finding existing evidence and not creating new. But the evidence gap maps will include links to previous studies, so there will be many examples of how to do it.

Quantitative Access Data

Kai Roland Green and Lanora Callahan will be working on this as subject specialists, supporting National Centres to capture data on children and young people who access and engage with theatre and performing arts in their countries.

Chris shared the [Terms of Reference document](#) for this project.

This project is very much advocacy-focused.



Training and mentoring will take place in 2026 and run for 6 months (tracking existing data sources, preparation & scoping, qualitative data collection, quantitative data collection, analysis, cross-country comparisons).

The budget is calculated for 6 centres to be involved.

There could be a longer time frame from researchers if the Centres could financially contribute.

The EC will take ownership of ethics approval (Lalu and Paulo could validate the ethics application).

The idea is that national centres participate in only one research project at a time. 6 for quantitative and 1-2 per region for Value of TYA (totalling 10-15).

Stavros asked to consider differentiation based on the Centre's capacity, so we can ensure Centres with no staff can participate.

Julia mentioned they are interested in creating data in Germany, so they pay people to do this. Centres would need to find money for staff to focus on this, or someone in their membership.

Lalu asked about child participation, and Chris said their voices will be prioritised, but Kai and Leonra won't work with them; it will be done indirectly through National Centres if it is relevant to them and conforming to ethical guidelines.

12.2. Artistic Gatherings - Expression of Interest for Next Term

The call for expression of interest is now open.

Louis said it might be necessary to encourage some countries that could be strategic.

Bebê suggested looking at groups that applied for RCP and weren't selected. Sue suggested asking India (for an EC meeting, not an AAG) and Singapore might have capacity, Lalu said she had asked Rwanda, Stavros mentioned CINARS and Luxembourg have mentioned interest. Bebê suggested Minas Gerais (region in Brazil), where there is a theatre with deep roots in the community.

Theis said there was interest from the Baltic countries, maybe Estonia or Latvia.

12.3. Review the [Policy for Public Statements](#)

Sue explained that the current policy had been signed off in Serbia in 2023, before some current EC members had joined, and needs to be reviewed.



Stavros mentioned that the policy is missing what to do in an emergency, since things are happening daily in many parts of the world that put the rights of children in danger. We should determine what is important enough to issue a public statement.

Louis shared that people often overestimate our impact as an organisation and think we can influence decision-makers. The statement is more for when several members are affected by a conflict. Our job is not necessarily to react to every situation, because we don't have any impact and many of them may be outside our remit. He suggested considering, based on all this, that the EC could endorse a UN statement, for example, or that of a global organisation addressing children. Sue said this could be problematic under our policy because they sometimes lean toward specific sides.

Lalu added that NGOs usually have an attitude of calling out, and it would be good to adopt an inviting tone to be part of the solution.

12.4. EC-input to Member Zone

Chris and Marissa Garay explained Member Zone (a database of membership) and asked the EC for written feedback.

12.5. Awards - Update and Timeline

Due to a lack of time, this issue was not discussed.

13. Memberships and Member requests

Louis suggested addressing members who haven't filled out the Membership Form and letting them know that, to be in good standing, they must complete it. Maybe we can let them know that if they continue without responding, we will suspend the membership until they do. Those who haven't responded, we have already reached out several times.

VOTE:

Is the EC in favour of taking this course of action, where the membership form becomes part of membership obligations?

Unanimous vote in favour.

The Membership group will try to set up a meeting with Uzbekistan to understand their current situation.



María Angela from Colombia wants a meeting to discuss starting a Centre. Gonzalo also had a meeting with another woman from Colombia who is interested; she works with an institution. Gonzalo will put both of them in contact with Sergio Rincón (current ASSITEJ Affiliate).

13.1. Letter of Support (*Bamboo Theatre, Mongolia*)

Marissa read Uyanga Ayurzana's request and the draft of the letter for EC approval.

The EC approved sending the letter by unanimous vote.

13.2. Letter of Support (*ASSITEJ South Africa*)

Marissa shared a draft of the letter with the EC for approval.

The EC approved sending the letter by unanimous vote.

13.3. *University of Exeter*

The *University of Exeter* is working on a project involving young practitioners and sustainable music-making. They are asking if they can include a short note saying that ASSITEJ can share resources with its members if the project is funded. They aren't members of ASSITEJ, but are now in contact with ASSITEJ UK. They have drafted a support letter, but we can modify it if needed.

Louis said that to support them, we need an endorsement from ASSITEJ UK so that the relationship is with the Centre.

Marissa will respond to them, asking them to reach out to ASSITEJ UK first.

13.4. Update from *ASSITEJ Sri Lanka*

During the course of the present EC meeting, the centre reached out. The Centre has been recovering and is now starting their festival again. They would like to host an EC meeting in Colombo in the future. They were unable to pay due to economic difficulties in the country, but are now ready to pay the fee and arrears. They are asking for a discount.

13.5. Update from *ASSITEJ India*

Nishna Mehta is the new President. The Centre has been struggling so the Membership group will find a date to have a call with her.

14. Next EC meetings

14.1. Confirm dates

Mexico City 2026: Arrival 16 March & departure 24 March



Chile 2026: Not set yet. The festival is the whole month of August, and Expo-Escena usually towards the end.

Mongolia 28 March – 8 April

EC needs to decide whether to visit the festival or just meet with Uyanga and the team.

Senegal 2026 (smaller meeting): 16 – 21 June

Korea 2027: Arrival 19 July & departure 2/3 August

The World Congress will be from 22 July to 1 August.

ASSITEJ Norway is looking at the possibility of hosting an EC meeting in 2027. They will have to apply for funding before the end of this year. The EC meeting could be an event in itself or in connection with Showbox, but not an ASSITEJ Norway festival, and would be towards the end of the year.

Louis said there will be an open call for future EC meetings, and if Norway is not an EC meeting, it could also be a meeting for European centres. The EC has been in Norway twice in the last 10 years.

The EC is looking for a meeting in Asia during the first half of 2027. This could be in India, potentially in Bangalore. The Membership group will bring it up with Nishna.

14.2. Meet Anelvi Rivera

Anelvi Rivera, from ASSITEJ Mexico, joined the meeting and shared that she was excited to have the EC in Mexico for the World Day 2026. She gave a brief background on the Marathon that Mexico has held for the last 17 years.

The National Centre has undergone a revamp since 4 years ago (*Red Miradas*), still with its base at the Ministry of Culture and 30 members.

For the 18th Marathon, there will be about 30 performances in Mexico City and 1 in each state (32 states), all taking place over one weekend from 11am to 7pm. The Marathon takes place at a cultural centre that houses seven venues for performances and workshops. About 13,000 people attend.

Theatre companies receive tax-free grants for productions at the beginning.

The 2026 event will last 3 days, including an opening on Friday, 20 March, with schools and children/adolescents in difficult situations.



The plans for the meeting of the Executive Committee of *ASSITEJ International* in March 2026 include meetings with members of the National Centre and others from the theatre community, authorities of the National Institute of Arts and the Ministry of Culture, to strengthen collaboration and focus on children across all art forms, *Alas y Raíces*, *UNICEF* (they have accepted to write a message for the World Theatre Day), *Goethe Institute*, the Spanish Cultural Centre, and students from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (*UNAM*) and the National School of Theatre Arts (*ENAT*).

The aim is also to hold workshops by the EC for the Mexican artist community and/or children.

Louis suggested using the EC's presence there to make videos/snapshots/material for the World Day campaign. An option would be to hire a videographer in Mexico.

Stavros added that it could be interesting to take something from each country and make a collective installation there.

Louis shared the idea of going to Panama to work with Renán Fernández on initiating a National Centre, and it would be great to have Anelvi there.

Gonzalo also suggested inviting *Iberescena* to meet in Mexico, and Anelvi shared that next year's *Iberescena* meeting will be held there.

14.3. General Assembly 2026: Confirm Dates

Next year's General Assembly will take place online on 21 May at 17:30-19:30 AEDT and 22 May at 07:00-09:00 AEDT.

15. Representation of *ASSITEJ* at Upcoming Events

Bebê will attend *MASA Market* in Côte d'Ivoire in April and *Tránsitos Havana* in Cuba in May.

Stavros will be in Iceland for *Ungi Festival* in April.

Lalu will attend the *Klein KKNK Teater Festival* in South Africa in late March.

Sue will travel to *e/Petit* right after the meeting in Montreal.

Theis and Sue will be meeting Louise Lapointe, the new president of *UNIMA*, while here in Montreal.

Louis will be in Brussels at a meeting in Parliament next week.

16. Reporting Back from Working Groups & Committees

16.1. General Update on Progress

Inclusive Pathways:

ASSITEJ as a central place to find information and make connections.



Everywhere the EC goes, we have one session on this subject - meetings, gatherings, and world congresses. Collection of materials and organisations, tools and methodologies, case studies with challenges and failures. Inclusion in the National Centre tool kit. Offering expertise to hosts and other festivals to connect with ways of working with children. Applications for professional exchange callouts can be a source of additional data for identifying good practice.

Membership:

The group is following up on the work of the working groups after the last Umbrella Session.

They are working on a plan of next steps for communication with Centres that aren't very active.

There was discussion of a pairing system for Centres, but there needs to be more thought on how it would work before trying it out and assessing the level of involvement from *ASSITEJ International*.

The group worked with the Communications group on the presentation of new and existing National Centres (The ABC of *ASSITEJ*).

Regional Cooperation Programme:

More information about details and actions is needed. The group will get in touch with François Fogel to draft some questions and meet with the African Vogue team.

Communications:

Working on a new slogan for World Day, presentations of Centres, guidelines for social media, and dissemination of research. Still need to finalise the World Day toolkit and the *ASSITEJ* annual report.

16.2. Any Proposals that Require EC Decision

Management:

Happy with the membership fees collected, which are more than expected, and thinking not to increase the top rate for members next year as planned and voted on at the General Assembly 2024.

The EC may want to change the top rate for low-income countries.

VOTE:

Is the EC in favour of not increasing the top rate for members in 2026?

Unanimous vote in favour.



17. Any other Business

17.1. Newsletter Openers During 2026

Newsletter openers for 2026 will be as follows:

January- Shoaib, February- Émilie, March- Gonzalo, April- Paulo, May- Bebê, June- Stavros, July- Julia, August- Sue, September- Lalu, October- Yannick, November- Seok-hong, December- Jon.

17.2. CINARS

Gilles Doré gave a short presentation on CINARS, the International Performing Arts Conference in Canada.

Usually, 25,000 professionals from all continents come to the biennale.

In 2026, it will be from 9-14 November, and they are currently calling for applications.

CINARS bring professionals together at conferences, workshops, an exhibition hall, and networking events.

Gilles shared that there are plans for 2026 to work together with *La Mèche Courte* (the hosting festival of the present EC meeting), to overlap with the festival, and begin CINARS right after. They already have a partnership with *Maison Théâtre*.

Gilles mentioned that Quebec has Ministry of Culture offices around the world, and they are now working to bring a group of programmers from rural areas who have never been to CINARS to develop a new network of programmers.

Louis expressed that ASSITEJ Canada would first need to see if it aligns and if it makes sense to host one of our events together.

One of the potentials of co-hosting would be about reaching more people in the Americas, and about mobility support to artists with limited travel funds. Gilles stressed that ASSITEJ Canada would lead the event and programming, and that it would be better to have it in an off year from CINARS.

18. Closure & thanks

19. Annexes

(see below)



President's report – November 2025. Montreal, Canada

A focus on Asia region in this period with the picture growing between leaders in CYPA in South East Asia and stronger connections with ASSITEJ International including greater understanding of what the links can do to support the activity in Asia. Lots of great connections with people who are getting things done in different ways and a very interesting picture of National Centres vs independent activity. With World congress as a focus I think we can bring a lot of these threads together.

Work and meetings:

- Children and the creative industries forum – meeting with leaders from creative institutions about children in their practice to further focus on CYPA in cultural policy.
- Regional Cooperation Programme selection process
- Gulali Lab workshop session online with Indonesian artists
- Organising General Assembly hearing sessions - prep for GA then General Assembly May 15 and 16
- Creative workplaces – consultation on TYA sector in Australia
- PAC meeting - I have been unable to attend more than one due to time
- Meeting with Arts Ministers advisor and senator Susan Templeman. Lobbying group constructed across art forms – music, performing arts, literature, screen and digital, visual arts with young people representing as part of this group.
- Meetings with ASSITEJ Korea for World Congress
- EC meetings online June and September – prep and chair
- Meeting with research team in Sydney about symposium plans
- Meeting with Stavros about Cyprus EU grant proposal
- Meetings and input to External Evaluation baseline report and process going forward

Regional cooperation programme process, selection and report writing - a huge job undertaken by the group and thanks to all for engaging in this with so much dedication to the spirit of the programme and care of the ASSITEJ community.

Travel for ASSITEJ

- Edinburgh International children's festival – Creative Australia role of supporting artists and delegates and making introductions. Delivered a response from ASSITEJ to Lyn Gardner's keynote.
- Okinawa Ricca Ricca festa – spoke on the panel on Theatre in Peacebuilding. Met with Mayako Miramoto. Met the new Secretary



General of ASSITEJ Japan Toshio Makita and new President Akira Ota. Other panel members included Ellison Tan from ASSITEJ Singapore

- Workshops and forums for CUTE fest – the first Baby theatre festival in Macau. Si Kei Chan produced this. Si Kei came to Serbia as one of our strategic invitations and is now collaborating with Jean from Luxembourg to create a new show. Connection in action!
- Yogyakarta Indonesia for Gulali Festival - panel to speak about ASSITEJ and meeting with ASSITEJ Indonesia.
- Meeting with ASSITEJ Russia – new administration.

Financial systems and General Assembly approval of process: finishing the legal and financial transfer from Italy to Denmark – working on the online General Assembly documents to present to members. Huge thanks to Marissa and Chris for their fantastic cooperation during this time.

ASSITEJ Administration: Letters of support; responding to emails; making introductions between artists and presenters and between artists; sending messages members for festival programs etc; proofing and editing minutes, newsletter, letters and documents; writing policies and drafting contracts, report for RCP selection.

Committee Work New Voices, Impact of Crisis and Inclusive pathways to participation – part of our ongoing committee work. Looking forward to progressing these at this meeting.

At home

Organising the selection process for new ASSITEJ Advisory after a long and extremely stressful change of leadership process of Theatre Network Australia. Settled now and in good hands. New leader relationship to ASSITEJ committed and strategy for creating a staff position to care for the sector directly in place. ASSITEJ advisory selection process EOI open call received over 50 applications – this is a good sign.

Report from the Secretariat

EC meeting in Montreal, Canada

November 2025

These are the headlines of the work done by the Secretariat since the EC meeting in Marseille, March. 2025.

Activity	Who	Status / Description
Babel Conference	Yannick, Louis, Sue	Yannick: Prepare all conference elements. Louis: Work to get attendance from Policy officer, Sylvain Pasqua EU-Commission - DG EAC.
Recruiting Beatriz	Gonzalo, Gonzalo, Louis, Marissa	Job interviews, onboarding
Newsletters	Marissa	The issues of April - Nov
Uniting our digital services	Chris	Migration of most digital services into one unting platform: Zoho. Forms, member zone, analytics, digital signatures, social media management, team inbox.
Expression of Interest call	Louis, Sue	Completed - deadline 1 Dec 2025
Regional Cooperation Selection	Selection committee	Completed
Wanderlust grant agreement	Louis, Sue, Stavros	Completed and signed
MOU for Congress 2027	Louis, Sue	Draft completed, waiting on comments from ASSITEJ Korea
Open call for productions	Louis, Chris, Marissa, Sue, Korean team	Draft completed almost ready for translations into: Korean, Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, Russian, audio version in English.
Digital production plan for Congress	Chris	Draft status
Legal registration and bank setup in Denmark	Louis	Completed
Danish accounting	Louis, bookkeeper (Kathrine)	System initiated, July-Oct accounting completed, working on the details of opening balance from Italian bookkeeping.
Legal rights to CCE	Louis	Transfer of the CCE project from the Italian legal entity to the Danish legal entity. Initiated but not completed.
Member form	Chris, Marissa	Form completed and member data received
Member zone	Chris, Marissa	System design drafted and forms streamlined
Value of TYA	Chris	Project agreement and design fully drafted, ready for feedback and signature

Quantitative Access data	Chris	Project agreement and design fully drafted, ready for feedback and signature
Baseline report and member survey	External evaluators, Sue, Louis, Chris,	Completed
External evaluation of Selection process for regional cooperation programme	External evaluators, Sue, Louis	Completed
Survey on cultural rights: Performing Arts Coalition	Elena (external consultant) Louis, Chris,	Call promoted and responses collected: 217 valid responses: ASSITEJ - 98 IETM - 76 EFA - 14 EDN - 13 Circostrada - 12 62 different countries represented. ASSITEJ mainly addressed European members.
PAC Report: Between Rhetoric and Reality: Cultural Rights, Artistic Freedom, and Democratic Resilience	Elena (external consultant) Louis	Draft Report ready - finalized in November
Online sharing of the report	PAC, Louis	For members and policy makers. Jan 2026.
Performing Arts Lunch	PAC, Louis, Sue	Lunch with the Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture. In early planning for Jan/feb
PAC response to Commission draft for AgoraEU in Budget 2028-2034	Elena (external), PAC, Louis	All EC members should share the letter with relevant members of the EU Parliament. Link to letter Not to be shared as a public campaign.
Public consultation on EU Culture Compass for Europe	Sue, Louis, Julia	Response submitted on behalf of ASSITEJ
General Assembly 2025	All staff	Organize the online General Assembly

Meetings of reporting relevance

Activity	Who	Description
ASSITEJ Korea	Sue, Louis, Chris	Congress preparations: 25 june, 12 aug, 26 aug, 22 sep, 15 oct
SHIFT meetings	Julia, Seok-hong, Chris,	7, 8 Oct

	Emilie, Louis	
EU conference	Louis	Danish presidency culture conference in Copenhagen on 3 Nov.
PAC meetings	Louis, Yannick, PAC partners	12 june, 9 sep, 16 oct, 18 nov
Comm teams in PAC	Beatrix	23 oct, 12 nov
ASSITEJ Russia	Sue, Louis	Meeting new secretary of ASSITEJ Russia
EU Parliament		<p>high-level roundtable "Culture in the Next EU Budget", taking place on Tuesday, 23 September 2025 at 12:30, at the European Parliament, Brussels</p> <p>To express the sector's needs and priorities ahead of the negotiations with the Council starting in Autumn. It will allow them to engage directly with Members of the European Parliament, policymakers, and key institutional representatives to discuss the European Commission legislative proposal of 16 July for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).</p> <p>Attendance Cancelled due to flight cancellation</p>
EU Parliament		Youth Network Event, where 100 representatives from pan-European, national, and regional youth organisations will gather in the European Parliament with a focus on the EU long-term budget (2028-2034). 19-20 Nov

Highlighted deadlines and projects

Task Name	Deliverable	Who	Comments	When
Policy event on Cultural Rights	D2.9	Louis, Sue, Beatrix, partnerships	Online session and performing arts lunch with EU Commissioner for culture. With Performing Arts Coalition (PAC).	Jan / Feb 2026
Sector Dialogue on the Future of EU Funding for Culture 2026	D2.4	Partnerships working group, Louis	Within PAC	During 2026
Policy Analysis	D2.3	Louis, Sue, Lenora	Children and young people's access to and participation in culture, within Creative Europe and other EU policies and actions. Follow up with Sylvain Pasqua.	June 2026
Impact of Crisis & The Role of Culture	D2.11	Sue, Carole, and ?	Development of training workshops and toolkits as well as an analysis of expertise and the creation of a database of practitioners in this field.	
Inclusive Pathways to Participation:	D2.12	Sue, and?	Identifies the ways in which ASSITEJ can embed the participation of children and young people as collaborators, through	

Children & Young People as Protagonist			specific forums, workshops and gatherings that centre the child or young person as protagonist.	
ASSITEJ Member Report 2025	D3.1	Membership group, Chris.	See description in deliverable	Jan 2026
Supporting International Professional Networks	D3.2	Bebe, Jon, Paulo, Louis, Gonzalo	Preparing meeting in Czechia 23 - 30 May	
Language Access Tools	D3.4	Chris, Jon, Marissa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going exploration of technology and processes that work for a global membership - Translation of edited texts and manifestos. - Investment in more simultaneous translation for our events, not just for the General Assembly. - Translation of ASSITEJ toolkits -preparation for participants at events, development of a database of 'buddies' from our membership who volunteer to work as translators 	
Member action around diversity	D3.5	Jon, Sue	Build upon learning from Diversity Benchmarking Pilot 2022-24 and development of a framework for building of and accountability for National Centre Diversity.	
Collaboration with international organisations	D4.2	Louis, Yannick, Bebe, Julia, Lalu, Paulo, Sue	Produce an annual report.	
Regional Cooperation Programme	D4.3	Louis, Bebe, Julia, Sue	Grant agreement for African Vogue	Nov 2025
Online Engagement	D4.5	Sue, Louis, Chris	Modify this deliverable to include less recording and hybrid sessions at our event and to remove "No Fomo". We need to do something else to compensate for this change.	
SHIFT	D4.7	Green team	Peer audit 2025	
Communication Strategy & Production Plan	D5.1	Comms group	A communication strategy and production plan will lay out the strategy for the four years of the project and present the headlines of the production plan to implement the strategy.	December 2025
World Theatre Day 2025 - Report	D5.3	Marissa		December 2025
World Theatre Day 2026	D5.7	Beatriz, Gonzalo	The campaign (1) advocates for the rights of children and young people to access the performing arts on global level	June 2026

			(2) engage and enable sector professionals to advocate on national and local levels and (3) create concrete access to and participation in performance for children worldwide on the 20th of March and the week around the campaign. -Submitted Materials- 1 report with quantitative campaign data	
World Theatre Day Advocacy Toolkit	D2.10	Gonzalo, Julia?, Chris, Beatriz	Advocacy toolkit for members to enable their work in local, national and regional contexts at the World Day.	Jan 2026
New Voices Fellowship		Jon, Shoaib, Sue	Follow up with the 2025 group. Explore focus of the 2027 group.	
Explore funding options		Carole, Louis, Yannick, others	Explore the funding options identified by Carole:	
Continue dialogue with Iberescena		Paulo, Bebe, Gonzalo, Louis	Identify possible actions together with Iberescena	
Explore policy/ advocacy actions in Africa		Lalu, Carole, Louis, Sue	Possible starting points are the Regional Cooperation Programme, and ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering in the region.	
Explore policy/ advocacy action in Asia		Sue, Seok-hong, Shoaib, Louis	Possible starting points RCP, Congress 2027	

Management working group	Goal from evaluation report	Comments and changes
Online conferencing	pilots a fully hybrid model (in-person + digital) for the next International gathering to test engagement and accessibility;	<p>Not convinced about this - look at successful online engagement and make a decision about what's possible for us and useful for the sector</p> <p>Thinking about regional specific online engagement - so that time zones are not an issue</p> <p>Possibility of focusing on artists in one respect eg: sharing productions, workshops or presentation recordings and perhaps children in another?</p>
Time management	develops a transparent workload matrix for EC members to ensure duties are distributed fairly	People agree that whatsapp communication combined with live google docs on the drive are the best way to work remotely across timezones.
Tool kit	breaks down the National Centre Toolkit into sub-kits and commissions a design team to make them visually accessible and introduces short video tutorials to aid quick onboarding;	Membership working group has done work on this with member input – align with them to share tasks
Governance	<p>establishes a maximum turnaround for circulating minutes, with an assigned role to oversee compliance</p> <p>Commissions a concise governance guide clarifying EC responsibilities, election processes, and decision-making protocols</p> <p>Annual General Assemblies – to be continued?</p>	<p>Marissa has undertaken minute creation going through Louis and Sue. Then sent to EC for final approval before circulating. Minutes are now approved at each meeting</p> <p>This will be essential as a handover document for the next EC. Make a map for this work in Montreal.</p> <p>Question to members at next AG</p>
Policies	<p>Overhauls and reviews policies with current EC members</p> <p>identify policy needs with EC</p> <p>Idea: Making a policy bank for members – people sharing their policies and what they have in place - a place on the website for this – member resources only.</p>	<p>Public statement policy – in Montreal.</p> <p>Call out to members for this info.</p>
Contracts	<p>Creates contract template for employees</p> <p>Working conditions and processes for international employment clarified. Eg Insurances and benefits</p>	<p>Contracts were created for staff - this is an area of expertise we had to make up - basic content made between us but Louis made the contracts according to Danish needs.</p> <p>The contracts took a long time so the staff were waiting. Refers to workload and capacity of management group.</p> <p>Communications MOU and process of employment - also took a long time</p>
Finance	Links ASSITEJ treasurer to budget creation and accountability	

	<p>Prompt payments of per diems and support when allocated - systems of payment internationally made clear</p> <p>(from members) Flexible Payment Options: Provide alternative payment methods beyond PayPal, considering regional limitations.</p> <p>Technological Accessibility - Regular Platform Updates: Ensure the website and online platforms are compatible with the latest technologies and browsers.</p> <p>User Feedback Mechanism: Establish a clear, responsive feedback system for users to report accessibility issues.</p>	
Production of events	<p>Transparency in selection processes and reporting</p> <p>Make meetings in South Global countries, to generate new ideas, relationships and opening of new opportunities.</p>	The RCP process and reporting was more detailed than anything we have offered members in the past. reports on selection of committees, and on process for the future would be the aim
General Assembly and EC	(Member feedback) Greater representations of candidacies for EC - support mechanisms for greater inclusion of global south	
Ideas for support	partial funding for staff positions for national centres and networks; or small grants to create surveys; or small grants to provide professional development eg regional workshops	



ASSITEJ Membership Working Group Report

November 2025

Members:

Carole Umilinga Karemara
Julia Dina Heße
Seok-hong Kim
Stavros Stavrou
Theis Irgens

Introduction:

Since March 2025, the ASSITEJ Membership Working Group has continued to build on its mission to strengthen communication and collaboration between ASSITEJ International and its members — National Centres, Networks, and Affiliates. The Group has focused on maintaining regular contact with existing members, supporting the formation of new National Centres, and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and good practices among all parties.

Through ongoing dialogue, consultation, and targeted initiatives, the Working Group aims to ensure that all members feel informed, connected, and represented within the wider ASSITEJ community, while promoting the growth and visibility of the Association around the world.

Working Group Meetings:

The Working Group met four times between September 2024 and March 2025: once in person (in Marseille) and three times online (via Zoom). Additional communication was conducted through email and WhatsApp correspondence.

Activities:

In the past few months, the Working Group has:

- Organised a Members Session during the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering in Marseille, where each National Centre or Network was represented by one delegate. The session took place on 25 March 2025.

- Welcomed new members and facilitated their induction process, with a mentor assigned to each new National Centre.
- Produced welcoming articles for new National Centres in the ASSITEJ Newsletter.
- Initiated a presentation of new National Centres on the Association's social media platforms.
- Engaged with existing National Centres through meetings and email communication to receive updates on their progress, with a focus on those with limited communication with ASSITEJ International.
- Had an active involvement in the Regional Cooperation Programme procedures.
- Continued assisting individuals and groups interested in establishing National Centres in countries currently without representation.
- Supported ASSITEJ affiliates in their work and explored the potential for these affiliates to develop into new National Centres.
- Initiated the creation of an updated version of the National Centre Toolkit, which will be released in the following months.
- Organised and implemented an Umbrella Session, with the aim of forming smaller working groups among members, to discuss topics suggested by the members themselves. The results will be used in the process of updating the National Centre Toolkit. The Umbrella Session took place on 2 October 2025 at 9:00 CET and 14:00 CET. The working groups which were formed will ideally meet twice again, before the next Umbrella Session in January.

The working groups which were formed are the following:

- Administration & Finances of National Centres and Networks – Strategies for sustainable management, financial planning, membership, and long-term stability.
- Collaboration Between National Centres/Networks – Exploring ways to strengthen partnerships and exchange across the ASSITEJ community.
- Inclusion & Accessibility – Making our work more representative and welcoming by removing barriers for underrepresented groups.
- Cultural Rights – Reflecting on how Centres and Networks can advocate for and protect cultural rights for all children and young people.
- Supporting Artists & Children in Times of Crisis – Sharing approaches to provide care, resources, and opportunities during difficult times.
- Regional and Affinity Networks of ASSITEJ – exploring whether these networks should have an official definition in the Constitution of ASSITEJ and what aims, rights, obligations, and protocols this might include.

Communication with Members:

Meetings and email communications were held or planned with both existing and prospective members.

Present Members:

- ASSITEJ Japan (In-person meeting in Japan, with Seok-hong Kim)
- ASSITEJ Sakartvelo (In-person meeting in Marseille)
- ASSITEJ Hungary (In-person meeting in Poland, with Stavros Stavrou)
- ASSITEJ Poland (In-person meeting in Poland, with Stavros Stavrou)
- ASSITEJ Jordan (Online meeting with Stavros Stavrou)

- ASSITEJ Lebanon (Online meeting with Stavros Stavrou)
- ASSITEJ Greece (Online meeting with Stavros Stavrou)
- ASSITEJ Montenegro (Online meeting with Stavros Stavrou)
- ASSITEJ Slovakia (Pre-induction meeting with Julia Dina Heße and Stavros Stavrou)

Future Members:

- Albania: In person meeting with the Director of the National Theatre for Children of Albania – Stavros Stavrou
- Portugal: Meeting of companies and individuals interested in founding a National Centre. ASSITEJ International represented by Gonzalo Moreno.
- Bangladesh: Discussions with groups and individuals interested in founding a new National Centre (Julia Dina Heße, Shoaib Iqbal and Stavros Stavrou)
- Moldova: Discussion with the Head of the National Theatre for Children (Stavros Stavrou)

Former Members:

- Bangladesh: An online meeting was held with Liaquat Ali Lucky, former President of ASSITEJ Bangladesh. Despite his willingness to reactivate the Centre, the Membership was not persuaded that he is the right person to take this responsibility, given the inactivity of the Centre for a long period.
- Kazakhstan: The Group made several attempts to contact Torgyn Rakymbayeva, President of ASSITEJ Kazakhstan. However, her daughter unfortunately informed us that she had died a year ago. The National Centre does no longer exist.

Member's Survey Results

The results were analysed, while further analysis will take place during the EC meeting in Montreal. Opportunities (e.g. respondents from countries with no National Centre) were identified and were/will be followed up. These included countries like Colombia, Tunisia, Morocco and Uganda.

Membership fees

The Group was in touch with the Association's treasurer regarding the new system of membership fees and the requested exemptions.



Baseline Evaluation 2025

ASSITEJ International
Theatre & Performing Arts for Children and Young
People

Written by: Associate Professor Richard Sallis and Dr Jennifer Andersen, Faculty
of Education, The University of Melbourne (Australia)
October 2025

assitej-international.org





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Executive Summary

The ASSITEJ International Baseline Evaluation (2025), authored by Associate Professor Richard Sallis and Dr Jennifer Andersen (University of Melbourne), marks the commencement of a four-year independent evaluation cycle (2025–2028) examining the association's global initiatives in theatre and performing arts for children and young people. Guided by a Theory of Change framework, this evaluation establishes foundational insights into ASSITEJ International's structures, programs, and priorities, focusing on cultural equity, advocacy, and organisational development.

Purpose and Scope

The baseline report sets out to assess progress since the 2024 Endline Evaluation, offering a targeted review of ASSITEJ International's activities between late 2024 and late 2025. It focuses on two key areas:

- The 2025 Artistic Gathering in Marseilles (Bright Generations / Générations Lumineuses), and
- The Regional Cooperation Programme (RCP), launched in December 2024 to promote cultural equity through regional collaboration.

The report also integrates findings from the 2025 Membership Survey, feedback from the Executive Committee (EC) Workshop in Marseilles, and observations from evaluators' participation in meetings, workshops, and document analyses.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach combined quantitative survey analysis (via Qualtrics) with qualitative thematic analysis, underpinned by ASSITEJ's monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework. Data were drawn from member surveys, Secretariat responses, online event observations, and documentation related to the RCP and its evaluation processes.

Key Findings

- Regional Cooperation Programme (RCP)

The RCP demonstrated ASSITEJ International's growing commitment to transparency and cultural equity. External evaluation of the application and selection process confirmed procedural fairness and encouraged embedding evaluative practice across organisational structures. A self-evaluation tool was also developed to enable project teams to assess process quality and project effectiveness.

- Membership and Engagement

The 2025 Member Survey attracted 162 responses — the highest to date — revealing a highly engaged membership that values communication, advocacy, and alignment with ASSITEJ's mission. However, confusion persists about membership pathways, particularly among younger practitioners and those outside Europe.



Recommendations include clearer communication about membership processes, targeted outreach to under-30 practitioners, and strengthened regional activities.

- Cultural Equity

Respondents endorsed cultural equity as central to ASSITEJ's mission. While awareness of

specific grants (e.g., EU Cultural Equity funding) remains limited, there is widespread support for equity-driven initiatives and calls for increased access for financially disadvantaged members. The evaluation finds that efforts toward inclusivity are progressing, but continued attention to global participation is warranted.

- Artistic Gatherings and Events

Survey responses to the Marseilles Artistic Gathering were largely positive, with high satisfaction levels. Feedback focused on enhancing accessibility, inclusivity, and logistical communication. The evaluators note that even critical feedback reflects deep engagement and investment by members in ASSITEJ's events.

- Executive Committee Workshop: Organisational Reflection

The March 2025 EC Workshop in Marseilles provided valuable internal reflection. Recommendations were developed by the EC across four domains:

- Management: Clarify governance, improve transparency (e.g., quicker minute circulation), and pilot hybrid conference models.
- Communications: Expand digital engagement, create sustainability definitions, and increase translation and outreach support.
- Membership: Implement a 'Welcome Pack', mentorship ('buddy') systems for National Centres, and regional focus groups.
- Advocacy: Strengthen academic partnerships, develop an ASSITEJ International peer-reviewed journal, and pilot participatory research with children and young people.

These recommendations collectively signal a forward-looking strategy emphasising inclusivity, accountability, and evidence-based advocacy.

Looking Ahead

The forthcoming Midline Evaluation (2026) will extend this work, with suggested focal areas including:

- Evaluation of National Centres' operations, challenges, and engagement with ASSITEJ resources; and
- Analysis of ongoing research projects emerging from the Building Collective Resilience initiative.

The evaluators recommend that the EC use the Theory of Change model to identify priority areas and align evaluation budgeting with strategic goals.

Affirmation

This report has been written by Richard Sallis and Jennifer Andersen. Feedback was sought from ASSITEJ International staff, however this was only for suggested corrections of minor factual inaccuracies and stylistic conventions.

Data collected for and shared within this report remains the property of ASSITEJ



International and has been used with its consent. The authors wish to thank the members of the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee and Secretariat for the provision of the data required to complete this report.

Biography of Evaluators

Associate Professor, Richard Johnson Sallis, B.Ed, M.Ed, PhD began his career in theatre for young audiences as a writer, director, and actor with the FM-Live Theatre Company in Victoria, Australia. He then went into education and headed up the drama department in two schools in Melbourne, Australia. During this time, he was elected President of Drama Victoria, the local drama education association, and subsequently Drama Australia, the national equivalent. He was on the Executive of IDEA (International Drama/Theatre and Education Association) for three terms. He is currently Leader of Drama Education at The University of Melbourne's Faculty of Education. For 10 years he was on the Board of the Arena Theatre Company, one of Australia's leading companies producing theatre for young audiences. He is also a co-director of the University of Melbourne, Faculty of Education, Research-based Theatre Laboratory. His research areas include Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA), Research-based Theatre (RbT), arts-based research (ABR), and diversity and inclusion in education and theatre.

Dr Jennifer Andersen, B.A.(Hons), Grad. Dip. (Ed.), PhD is a theatre maker, teacher and researcher specialising in early years arts creation and education. She was a co-founder and performer with the independent theatre company ONE TOE, which created acclaimed physical and visual theatre productions throughout the 1990s. Working as part of the collective Pocketfool, she has made numerous innovative in-theatre and outdoor experiences for young children. Jennifer was the founder of La Mama Theatre's children's program, La Mama for Kids. She has been dedicated to developing the capacity of artists and teachers to work with children in formal and informal education contexts through her previous role as Artist Learning Coordinator at ArtPlay and her ongoing research and tertiary teaching. Her PhD research explored the role of care in the practice of actors who create theatre with and for children. Jennifer is currently teaching in a community kindergarten with a Bush Kinder program and has recently developed a theatre work for babies.

Background, Focus, Scope

In late 2024, the aims and scope of the four-year evaluation (2025-2028) was established. It was agreed that there would be three reports generated by the Evaluators:

2025: Baseline Report 2026/2027: Midline Report 2028: Endline Report.

The focus of each report would reflect ASSITEJ International's priorities in any given time-frame and include reportage on how recommendations from previous reports have informed its work over the previous year(s). Cultural Equity is a key focus for ASSITEJ International over this time period so this will substantially inform the work of



the Evaluators.

It was established that, for the Baseline report, the key foci were to be the Artistic Gathering in Marseilles (March 2025) and the Regional Cooperation Programme (RCP), with which the Evaluators were separately involved (please see below).

It was further decided that, over the four years, where possible, the Evaluators should scope ASSITEJ International's activities both within and outside Europe, to give a whole-world account of its outreach. Evaluation of the association's various advocacy and communication initiatives was considered to be a key priority. More data collected from children was also proposed, as opportunities may arise over the four years. With the promotion and implementation of the ASSITEJ International National Centre 'Toolkit' it was proposed that this could fall under the purview of the Evaluation as well.

Further to the aforementioned reports, it was agreed that the Evaluators would propose ways to assist ASSITEJ International and its associated National Centres to evaluate aspects of their work. For example, creating evaluative templates to assist the Executive working groups and assisting successful applicants of the Regional Cooperation Programme (RCP) to develop self-evaluation practices and tools.

Methodology

Methodologically a 'Theory of Change' approach was applied in accordance with that adopted by ASSITEJ International for its strategic planning and operations. This involves identifying long-term goals and working back from them to ascertain how they might best be achieved. This baseline report or 'external evaluation' is part of the 'monitoring, evaluation and learning' strand of the association. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to generate the data for this baseline evaluation report. The aim of the document is to help the association to evaluate and report on its progress over the past year (i.e. late 2024 to late 2025) since it responded to content and recommendations the Endline report (November 2024).

Data collection

The following data were collected that have informed this baseline report:

- Observation of some of the online events held at the International Artistic Gathering 2025, Bright Generations: Generations Lumineuses, including key meetings held between the ASSITEJ Executive and the National Centres.
- Results of the survey of ASSITEJ International members, including those who attended the Artistic Gathering in Marseilles.
- Responses from members of the Secretariat to the raw survey data and the survey evaluation report that was presented to them. These responses informed the ongoing analysis and final presentation of survey results.
- Attendance at meetings at the invitation of the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee and Secretariat.
- Observations and feedback from the workshop developed by the



- evaluators for the ASSITEJ International Executive and its Secretariat.
- Reflections on the Regional Cooperation Project (RCP) initiated by ASSITEJ International in 2025.
- Document analysis (hardcopy and digital) such as the reports written by the ASSITEJ International project team about the RCP.

Data Analysis

Survey results were automatically generated by Qualtrics and were analysed using the major themes of the Creating Cultural Equity project. Other data were analysed primarily through thematic inductive analysis and through deductive analysis, based on themes arising from previous surveys in 2023 and 2024. Emerging and sub-themes were noted. The evaluators held regular meetings where they discussed the data and the emergent findings. Meetings were often transcribed and this helped to inform the content for this report.

Limitations

The External Evaluators were unable to attend the Artistic Gathering in Marseilles due to budgetary constraints; the evaluators determined that their fee was better spent on data collection and analysis rather than on travel costs. However, data were collected about the event via the survey, and attendance at online sessions, the results of which have informed this baseline report.

The consolidated focus of the Baseline Evaluation is not only appropriate for its budget and timeframe, but it is hoped that it will offer the EC and ASSITEJ International more broadly meaningful information that will complement its internal quantitative data generation and analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The following discussion summarises the findings and recommendations of the 2026 Baseline Evaluation. Full details of relevant documents (e.g. the survey reports) are available on request. The recommendations were created in response to previous ASSITEJ International goals; not all may be relevant to the organisation's immediate work, and others may occur to readers of this report. An 'overall recommendation' of this report, then, is for the EC to offer feedback about the recommendations to the evaluators about the relevance, value and possible implementation of the recommendations, so we can continue to improve how we write them in future reports.

Regional Cooperation Program Evaluation

In December 2024, ASSITEJ International launched the Regional Cooperation Program (RCP). The program aims to further the organisation's cultural equity goals by supporting regional-based, collaborative projects led by several



National Centres. The initiative itself, and the funding role, were both new for ASSITEJ International. This, plus the highly relational nature of the organisation, in which many of applicants were well known to the Executive Committee, prompted the organisation to engage the external evaluators to observe and comment on the RCP application and selection process. This evaluation project was separate to the ongoing evaluation of the organisation, although it was informed by that. It was also funded separately, which we, the evaluators, greatly appreciated, as it allowed us to do justice to both evaluation projects.

As the evaluators, we were given access to the RCP public documentation, the working committee's scoring documentation and communication, and the applications themselves. We assessed the applications using the same criteria as the working group and acted as silent observers throughout the deliberations. After the projects were selected, we prepared an evaluation report, with recommendations, that was first given to the Secretariat to

fact-check and then shared with the Executive Committee. This is available on request. The decision to commission a separate evaluation of the RCP reflects ASSITEJ International's commitment to transparency and ongoing improvement. It also demonstrates the degree to which evaluation has become embedded in the organisation's work practices and strategic plans.

Recommendations:

That ASSITEJ International

- discusses the RCP Evaluation at the working group and, if appropriate, EC level;
- adds the RCP Working Group and EC's own reflections to the evaluation, to make it a living document;
- adds feedback from project teams throughout the life of the 2025-6 RCP round; and
- uses these combined ideas to inform future rounds of the RCP.

Regional Cooperation Program Self-Evaluation Tool

To build on the initial RCP evaluation, we offered support for the successful applicants to develop self-evaluation processes and tools. Drawing on the information shared with us by RCP working group, we understood that this offer could be perceived as burdensome by the project teams, so we developed a flexible tool that they could decide how best to use. The tool evaluates process rather than outcomes, focusing on what helps or hinders a project to achieve its goals.

The tool was presented to the Secretariat early in the RCP project's implementation timeline and is available on request. It was received enthusiastically, with members noting that it could also inform and guide discussions between the teams and their EC liaisons. At the time of writing, the Secretariat plans to share the tool with the RCP Working Group, project teams, and liaisons, and to arrange a future meeting between the project teams and the evaluators, to discuss if and how teams would like to use it.

Recommendations:

That ASSITEJ International

- offers the RCP project teams the use of the self-evaluation tool and the



opportunity to meet with the External Evaluators to shape it for their purposes;

- asks project team members and liaisons for their feedback about the tool; and
- uses the tool for any other internal processes that it deems appropriate.

2025 Member Survey

Following on from the 2023 and 2024 Building Collective Resilience surveys, the evaluators conducted a new survey in 2025. Where useful, questions were carried over from the previous two surveys so that trends and changes could be tracked over time. New questions were included relating to Cultural Equity and to the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2025 (France): Bright Generations/Generations Lumineuses.

There were 162 responses to the survey, although not all respondents completed every question as some were only for those who had attended the Artistic Gathering. A high number of respondents offered detailed text comments which, added to the large number of overall responses, reflects an engaged community of practice that is highly invested in ASSITEJ International.

We produced a document that reported on the findings of this year's survey and analysed them in relation to the results of the previous two surveys. Five versions were created of this report, that highlighted (through different colour coding) findings and recommendations relevant to each of the Executive Committee Working Groups, to inform their future work.

The Working Groups are:

- Communication
- Developing Membership
- Event Production
- Administration and Management
- Research, Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships

The full report and Working Group versions are available on request. Significant findings and recommendations are below.

Recommendation:

That the Working Groups use the highlighted versions of the survey report to inform their work and to report back to members about how the EC is responding to the survey results.

Survey Findings and Recommendations

Survey design

The 2025 survey garnered significantly more responses than the previous two surveys. It is not clear why this was the case but it is, nevertheless, a positive reflection of the membership's investment in the strategic direction of ASSITEJ International. A greater proportion of respondents completed the 2025 survey than finished the 2024 survey. This perhaps reflects the fact that the length of the 2025 survey was deliberately curtailed, so respondents did not suffer 'survey fatigue'.

The wording of some questions was refined from one survey to the next which



posed some challenges for comparing results across years, but this process is probably now complete and the results of future surveys will be easier to compare.

The 2025 survey was not intended to be followed by interviews so we did not ask respondents to include their contact details. This has unfortunately meant that the Executive Committee members cannot follow up individual requests or comments.

Membership

Becoming a member: A significant number of respondents to the surveys are not ASSITEJ International members (19% in the 2023 Midline survey, 15% in the 2024 Endline survey and 31% in the 2025 survey). Responses to other questions about membership in all three surveys have revealed some confusion amongst respondents about how to become a member. Cost and access to activities are the biggest barriers to membership.

Most ASSITEJ International members who responded to the surveys are aged 30-70 and have been members for more than 5 years. This result may be emphasised by the fact that the surveys have largely been completed by people who have attended an Artistic Gathering or World Congress. Such people tend to be older as they have the means to travel, however, the results still do suggest that there is potential to increase membership amongst practitioners under 30.

Recommendations:

That ASSITEJ International

- explores new ways to communicate the value, cost and process of membership, with a special focus on young practitioners (e.g. via the newsletters and/or a 'how to become a member' flowchart on the website); and
- continues to explore ways to encourage and support regional, national and online activities that may be more accessible to members than in-person international events.

Reasons for membership: Members have consistently indicated in the surveys that they are members of ASSITEJ International for communication and professional exchange, to support advocacy and to contribute to the sector. Additionally, they say that the key factors in feeling included by ASSITEJ International are:

- regular communication;
- achievable opportunities to participate in ASSITEJ International activities; and
- an alignment between their personal values and goals and those of the organisation. These findings are a strong endorsement of ASSITEJ International's mission.

Recommendation:

That ASSITEJ International continues its strong communication with members, including concerning how it is realising its core values and goals.

Allied membership: Many ASSITEJ International members are also members of associated professional networks. This endorses ASSITEJ International's efforts to support such groups and positions as a focal point for performance with and for children and young people.

Recommendation:

That ASSITEJ International continues to cooperate with allied professional



networks and explores ways to communicate the value of ASSITEJ International membership to members of these organisations.

Cultural Equity

Members' views on cultural equity: Responses to a range of questions in the surveys indicate that although fewer than half of 2025 survey respondents were aware of the

European Union Cultural Equity grant, members value cultural equity and have many ideas for how ASSITEJ International can improve it for members and for children and young people. This is a strong endorsement of ASSITEJ International's current focus.

Recommendation:

While not all the suggestions by survey respondents are feasible, it may be useful for the Executive Committee to read them and, where possible, for the working groups to consider how to implement them. It may also be useful to communicate this action to members so they feel that their suggestions have been heard.

Cultural equity of members: The respondents to the 2025 survey came from more varied geographical areas than in the 2024 or 2023 surveys, although they primarily work in Europe and the UK. This suggests that ASSITEJ International's efforts at increasing cultural equity are working but that there is still scope for increasing participation across the world.

Recommendation:

That ASSITEJ International continues to promote cultural equity in all its operations and to communicate these efforts to members, so they feel included and inspired to participate in the organisation's activities. For example, many survey respondents called for more assistance to be given to financially disadvantaged members to attend events. A greater number of respondents had received such assistance in 2025 than in 2023 or 2024, and it may be useful for members to know this.

Artistic Gatherings and World Congresses

Each of the surveys (2023, 2024, 2025) were published soon after a major ASSITEJ International event. They therefore attracted a large proportion of respondents who had attended one of these events. These delegates were overwhelmingly somewhat or completely satisfied with their experiences, with a few minor exceptions. Many respondents offered philosophical and practical suggestions for improving future events which suggests that they are deeply invested in their ongoing success and that they trust that their views will be actively considered by ASSITEJ International. A small number of responses were very critical of the events, with some of these criticisms being repeated across the 2024 and 2025 survey. While such comments can be disappointing, like more positive ones, they reflect the significant investment that members have in these experiences, both professionally and financially. They also suggest that a very negative experience can influence a members' view of the organisation for a long time.

A large number of comments relate to cultural equity and advocacy for children rights and the TYA sector, endorsing ASSITEJ International's mission.

Recommendation:

That members' suggestions are discussed by the Executive Committee Working Groups and, where relevant, passed on to future organisers of Artistic Gatherings and World Congresses. Separate versions of the survey results highlighting



relevant responses for each working group have been produced by the evaluators to facilitate this undertaking. These are available on request. It may also be useful to communicate this process to members (e.g. via the ASSITEJ International newsletter), thanking them for their input so they appreciate that their views are actively being considered.

Overall recommendations, regarding ASSITEJ International surveys:

- That a summary of the findings and the Working Groups' responses is communicated to the membership when the WGs have had time to consider the reports;
- That the Secretariat reflect on how this survey was distributed and whether this has led to a higher response rate, so future surveys can be distributed in the same way;
- That future surveys remain as short as possible, use language consistent with previous surveys;
- That new questions in future surveys be informed by Theory of Change, to ensure they are relevant to ASSITEJ International's evolving goals and priorities;
- That future surveys include an option for respondents to add their contact details so the Executive Committee can follow up on specific comments; and
- That subsequent surveys clearly inform respondents how the survey will be used in the future.

Marseille ASSITEJ International Executive Committee Working Groups Workshop – March 22, 2025

Introduction

Below we synthesize the key points and discussions that emerged during the Marseilles workshop held on March 22, 2025. ASSITEJ International Executive Committee participants in the Marseilles workshop identified critical areas for development across management, communications, membership, advocacy, and broader organisational growth. Key themes included enhancing inclusivity, strengthening evidence-based advocacy, ensuring cultural equity, and deepening engagement with National Centres. The discussions point towards a more collaborative, transparent, and forward-looking ASSITEJ. A summary of the workshop discussions and recommendations are provided below. They are followed by some final evaluative comments and reflections.

Workshop Recommendations

It should be noted that the recommendations below emanated from the EC Working Groups during, and subsequent to, the Marseilles workshop.

Management

Online Conferences: Executive Committee (EC) members expressed divergent views on the



value of online conferences (or online components of a conference). It was agreed that more

discussion is needed on this issue before the next international gathering.

Time Management: Concerns were raised about the workload and time commitments of EC members. Time commitment and clarification of duties is a key consideration given that the majority of the Executive Committee is comprised of unpaid volunteers.

Toolkit and its Development: It was proposed that the responsibilities of EC members be added to the existing National Centre Toolkit. This proposal is a productive way forward, especially with regard to clarifying the roles, responsibilities and time commitment of EC members. It was proposed to break the existing Toolkit into smaller, more accessible sub-kits. This may be useful so the sub-kits can be targeted in their approach and audience.

The creation of video tutorials explaining the Toolkit for National Centres and new EC members was also proposed.

Meeting Minutes: Calls were made for a quicker distribution of minutes to improve transparency and efficiency. This accords with best business practice and it is recommended that this be adopted.

Governance: Clarification was sought on what 'governance' means specifically in the context of ASSITEJ International's EC. This clarification would benefit ASSITEJ International's EC, those wishing to seek election for the EC members and its members more generally.

Management: Consolidated Recommendations

That ASSITEJ International

- pilots a fully hybrid model (in-person + digital) for the next International gathering to test engagement and accessibility;
- develops a transparent workload matrix for EC members to ensure duties are distributed fairly;
- breaks down the National Centre Toolkit into sub-kits and commissions a design team to make them visually accessible and introduces short video tutorials to aid quick onboarding;
- establishes a maximum turnaround for circulating minutes, with an assigned role to oversee compliance;
- commissions a concise governance guide clarifying EC responsibilities, election processes, and decision-making protocols; and
- in consultation with the Evaluators, creates a position paper, guided by Theory of Change, discussing the potential advantages and value of having the evaluation team represented in-person at Artistic Gatherings and Congresses. For example, advantages could include: opportunities to interview attendees; to witness equity on the ground as the event is taking place; to attend more sessions than the online program may permit; or to meet with the EC during the event to reflect 'in-action' to complement 'on-action' reflections after the event.

Communications

National Centres: A need for increased resources to support National Centres



was identified. There is evidence that this is being action, such as the Regional Cooperation Programme (2025) and the National Centre Toolkit.

Social Networks: Greater use of social platforms was encouraged, including establishing an ASSITEJ International WhatsApp group (or groups). Using social media more broadly to access members is to be welcomed however, each platform will need to be monitored which, inevitably, takes time. The EC will most likely need to decide who will be responsible for this.

Sustainability: It was recommended to engage National Centres in defining what 'sustainability' means for them. As responses to the 2025 survey demonstrated, members of ASSITEJ International have differing view as what is meant by 'sustainability' as it pertains to their work. Many interpreted this to mean sustaining their viability as a practising artist or company.

Communications: Consolidated recommendations

That ASSITEJ International

- establishes a small grants scheme to support local communication projects (translation, websites, newsletters);
- appoints a dedicated digital communications officer or rotating EC role to manage WhatsApp and other channels of social media; and
- launches a participatory process (survey + workshops) with Centres to co-define what sustainability means for ASSITEJ in cultural, financial, and environmental terms. This may help to consolidate and disseminate the existing work undertaken by the Sustainability Working Group in previous years.

Membership

Working Group: A new working group on membership development has been established. This is likely to assist ASSITEJ International to better develop strategies for its members, given that survey results suggest that membership is a key issue for those who responded.

The following suggestions made by members of the EC working groups during the workshop are supported by the Evaluators:

Onboarding: New Centres should receive a 'Welcome Pack' outlining how to work effectively with the EC (or this could be a sub-kit within the National Centre Toolkit).

Buddy System: A mentoring system should be established in the lead-up to the Seoul event.

Regional Focus Groups: Centres could be supported to organise regional focus groups prior to the World Congress (2027) in Seoul.

Regional Outreach: Efforts should be made to encourage Theatre for Young Children/People (TYC/TYP) groups in Middle Eastern countries to join ASSITEJ.

Surveys: Working Groups should be supported by the external evaluators when creating and implementing their own surveys.

Artificial Intelligence: The organisation should remain attentive to developments in AI, particularly regarding ethics and artistic control.

Membership: Consolidated recommendations

That ASSITEJ International

- standardises and distributes a Welcome Pack in multiple languages;



- pairs new National Centres with experienced members ahead of the Seoul World Congress;
- provides seed funding for National Centres to host pre-Congress regional focus meetings;
- tasks the Membership Working Group with developing a tailored outreach plan for underrepresented regions (e.g., Middle East, Africa); and
- establishes a small task force to monitor AI developments and reports annually on procedural, practical and ethical implications.

Advocacy

General Advocacy: A stronger emphasis on advocacy was deemed necessary. Advocacy should be strengthened through quantitative data and statistics, such as those produced by ASSITEJ researchers and evaluators.

Research and evaluation: Partnerships with academic institutions should be actively explored, and current ones could be further developed. Consideration should be given to establishing an ASSITEJ International peer reviewed journal. The possibility of collecting more data directly from children and young people was also discussed.

Stakeholders: Targeting key stakeholders was seen as a priority.

Coalition Identity: National Centres should be reminded of their role as part of a wider coalition and the implications of this membership.

Advocacy: Consolidated recommendations

That ASSITEJ International

- formalises links with universities and creates an Academic Advisory Group;
- develops a scoping paper for an ASSITEJ International peer-reviewed journal, exploring funding models and editorial partnerships. This could, perhaps, be undertaken in collaboration with ITYARN;
- pilots participatory evaluation tools to collect input directly from children and young people; and
- maps global stakeholders and prioritises three key areas (e.g., education, cultural policy, youth development) for targeted advocacy campaigns.

Workshop Summary

The Marseilles workshop provided a valuable opportunity for ASSITEJ International to reflect on its current practices and envision pathways for growth. Across the areas of management, communications, membership, and advocacy, participants emphasised the importance of transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to members' needs. Key recommendations such as clarifying governance, strengthening communication channels, supporting National Centres and building evidence-based advocacy reflect a collective commitment to organisational renewal.

The workshop highlighted both challenges and opportunities—particularly the need to balance volunteer capacity with organisational ambitions, to engage with emerging technologies and definitions of sustainability, and to affirm



ASSITEJ International's identity as a coalition united in its mission. The discussions reaffirmed that the strength of ASSITEJ International lies in its global network and that, through collaboration, cultural equity, and a focus on young people's voices, the organisation can continue to shape a more connected and resilient international community of practice.

This report of the Marseilles EC workshop captures a moment of collective visioning that sets the foundation for future action. The next steps will require not only the careful implementation of recommendations, but also the ongoing engagement of all members to ensure ASSITEJ International remains dynamic, inclusive, and impactful in the years ahead.

Looking forward

The Midline Evaluation will run from October 2025 to October 2026 and will build on the work described in this Baseline Evaluation Report, the RCP Evaluation Report, and the survey results.

Recommendations:

- That when the EC has had time to consider this content of this report it should determine what areas the Midline Evaluation should focus on. This will help to inform the evaluation method and guide the use of the evaluation budget. Theory of Change, which ASSITEJ International is using to guide its work, may provide a useful way for the EC to identify evaluation priorities, and to allocate the evaluation budget accordingly.
- That the evaluation team keep a record of how much time is spent on each evaluation task and activity, to help inform the design of future evaluation cycles.

Two possible areas of focus for the 2026 evaluation are:

National Centres: Conduct a survey of National Centres to identify what they are doing, how they service their members, what challenges they face, what ASSITEJ International resources and support they engage with (e.g. National Centre Toolkit) and what suggestions they have for future engagement with and support from the organisation.

Research: This year, the evaluation did not focus on the research projects that were ongoing from the BCR programme, but we are aware that they are coming to an end and that ASSITEJ International is keen to both learn from the findings and to stimulate further research that will benefit the sector. We recommend that in 2026 the evaluators meet with the researchers and members of the EC to:

- learn of the research outcomes;
- learn how the research outcomes are being communicated to the EC and the wider membership;
- learn how ASSITEJ International plans to use the research findings and reports (e.g. for advocacy purposes); and
- learn how each research process unfolded (i.e. what supported or hindered the projects?).



Conclusion

The 2025 ASSITEJ International Baseline Evaluation identifies an organisation that is maturing in its evaluative culture by increasingly integrating reflection and learning into its operational fabric. It acknowledges the challenges of balancing volunteer capacity with expanding global ambitions, but recognises the organisation's strong leadership, member engagement, and a clear strategic orientation toward cultural equity and youth empowerment.



Report: Participation in OISTAT Panel Discussion and Meeting with President Aby Cohen

Prepared by: Bebe de Soares

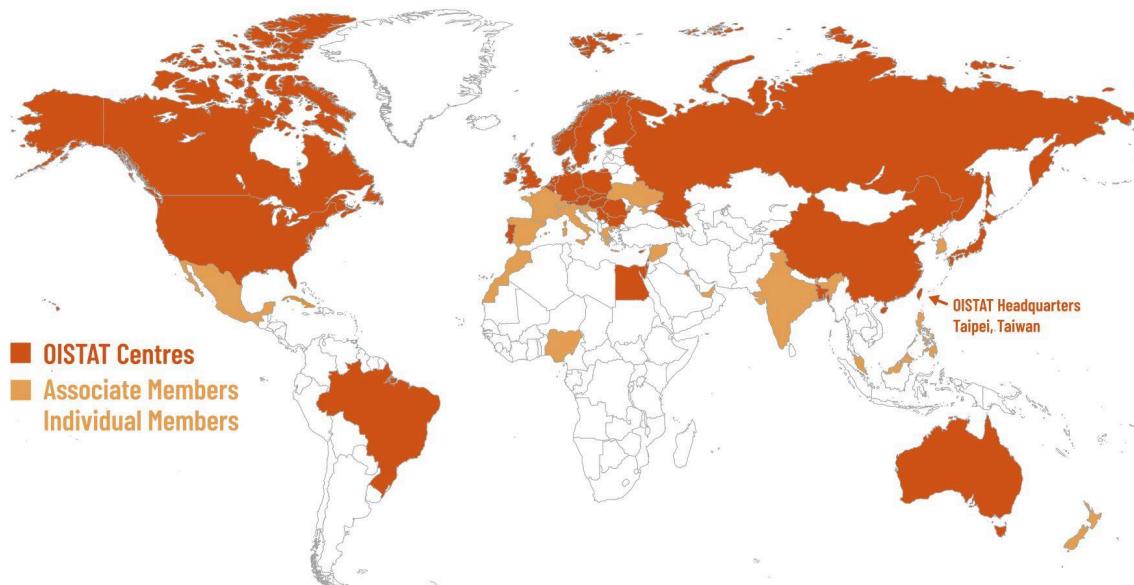
Affiliation: ASSITEJ International

Date: October 2025

1. Context and Purpose

This report summarizes my participation as a representative of **ASSITEJ International** in the **OISTAT** (International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians) panel discussion, as well as the subsequent personal exchange with **Aby Cohen**, President of OISTAT (2025–2029).

This participation aimed to strengthen dialogue and identify potential collaboration between **ASSITEJ** and **OISTAT**, especially in areas related to scenography, theatre architecture, education, and design practices for youth and community audiences.



2. Overview of OISTAT's Structure

OISTAT is an international network that connects professionals in theatre design, architecture, and technology.

2.1 Governance

- **Congress:** Highest authority, convened every four years to elect leadership and decide on major policy.
- **Executive Committee (EC):** Eight members including the President, responsible for governance and direction.
- **Governing Board (GB):** Chairs of all Commissions and Sub-Commissions; coordinates discipline-based activities.
- **Headquarters:** Located in Taipei, Taiwan, under Executive Director **Samuel Shih-Hsing Wang**.

2.2 Current Leadership (2025–2029)

President: Aby Cohen (Brazil)

Executive Committee Members:

- Mia David (Serbia)
- William Kenyon (USA)
- Johan Mansfeldt (Sweden)
- Suzanne Osmond (Australia)
- Jan Štěpánek (Czech Republic)
- April Viczko (Canada)
- Samuel Shih-Hsing Wang (Taiwan)

Commissions - OISTAT's commissions are structured around **artistic and technical practices**—such as **costume design, set design, lighting, architecture, and technology**—bringing together professionals internationally within each discipline.

Architecture Commission — deals with theatre architecture, design competitions etc

- **Performance Design Commission** — formerly called Scenography. Under this one there are Sub-commissions:
 - Costume Design Sub-commission
 - Lighting Design Sub-commission
 - Sound Design Sub-commission
 - Space Design Sub-commission
- **Education Commission** — focuses on learning, student exchanges and international education projects.
- **Technology Commission** — handles theatre technologies, standards, safety, etc.
- **Publication & Communication Commission** — deals with publications, communications and media.
- **Research Commission** — formerly “Theory & History”; focuses on theoretical, historical, archival work.

3.1 Panel and General Observations

Moderator: Anna Robb, Executive Producer for Our Legacy Creations & Chief Executive Officer of StageLync

Panelist(s)

- Wan-Jung Wei, Executive Director of OISTAT
- Bebê de Soares, Board Member of ASSITEJ International
- Cláudia Belchior, President of the European Theatre Convention (ETC) & Executive General Coordinator at the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon/Portugal
- Ghannam Ghannam, Director of the Department of Training, Rehabilitation and School Theatre, Arab Theatre Institute

Invited to explore how NGOs navigate global complexities and foster cooperation around cultural diversity, sustainability, and nurturing the next generation.

Bebê de Soares, Board Member of ASSITEJ International

- (1) How does ASSITEJ International engage young audiences in the performing arts through international collaboration?
- (2) What successful initiatives have helped create a global network of professionals dedicated to theatre for children and young people?

(3) How does ASSITEJ advocate for the rights of children and young people to access theatre and arts worldwide?

3.2 Conversation with Aby Cohen

During our personal exchange, **Aby Cohen** expressed genuine curiosity and enthusiasm for understanding **ASSITEJ's structure**, including:

- Our **membership system**, categories, and **fees**;
- The **global strategy** of ASSITEJ, particularly regarding advocacy and artistic exchange;
- The operation of our **networks** and their thematic focuses.

She emphasized her wish to **identify mutual strands of work** and explore **ways for collaboration** between the two organisations.

There was particular interest in **South and Latin America**, where both OISTAT and ASSITEJ are striving to strengthen regional participation and professional engagement.

Aby Cohen also noted that OISTAT faces challenges similar to those of many international networks—particularly in **convincing professionals to become members**.

In this context, the classical question emerged:

3.3 Future Collaboration

- **Invitation to Prague:** Aby Cohen expressed her wish to attend the upcoming **ASSITEJ "Network of Networks" meeting in Prague (April 2026)**, and offered to give a **short presentation about OISTAT** to introduce its mission and commissions to our members.
- **Areas of synergy:** We identified potential collaboration in:
 - **Education and professional development** (joint workshops or exchanges).
 - **Sustainability and scenographic design** for youth and touring theatre.

The meeting with **Aby Cohen** highlighted significant opportunities for future cooperation between **OISTAT** and **ASSITEJ International**. Both organisations share complementary missions: to support creative professionals, advocate for global cultural exchange, and encourage sustainable, inclusive practices in theatre-making.

Other encounters

Bruce Guthrie from National Theater India expressed interest in PYA

- Issa Saleh from Syria has an interest in theater for trauma healing

PICTURES

 WSD 2025 - Scenofest_A Global Network for the Next Generation (Delete after Nov 12)

Contact for the conference: **Hsi-Lun Tai - Project Coordinator**

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Nordic-Baltic region report

Activities That Have Made an Impact

The NBAN project focused its first year on building foundational structures and initiating key thematic exchanges. The most impactful activities were those that enhanced cross-regional mobility, focused on diversity and inclusion, and increased international visibility. The work of the national centres is already demonstrating a forward-looking approach to sustainability and political positioning.

A. Impactful Activities

Activity	Impact and Significance
Hybrid Seminar on Inclusion and Leadership	This co-organized seminar with ASSITEJ Denmark focused specifically on diversity and equal access, featuring a keynote by Caroline Bowditch on the near absence of visibly disabled performers. The hybrid format allowed for participation from 42 on-site and 12 online attendees, broadening the reach of this critical discussion beyond the immediate festival context.
Nordic-Baltic Dance Workshop (Malmö)	The workshop provided a vital opportunity for artistic exchange and professional mobility for young dance artists across the region, deepening professional connections and inspiring new approaches to dance for young audiences.
Cultural Preparedness and TYA Research (Norway)	ASSITEJ Norway is actively positioning TYA within the national political discourse on preparedness and democratic defense infrastructure, arguing that art builds social resilience and critical thinking. They are also highlighting key research findings, such as "The Art of Learning."
Sustainable Touring Model (Norway)	ASSITEJ Norway is pioneering a focus on TYA-concept export as a sustainable and greener alternative to traditional full-production touring, reducing climate

	impact and providing a more stable economy for artistic companies.
Structural Foundation	The establishment of the NBAN website, the hiring of a project coordinator, and regular online meetings (including dedicated working groups for finance and communication) provided the administrative backbone necessary for future collaboration and sustainability.

Major Issues Identified in the Region

The TYA sector in the Nordic-Baltic region is currently defined by a simultaneous surge in collaboration and a contraction of financial support. The core issues are severe public funding instability and organizational capacity threats.

Widespread Public Funding Contraction and Real-Term Cuts:

Finland: The TYA sector is facing the biggest public funding cuts since the 1930s, directly creating insecurity for freelancers and pushing subsidized theaters toward "box office hits" and away from dedicated programming for young audiences.

Norway: The field faces direct cuts to key support organizations, specifically:

- Cuts to Norwegian Arts Abroad (NAA), which directly undermines international visibility and mobility.
- Cuts to the Alliance for Actors and Dancers (SKUDA), which severely impacts TYA artists often employed through this program.

General Funding Erosion: Even where state funding is nominally stable (as with ASSITEJ Norway's core funding), the lack of increase over time means a real-term cut as costs rise. This directly limits ASSITEJ Norway's ability to maintain the professional quality and size of its key national event, the International Norwegian ASSITEJ Festival (INAF).

Organizational Sustainability and Capacity Threats:

ASSITEJ Finland: The national centre faces a severe threat of staff reduction, potentially dropping from two full-time employees to one person on an 80% contract starting May 2026. This would significantly reduce the capacity of a key member of NBAN.

Internal Network Capacity: The pressure from real-term cuts in Norway is forcing the national centre to re-consider and potentially scale back or restructure core activities like the INAF festival, potentially shifting to more cost-effective regional collaborations.

Thematic and Structural Barriers:

The network's own programming identified issues around diversity, representation, and inclusion

(specifically the underrepresentation of disabled performers) as major discussion points, suggesting these are structural barriers that require ongoing focus and systemic change within the region.

3. Gaps in the Network's Awareness or Knowledge of the Region

In-Depth Needs of National Centres & Project Support:

The network needs to gain a deeper understanding of the unique, individual, and most pressing organizational needs of each centre (e.g., administrative software needs, specific skills gaps).

Specific Partner Gaps (Norway): ASSITEJ Norway is explicitly seeking connections to European partners with Creative Europe experience to support an upcoming VR TYA-project linked to health perspectives.

Long-Term Sustainability Models & Hosting Requirements:

The project report explicitly mentions a need to "explore long-term sustainability and funding structures" for NBAN itself.

EC Hosting Input (Norway): ASSITEJ Norway is currently seeking specific input on what is expected when hosting an ASSITEJ Executive Committee (EC) meeting, and how the EC can best contribute to the local TYA field in Norway to strengthen their 2027 funding application.

Overall issue – the ASSITEJ Asia Network is not really working at the moment. Much has been attempted and people are still interested but the field is too big and people too stretched across time zones to connect easily. Asia TYA network is working. What do we learn from this?

What are the activities that have made an impact?

- BICT fest and the Asia TYA Network
- Babel workshop kicking off Gulali Lab and festival in Indonesia
- Ricca ricca festa
- Macau International children's arts festival MICAF
- Macau baby Festival - CUTE Fest
- Support for new works in Singapore - mostly early years through Art Ground but also from Esplanade theatres.
- A fair few intercultural collaborations and touring between Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, Indonesia, New Zealand, China, Japan, India
- Connections between Taiwan artists and ASSITEJ (Serbia) and subsequent intros to Melbourne Fringe Festival - resulting in tour
- Re-emergence of A.S.K. – starting to bring companies and artists back into China
- Knowledge of world congress in Korea – APAM using this as a focus so gathering Asia presenters together – opportunities to raise awareness of TYA and ASSITEJ
- Strong centres (well regarded by members): Singapore, Indonesia, Korea, New Zealand, Australia, Mongolia, Pakistan.
- The UNIMA World Congress 2025 was held in Chuncheon, Korea. A new leadership team was elected, and they expressed their intention to collaborate with ASSITEJ International, particularly in the field of arts education for the young.

What are the major issues you can identify in this region?

- The overall term 'ASIA' covers too much ground – south and east Asia is one region, central Asia another, Asia pacific another etc
- Professional development opportunities. Difficulty in maintaining a professional career in the field. Need to break it up and specify issues
- Individual artists are trying to connect to international ASSITEJ and each other, and there are many threads pulling in different directions – lack of connection with or trust in national centres. (Particularly artists from China, Vietnam, Japan)
- No one common language to communicate in.
- Economic situation in many countries means cultural cuts - sometimes completely
- Lack of understanding (or appreciation) outside of Asia of regional contexts and different styles of work.
- Social and educational pressures on children. Economic and time stress for adults.
- Centres that are undergoing change or development: Nepal, China, Japan
- Centres that need attention: India, Japan, China, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, more?

Where are the gaps in the network's awareness or knowledge of the region?

There is a lack of communication among national centres, as well as in Asia. There is hardly any communication that comes across, in the form of information sharing etc.

The silent members – Sri Lanka, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka: They did a theatre festival lately, I messaged Chandana and we texted each other but could not find time to speak.

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=122267132912063907&id=61551917236219&mibextid=wwXIfr&rdid=1jOMSnk0BZ2JbAju#

China: I met many people who worked in the ministry. There is no “leader” at the moment, but they have a name now who is joining the ministry and will have the portfolio. He will also be responsible for ASSITEJ China. Everyone I met there was waiting for it.

Bangladesh: There is no national centre there anymore. We spoke to Mr Liaqat Ali Lucky, who is going through massive corruption cases. Apart from that, he controlled the national centre in the past and never made it work. He wants to reestablish it to bolster his credibility. We shall not do it.

The possible new members – Malaysia (although orgs and artists could join with Indonesia now as a neighbouring National Centre – they all know each other)

Thailand – possible to move more on this due to focus on AsiaTYA each year at BICT.

UAE, where I had my first meeting to introduce when I was there in March, and I spoke to them again last week, they are preparing the case and discussing. They might apply for national centre membership early next year.

ASSITEJ Ghana Activity Report: March – October 2025

1. Executive Summary

From March to October 2025, ASSITEJ Ghana undertook a series of impactful programmes and collaborations designed to promote theatre and the performing arts for children and young audiences across the country. This reporting period marked the formal establishment of the national centre, capacity-building initiatives through storytelling and animation workshops, a major original theatre production, and national participation in the Heritage Theatre Arts Festival. These collective efforts have strengthened Ghana's contribution to the global ASSITEJ network, built stronger educational partnerships, and inspired young people to embrace theatre as a medium for cultural expression, learning, and empowerment.

2. Background

ASSITEJ Ghana, inaugurated in March 2025, is the official national centre under ASSITEJ International, committed to promoting theatre and performing arts for children and young audiences in Ghana. Its mission is to support creative education, foster professional collaboration, and ensure that every child has access to quality theatrical experiences that inspire imagination, empathy, and cultural awareness. The establishment of ASSITEJ Ghana reflects the broader vision of ASSITEJ International — connecting the world's theatre makers to share, learn, and grow the global community of theatre for young audiences.

3. Overview of Major Activities (March – October 2025)

3.1 Launch of ASSITEJ Ghana – March 20, 2025

Venue: Zaire Avenue, East Legon The official launch of ASSITEJ Ghana was a landmark event attended by educators, artists, parents, and theatre practitioners. The programme commenced with welcoming remarks by Mrs. Abena Dansoa Ofori Amankwa (Secretary, ASSITEJ Ghana), who outlined the vision and journey leading to the establishment of the national chapter.

Key highlights included:

- Speech by the Director, Mrs. Vivian Boateng, introducing the committee members.
- Special performance of *Gizo Gizo* (a children's theatre musical) produced by Booksie and Vivie's Dance and Theatre Academy (VDTA).
- Keynote address by Hon. Dzifa Gomashie, Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, reaffirming the Ministry's support for theatre in education and youth development.
- Performances by VDTA's Creative Education in Drama (CRED) students and a storytelling act by Parables.
- Unveiling of the ASSITEJ Ghana logo.

Outcome:

The event successfully launched ASSITEJ Ghana as a credible national body for children's theatre, promoting collaboration between education, culture, and creative professionals.

Financial and In-kind Contributions:

Supported by ASSITEJ Ghana committee members, VDTA, and individual sponsors,

the launch reflected strong community participation and ownership.

3.2. Parables Educational & Storytelling Programmes (March – October 2025)

Parables, under ASSITEJ Ghana, implemented a series of storytelling, animation, and literacy-based activities aimed at developing creative skills among children and educators.

Key Activities:

- **March:** Screening of “28th Crossroads” animated movie in selected schools.
- **March – July:** Storytelling and animation training sessions in schools.
- **May – July:** Capacity-building workshops in various institutions:
- TIS School – May
- GIS School – June
- National Children’s Library – July & August
- **October:** Launch of the *Ananse Heritage Project*, supported by ASSITEJ Ghana, focusing on cultural education through indigenous stories and creative expression.

Impact:

Over the period, hundreds of students were reached through creative literacy programs, building imagination, confidence, and appreciation for African storytelling traditions.

3.3. “Way Home: The Gathering of Heroes” Musical Theatre Production – May 31 & June 1, 2025

Venue: Vivie’s Dance and Theatre Academy Studio, East Legon A VDTA musical production, that was supported by ASSITEJ Ghana. *Way Home: The Gathering of Heroes* celebrated Ghanaian folklore and the resilience of young people through an original musical theatre production.

Synopsis:

The play follows a group of young heroes journeying through time and tradition, uncovering lessons of courage, unity, and heritage. With dynamic choreography, music, and acting, it demonstrated the transformative power of theatre in promoting cultural identity.

Production Details:

- Audience: Over 500 attendees each show
- Cast: Children and young performing artists.
- Feedback: Highly positive responses from parents, youth, and creative professionals.

Impact:

The production showcased excellence in youth performance, positioned Ghanaian children’s theatre as globally competitive.

VDTA is a proud member of ASSITEJ Ghana and we look forward to inspire new collaborations for touring opportunities abroad.

3.4. Heritage of Africa's Theatre Arts Festival (also known as Broadway Theatre Festival) – October 6–12, 2025

Venue: School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana

Theme: "Threads of Heritage: Weaving the African Identity"

The festival, organized by Heritage of Africa – Ghana, celebrated the intersection of traditional performance and contemporary theatre practice. ASSITEJ Ghana actively participated in this festival, reinforcing its commitment to cultural exchange and youth theatre development.

Key Activities:

- Opening ceremony with drumming, dance, and keynote speeches.
- Stage productions by local and international theatre companies.
- Masterclasses and workshops in acting, choreography, lighting, and production.
- Panel discussions on theatre in Africa, creative entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation.
- School engagement sessions promoting theatre education.
- Closing gala with awards and cultural showcases.

Stakeholders & Partners:

School of Performing Arts (UG), Ghana Tourism Authority, Creative Arts Agency, Twellium Industrial Company, Ghana Education Service, Ghana Dance Ensemble, National Commission on Culture, traditional leaders, and corporate sponsors.

Impact:

The festival attracted over 2,000 attendees and strengthened Ghana's position as a hub for cultural tourism and theatre innovation.

Rebranding:

The transition from *Broadway Theatre Festival* to *Heritage Theatre Arts Festival* represents a renewed commitment to celebrating African stories and heritage on a global stage.

4. Achievements & Impact

- Successful establishment and recognition of ASSITEJ Ghana as a national centre.
- Strengthened partnerships with schools, cultural institutions, and creative organizations.
- Expanded access to theatre and creative education for children and young audiences.
- Empowered youth through performance, storytelling, and cultural education.
- Increased visibility of Ghana within the ASSITEJ International network.
- Promoted cultural tourism and cross-sector collaboration in the arts.

5. Partnerships & Collaborations

Key collaborators during the reporting period included:

- **Local Partners:** Vivie's Dance and Theatre Academy (VDTA), Parables, Booksie, National Children's Library, Ghana Tourism Authority, Creative Arts Agency, and participating schools.
- **Government and Institutions:** Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Ghana Education Service, National Commission on Culture.
- **Community Partners:** Traditional leaders, media partners, and corporate sponsors. These partnerships played a vital role in resource mobilization, audience development, and project sustainability.

6. Financial Overview (Summary)

While ASSITEJ Ghana continues to grow, its activities have been largely supported through in-kind contributions, committee support, and the membership activities/sponsorships. Significant contributions came from VDTA and committee members during the launch. We hope to work towards being financially independent of our membership by taking a fixed amount as dues and by opening up our membership to the broader Ghanaian artists and artistic institutions who work with and for children and the youth.

7. Challenges & Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- Limited financial resources and sponsorship gaps.
- Inadequate technical equipment for stage production.
- Tight preparation timelines for some activities.

Lessons Learned:

- The importance of early planning and structured budgeting.
- The need for strengthened financial tracking and accountability.
- Greater emphasis on stakeholder communication and resource sharing.

8. Future Outlook (November 2025 – 2026)

- Strengthen partnerships with government agencies and private sector sponsors.
- Expand outreach programmes to regional and rural schools.
- Leverage digital platforms to share Ghanaian children's theatre internationally.
- Prepare *Way Home: The Gathering of Heroes* for regional and international tours.
- Organize national workshops to train educators and artists in creative education methodologies.

9. Conclusion

The period between March and October 2025 has been one of significant growth, collaboration, and creative excellence for ASSITEJ Ghana. From its launch to national-level engagements and artistic productions, the centre has demonstrated strong commitment to nurturing the next generation through theatre. With continued support from ASSITEJ International and local partners, ASSITEJ Ghana remains dedicated to advancing children's theatre as a powerful tool for education, cultural preservation, and social change.

10. A summary of the last ASSITEJ GHANA committee meeting.

A. Membership Growth, Strategic Planning, and Future Outlook

ASSITEJ Ghana continues to take deliberate steps toward strengthening its structure and expanding its membership base. As a relatively young chapter, the association recognizes that sustainable growth will depend on collaboration, strategic positioning, and effective use of existing member activities and festivals to build visibility and awareness. During the recent committee meeting, members emphasized the importance of adopting a clear strategic plan that guides operations and membership engagement over the next two years. In the interim, efforts will be concentrated on maximizing the reach of current projects, festivals, and productions already being undertaken by member organizations. These will serve as entry points for greater national recognition and participation. A key discussion centered on **broadening membership**, with a special focus on involving schools that demonstrate strong commitment to the performing arts. It was proposed that **privileged schools** be

encouraged to adopt smaller or community-based schools, thereby extending access to artistic opportunities for children and youth across different socio-economic backgrounds. This mentorship model aims to foster inclusivity, capacity development, and community engagement — values that lie at the heart of ASSITEJ Ghana's mission. The committee also reaffirmed the **benefits of membership**, highlighting access to professional development workshops, cultural exchange programs, and participation in international platforms under the ASSITEJ International network.

Members expressed enthusiasm about positioning Ghanaian children and educators to take part in the **2027 ASSITEJ World Congress in Korea**, viewing it as a long-term goal that could showcase the creative excellence of Ghana's young performers on a global stage. Looking ahead, ASSITEJ Ghana plans to commemorate its **first anniversary** with a performing arts festival in **March 2026**, coinciding with the **International Day of Theatre for Children and Young People**. The celebration is envisioned to include:

- A one-day workshop for children in partnership with the Centre for National Culture.
- A month-long series of activities culminating in performance showcases.
- Opportunities to present the work of new institutional and educational members.
- A reflection on the achievements and milestones of ASSITEJ Ghana's first year.

To ensure proper execution, the committee agreed to hold an in-person planning session before the end of the year, refine organizational roles and strengths, and prepare a funding proposal to attract sponsors for the 2026 celebration. Through these collaborative efforts, ASSITEJ Ghana seeks to strengthen its foundation, increase visibility, and continue to provide creative platforms for children and young people across the country.

ASSITEJ/ACYTA FOCUSED SESSION

PANEL SESSION CONCEPT NOTE

Topic: *Telling Tomorrow's Stories: Innovation and Inclusion in Theatre for Young Audiences*

Event: 3rd Abuja International Theatre Festival & Awards (ABITFA 2025)

Dates: November 6, 2025 (11.00AM WAT)

Venue: Hybrid

Organizers: Arojah Royal Theatre, ASSITEJ Nigeria & African Children and Youth Theatre Arena (ACYTA)

1. Background

Theatre for children and young audiences plays a critical role in shaping future generations—stimulating imagination, empathy, and identity formation. In a fast-evolving world driven by technology and social change, theatre must innovate to remain relevant while fostering inclusion and representing the diverse realities of young people.

In line with **ABITFA 2025's theme — INNOVIDCLUSION (Innovation • Identity • Inclusion)**, this panel brings together practitioners, educators, and cultural leaders to explore how inclusive and innovative storytelling can empower young audiences and promote unity through diversity.

2. Objectives

- To explore new, **innovative practices** in theatre for children and youth across Africa and globally.
- To discuss how **identity and representation** shape the narratives young people encounter on stage.
- To highlight strategies for **inclusion**—ensuring accessibility for children of all backgrounds and abilities.
- To strengthen **collaborative frameworks** between ASSITEJ, ACYTA, schools, and creative practitioners.

3. Discussion Angles

- Innovations in storytelling: integrating digital tools, sensory theatre, and participatory performance.
- Inclusive approaches to audience engagement — theatre for and with children of all abilities.
- Representation and identity: reflecting the diversity of African children's experiences on stage.
- The role of education: merging creative learning with formal and informal school systems.

- Opportunities for cross-cultural collaborations and youth-focused international exchanges.

4. Expected Outcomes

- A shared framework for inclusive and innovative youth theatre practice in Nigeria and Africa.
- Strengthened partnerships between ASSITEJ, ACYTA, schools, and cultural institutions.
- Identification of opportunities for international collaboration and touring productions.
- Recommendations for policies supporting children's theatre and inclusive arts education.

5. Proposed Panelists

- **Joshua Alabi (Nigeria)**
- **John Nnamai (Kenya)**
- **Faye (South Africa)**
- **ASSITEJ International**

Moderators:

- **Oluwaseun Odukoya (Nigeria)**
- **Themibile Tshuma (South Africa)**

6. Format

- Duration: 90 minutes
- Format: Interactive panel + Q&A + short youth performance clip (optional)

ASSITEJ Senegal Centre

The ASSITEJ Senegal Centre was established in July 2024. It brings together theatre, dance, and visual arts associations that are interested in training for theatre for young audiences and in developing activities for children.

To date, the Centre has not yet been able to organize any specific training or activities. However, the Djarama Association, a founding member of the Centre, continues to carry out awareness-raising and training initiatives aimed at developing theatre for young audiences in Senegal and across the sub-region.

Between 2024 and 2025, Djarama produced three African young audience theatre creations and conducted two training workshops, one in Senegal and one in Guinea-Bissau.

As part of the Vogue Africain project, the ASSITEJ Senegal Centre aims to strengthen the capacities of its members, stimulate creative work for young audiences, and foster collaboration among artists and cultural organizations engaged in this field.

Centre ASSITEJ Sénégal

Le Centre ASSITEJ Sénégal a été créé en juillet 2024. Il regroupe des associations de théâtre pour adultes, de danse et d'arts plastiques qui manifestent un intérêt pour la formation au théâtre jeune public et pour la mise en œuvre d'activités destinées aux enfants.

À ce jour, le centre n'a pas encore pu organiser de formation ni d'activité spécifique. Cependant, l'association Djarama, membre fondatrice du centre, poursuit des actions de sensibilisation et de formation en faveur du développement du théâtre jeune public au Sénégal et dans la sous-région.

Entre 2024 et 2025, Djarama a réalisé trois créations de spectacles jeunes publics africains et conduit deux formations, l'une au Sénégal et l'autre en Guinée-Bissau.

Dans le cadre du projet Vogue Africain, le centre ASSITEJ Sénégal ambitionne désormais de renforcer les capacités de ses membres, de stimuler la création pour le jeune public et de dynamiser la coopération entre artistes et structures culturelles engagées dans ce domaine.

ASSITEJ South Africa: Overview Report 2024–2025

The past year has been one of growing pains for ASSITEJ South Africa. The organisation has been stretched to do more, reach higher and wider than ever before, while maintaining excellence in its programmes, often with reduced resources and capacity. Despite financial pressures and the loss of key staff members, ASSITEJ SA continues to grow its reach, refine its systems, and strengthen its impact in theatre, arts education, and creative youth development.

Leadership, Transitions, and Team

This year saw several significant farewells. The organisation lost long-serving staff and board members whose contributions shaped our evolution. Founding board member Janet Watts exited the board, leaving behind a legacy of wisdom, administrative strength, and strategic vision, particularly through her work on the Kickstarter methodology. Alison Polley-Green, who led the Education portfolio since 2012, also departed, having built the Theatre4Youth programme and spearheaded the Kickstarter Educational Empowerment project. Curator Faye Kabali-Kagwa, who played a central role in Cradle of Creativity 2023 and in projects such as Unlocking Learner Creativity and YiPEE, left to focus on curation for the festival: Theater der Welt. The organisation is bidding farewell to long-serving board members, Ismail Mahomed and Obett Motaung, both of whom made valuable contributions to governance and strategy.

Amidst these transitions, the remaining team is demonstrating resilience, embracing professional development through the A2B programme and adopting new tools such as ClickUp for project and performance management. We hope in this way to improve efficiency and collaboration. We have also managed to achieve a 5 star rating with iZinga Assist, an organisation that accredits compliant NPOs, in order to support them to attract international funding.

Financial Overview

ASSITEJ SA's funding base grew to more than R6.3 million over the year. The highlight was the successful award of Social Employment Fund 4 (SEF4) valued at R37.3 million, with R7.46 million allocated directly to ASSITEJ SA (although this money has not yet been received). This funding enables the employment of approximately 1,575 artists around the country and for engagement with 47,000 children monthly for ten months, solidifying our role as a key arts employer and community connector. Additional successful funding came from the SAC-IAWJ Judicial Theatre project, the DCAS GBV Western Cape initiative, and the Ivanplats partnership.

However, financial instability persisted through much of the year due to delayed payments, unsuccessful applications, and a high dependency on SEF. Several funding proposals, including to DSAC, EUNIC, the Rupert Foundation, and ASSITEJ International, were unfortunately unsuccessful. Cash flow shortages affected our capacity to retain staff at their original rates, and several people reduced hours, volunteered, or otherwise assisted to ensure that ASSITEJ SA continued to do its work.

Programme Achievements

Create Access

Through our Arts4Youth programme, powered by the Social Employment Fund, ASSITEJ SA has expanded arts access nationwide, focusing on community-based arts education and youth engagement. The “Pieces of Me” tour travelled to major festivals and the Reykjavik Fringe, enhanced international exposure and created income-generating opportunities for artists and ASSITEJ SA. We also toured “King of Broken Things” to London, which while not financially successful, received appreciative reviews and responses. At the National Arts Festival 2025, ASSITEJ SA ran a successful venue platform supporting 19 productions, building relationships with artists and audiences. We are continuing to support some of this work to tour nationally. The Girl Power (Against Violence) initiative continues to expand its reach, focusing on positive masculinity and prevention education through the arts. “Nompilo” written by Lalu Mokuku and Omphile Molusi, is a powerful theatre piece introducing children to the language of law and justice in relation to gender-based violence, and has now travelled to 40 schools in Eastern Cape, KZN and Free State (with two separate casts). We are hoping to keep touring this production to other provinces if we are able to raise more funding.

Support Artists

ASSITEJ SA continues to nurture artistic development and professional capacity. We have plans to publish a series of South African plays for young audiences, including “The King of Broken Things”, “Pen(t)s Down Haha!”, “Kidding”, “Kids from Amandla Street” and “Nompilo”, among others which may be considered for networks within the DBE.

As part of the Girl Power programme, we have run a new series of financial literacy and empowerment workshops reached artists across programmes, equipping them with practical tools in budgeting, savings, and entrepreneurship. Within the SEF, we run workshops both on the professional and artistic side of creating for young audiences, and on the administrative and entrepreneurial side, in order to support artists to be more sustainable.

Empower Education

In education, ASSITEJ SA deepened our influence in arts-based learning and psychosocial development. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) launched the national Life Skills textbooks to which ASSITEJ SA contributed the Creative Arts content, a milestone in providing accessible approaches to including the arts in formal learning. The Arts-rich Schools initiative is gaining traction, with schools being assessed for creative inclusion in a pilot programme, and the department has been particularly excited about “Nompilo”.

Projects such as Unlocking Learner Creativity (Western Cape) and YIPEE continued to demonstrate sustainable impact, with several schools retaining facilitators beyond the funded period. YIPEE focuses on wellbeing and aims to generate gratitude, kindness and hope in the whole school community using the arts. ASSITEJ SA is also developing trauma-informed methodologies for arts education and has advocated for systemic inclusion of creative learning within the DBE’s frameworks.

Advocacy and Networking

ASSITEJ SA remains a leading advocate for cultural rights and arts in education. The Take a Child to the Theatre campaign gained strong visibility again this year, reaching thousands of local children, while the Girl Power campaign deepened its national reach through school and community engagements. Representation at key national and international forums—including the ASSITEJ 60th Anniversary in Marseille, the WHO and UNICEF Digital Dialogues, the TUT GBV Conference, and the EMASA (Education) and SACO (Cultural industries) conferences—is amplifying ASSITEJ SA’s voice in policy and practice. Yvette Hardie’s role on the DSAC Arts Education Sector Council (known as the National Arts Education Authority) has the potential to strengthen sectoral representation and to ensure greater access to the arts for children.

Cradle of Creativity 2026

Preparations for the next Cradle of Creativity are continuing despite funding setbacks. After Faye’s departure, the curatorial team was expanded to include several staff members, and we are working through applications, alongside other portfolios. We are behind on our deadlines, but we are continuing to engage with international partners and embassies. We are hopeful that we will be able to host the festival in August 2026, even though at this time no funding has been raised as yet for the festival.

Partnerships

ASSITEJ SA sustained an extensive network of partners across government, academia, civil society, and the arts. These include Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, Department of Basic Education, Department of Cultural Affairs and Sports Western Cape, Western Cape Education Department, DG Murray Trust, citiesRise, National Arts Festival, NASCEE, Drama for Life, Market Theatre Foundation, De Stilte Dance Company, and a range of embassies and cultural institutes. New collaborations with institutions like the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, The Difference Institute, and the Institute for Life Course Health Research at Stellenbosch University have opened further opportunities for advocacy, education, and research.

Challenges

The main challenges of 2024–2025 were financial uncertainty, staff burnout, and systemic instability in the arts funding landscape. Several grants were delayed or unsuccessful, and cash flow interruptions resulted in difficult salary conditions. Operational challenges included ongoing safety concerns at the Vrygrond office due to gang violence, and unreliable internet connectivity.

Way forward

We hope that our success with SEF4 will provide vital stability and the opportunity to consolidate systems, enhance monitoring, and deepen impact. ASSITEJ SA continues to affirm that access to the arts is a child’s right and a catalyst for social change. With continued collaboration and support from our partners, we are moving forward with creativity, conviction and hope!

ASSITEJ ZAMBIA

REPORT TO THE AFRICAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH THEATRE ARENA (ACYTA) AND ASSITEJ INTERNATIONAL FOR THE PERIOD BETWEEN MARCH AND OCTOBER, 2025

1. Introduction

- While this report covers some activities the national centre has carried out during the period March – October this year, it also looks at the way forward for the centre and the challenges encountered

2. Main activities held between March and October, 2025

- (a) We held our annual Jacaranda International Children and Youth Arts Festival in Lusaka. The three-day festival was attended by three youth groups from Malawi and sixteen groups from across Zambia. The festival was held with the support of Lusaka City Council, Circus Zambia and Pakachele School.
- (b) Member groups from across the country and within their localities conducted various activities in commemoration of the World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People (March 20), Youth Day (March 12), World Water Day (March 22), Day of the African Child (June 16) and Independence celebrations (October 24).
- (c) Within the same period two ASSITEJ Zambia member groups travelled to Malawi for the 2025 Malawi International Youth Cultural Festival in Lilongwe. This is in fulfilment of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2019 between ASSITEJ Zambia and the Malawi Light of Youth Creative Organisation (LYCO). The MoU has seen children and youth groups from the two countries attend each other's festivals going up to 2019.
- (d) ASSITEJ Zambia was in charge of the Kids Corner of the Kwimbo National Arts Festival (KNAF) which is Zambia's biggest arts festival annually held in Lusaka. The corner was responsible for all the children activities among them traditional games and dances, storytelling, singing, drawing, short performances by children. The corner was supported by the Finnish Embassy in Zambia.
- (e) ASSITEJ Zambia in collaboration Pschobase – a mental health organization held a program aimed at closing the gap on mental health by making wellness support accessible, affordable and community driven through systematic intervention programs in schools, workplaces and communities. It is hoped that the program will receive the needed support so that it is spread to more schools and communities.
- (f) ASSITEJ Zambia has already put in place a provincial committee on the Copperbelt and this provincial centre will be re-launched on December 12 this year in Kitwe to enhance the association's

presence and activities in the mineral-rich province of Zambia where children's arts activities had died down due to logistical challenges.

(g) ASSITEJ Zambia has entered into partnership with the Lusaka City Council (LCC) to use some of its facilities for our activities such as festivals, workshops and meetings at no charge and in return ASSITEJ Zambia will ensure that the council sponsored arts groups are invited to its major activities – festivals, workshops and training activities.

3. Membership

- As a member driven organization, ASSITEJ Zambia has continued to recruit members to enhance the quantity, quality, value and relevance of the association. Most membership is drawn from institutions of learning while the rest are children and youth welfare centres and community based groups. The association is spreading countrywide though not at the desired rate. During the period under review, one province was added to our activity base – the copperbelt. There are only three provinces where ASSITEJ Zambia has no membership.

4. Workshops and Training

- ASSITEJ Zambia is growing both in numbers and capacity. During the period it managed to conduct one capacity building workshop in the period under review in Lusaka.

5. Challenges faced by the association

- Finances – This association lacks enough financial resources to finance its intended activities such as workshops, trainings and exchange programmes. In Zambia, associations like ours hardly receive any funding from the government and the corporate world. A number of programmes are funded by some members of the national executive committee due to their love for the children's arts.
- ASSITEJ Zambia continues to struggle to raise resources to pay for membership to ASSITEJ International. Right now the members of the executive are mobilizing resources amongst themselves to pay the fees to the international body.
- The association requires more resource mobilization skills to enable it attract credible partners to support its programs. In Zambia, many major business entities do not have corporate social responsibility obligations and only help at their own will. For example, the government in the 2026 budget only allocated 0.3% of the National Budget to the Religious and Cultural Sector – which is negligible and from this the arts and culture get the least.

5. The Way Forward

- ASSITEJ Zambia has always been futuristic in approach. It is currently in the process of looking for more partnerships to undertake some projects. These partnerships could be local or international. These projects will focus on capacity building in storytelling, puppetry, mask making, cartoon production, traditional instruments making, contemporary theatre and dance, climate change, strengthen local and international collaborations and more importantly to enhance children's rights to the arts and other rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989.
- ASSITEJ Zambia looks to the mother body (ASSITEJ International) and other stakeholders for any form of support in terms of skills enhancement. We need training in resource mobilization, inclusivity and general administration of the national centre.

6. Obituary

- The association lost its Vice President Harrison Muleya who died in Solwezi on May 22 after an illness. The late Muleya served as a member of the ASSITEJ Zambia National Executive Committee since 2002 and represented the country at a number of international festivals and workshops among them in Germany, Slovenia, Italy, Thailand, India and Mozambique.

7. Conclusion

- With the recently launched National Arts Policy – the first one in sixty-one years of our nationhood, ASSITEJ Zambia hopes to take full advantage of the available resources. We also believe that strengthening ACYTA will be a huge step in strengthening our resolve to successful implementation of our programmes. We need local and international partnerships. We shall go out there and sell our 'manifesto' to the stakeholders who are the members, the government, the NGOs, bilateral and multilateral funders and indeed the government until our goal of availing quality theatre to the young audiences in our countries is realized.

8. Contact Details

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October, 2025

ASSITEJ Zimbabwe Activity Report (March – October 2025)

1. Overview

Since March 2025, ASSITEJ Zimbabwe has continued its efforts to strengthen Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) in Zimbabwe despite significant operational and financial challenges. Our focus during this period has been on rebuilding member engagement, sustaining affiliation with ASSITEJ International, and nurturing creative projects that keep the centre active and visible.

2. Challenges and How We Addressed Them

• Financial Constraints:

The centre continues to face financial challenges, particularly in raising funds for affiliation and membership subscriptions. Many members have been unable or unwilling to pay their annual subscription fees, which has made it difficult to sustain operations.

Response:

To overcome this, we explored alternative fundraising strategies to cover our international affiliation fees. We also focused on project-based activities that could generate modest income while keeping members creatively engaged.

• Low Participation in Executive Meetings:

While we have tried to hold regular Executive Committee meetings, attendance remains low. Most of the time, only the Chairperson (Chipo Basopo) and Deputy Chairperson (Matesu Dube) attend these virtual sessions.

Response:

To maintain momentum, we delegated specific functions to smaller, more active groups and encouraged direct involvement through project work rather than meetings alone.

3. Key Development: Establishment of Little Footprint Theatre – Zimbabwe

To revitalize our centre's activities and promote TYA work, we established a subcommittee called Little Footprint Theatre – Zimbabwe.

This initiative brings together young artists who meet every Thursday to create and rehearse plays for children and young audiences.

Little Footprint Theatre operates under the mentorship of Precious Children's Arts Organisation, Umkhathi Theatre Works, and ASSITEJ Zimbabwe, all registered under the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe.

This collaborative model has proven successful in:

- Keeping members active and creative.
- Producing original, meaningful plays for children.
- Strengthening ASSITEJ Zimbabwe's visibility and impact at the grassroots level.

4. Creative Output: Theatre for Young Audiences

Through Little Footprint Theatre, we have developed several new works that cater to different age groups and themes. The plays emphasize children's rights, empathy, mental health, culture, and creativity.

Plays Developed:

- Sandscape Zimbabwe (Ages 4–8) – A fun, wordless show using sand, sound, and movement to celebrate nature and creativity.
- The Painted Kite (Ages 9–13) – A story of friendship, bullying, and standing up for one another.
- Dhiya (Ages 9–13) – A touching intergenerational story between a grandfather and granddaughter celebrating culture and storytelling.
- No Return (Ages 13+) – A powerful play about choices, addressing drug abuse, bullying, and mental health.

New Production:

- Socks and Hats (Ages 0–6) – Currently in development, this imaginative play uses simple materials such as socks and hats to create a sensory, playful theatre experience for early years audiences.

5. International Recognition and Invitations

Little Footprint Theatre's work has begun to gain international attention:

- The Painted Kite has been officially selected for The Cradle of Creativity Festival 2026 in South Africa, showcasing Zimbabwe's growing TYA talent on a continental stage.
- Little Footprint Theatre has also been invited to attend the Kulturstadt International Youth Festival in Germany from 1–8 January 2026.
We are currently seeking financial support to raise funds for three cast members to attend this prestigious international event.

6. Upcoming Activities: World Children's Day & 16 Days of Activism (20–30 November 2025)

We will mark World Children's Day with a series of school performances across Harare, Bulawayo, and surrounding areas.

The performances will also align with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, linking art with advocacy for children's safety, kindness, and positive choices.

Schools have been invited to:

- Select a suitable date during the celebration week.
- Choose a play from our repertoire.
- Agree on an affordable ticket contribution per learner.

The aim is to bring meaningful, age-appropriate performances directly to schools — entertaining, inspiring, and educating learners while celebrating children's rights.

7. Future Plans

Our future vision is to expand access to TYA across Zimbabwe and beyond.

Key goals include:

- Creating workshops for all developed productions to strengthen the skills of performers and facilitators.
- Touring all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, ensuring children across the country experience theatre in their own communities.
- Exploring regional and international tours to further expose Zimbabwean work to global audiences and build exchange opportunities for young artists.

8. Conclusion

Despite financial and participation challenges, ASSITEJ Zimbabwe continues to thrive creatively through innovative approaches such as Little Footprint Theatre. These efforts have not only sustained our engagement with young audiences but also reaffirmed our commitment to nurturing the next generation of theatre practitioners and audiences in Zimbabwe.

Our growing international recognition marks an exciting new chapter for Theatre for Young Audiences in Zimbabwe — one rooted in creativity, resilience, and collaboration.



STAGE WORTHY: The Value of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People

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Terms of Collaboration

This Terms of Reference proposal has not yet been reviewed or approved by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee - it has been written in collaboration between the ASSITEJ International Secretariat, Professor Selina Busby, Professor Michael Anderson, Professor Kelly Freebody, Dr Thomas De Angelis, Dr Katy Alexander, and Eliza Oliver. The final decision to proceed with the project as written, including the proposed team and budget, will be confirmed by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee by the end of 2025.

Once this document has been approved, it will be modified into a Research Collaboration Agreement to be signed between ASSITEJ International and the CREATE Centre (Creativity in Research, Engaging the Arts and Transforming Education, Health and Wellbeing) of the University of Sydney. This agreement outlines the agreed-upon terms of payment, as well as any statutory, legal, or financial obligations. It is subject to the laws of Denmark and New South Wales, Australia.

Context

ASSITEJ International

ASSITEJ International unites theatres, organisations, and individuals throughout the world who make Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People. ASSITEJ International is dedicated to the artistic, cultural, and educational rights of children and young people across the globe and advocates on behalf of all children regardless of nationality, cultural identity, ethnicity, or religion. ASSITEJ International brings people together so that they can share knowledge and practice within the field of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People in order to deepen understandings, develop practice, create new opportunities, and strengthen the global sector, on behalf of all children everywhere. The members of ASSITEJ International are National Centres, Professional Networks, and Affiliates.

More about ASSITEJ International can be found on its [website](#).

The Rationale

As part of ASSITEJ International's '[Creating Cultural Equity' \(CCE\) project](#) (which is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission), ASSITEJ International is appointing researchers to assist in its vision to collect and disseminate data, information, practices, ideas, and solutions around the theme of Value and Impact of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People.



TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) provides significant opportunities for impact; it is diverse, risk-taking, multi-artform, and cross-sectoral, engaging with children, young people, and their families in intersectional and intergenerational ways. It is deeply invested in the value and recognition of young people of all ages as cultural participants and contributors. This is a far-reaching sector in every country in ASSITEJ's global membership: reaching children and young people in schools, universities, streets, parks, theatre houses, remote communities, sports clubs, crèches, homes, hospitals, and prisons. However, TYA is often as marginalised as some of the children we serve and struggles as a sector to gain full recognition for its value and impact. One of the aims for the CCE project is to better recognise the value of this sector, specifically theatre and performance for and with children and young people, by the broader arts and other partner sectors. As such, this project is intended to qualify ASSITEJ International's claims about the value of the sector it represents.

The Sector

To build a meaningful and inclusive research depository of impact studies, it's essential to recognise the wide range of formats in which TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) is presented. TYA takes place across diverse contexts, including TYA venues, classical venues hosting TYA, outdoor spaces such as street performances and festivals, school settings, and theatre created by children. Understanding these varied formats ensures that data collection frameworks are responsive to the full scope of TYA practices and can accurately reflect engagement across different cultural and geographic settings.

ASSITEJ International considers Theatre & Performing Arts to be a broad and diverse field that includes, but is not limited to, art forms such as applied theatre & performance, circus & clowning, cabaret, comedy, dance, live digital & online performance, drama & theatre, immersive & participatory theatre & performance, musical theatre & performance, performance art & live art, physical theatre & performance, puppetry & object theatre, storytelling & spoken word, and outdoor / street theatre & performance.

ASSITEJ International considers Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People (TYA) to be a broad and diverse field that includes, but is not limited to, the creation and delivery of the aforementioned art forms to children and young people through the varied and intersecting formats of:

- applied theatre and performing arts for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts education for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts in education for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts performed for, by, and with children and young people;



- youth theatre and performing arts programmes.

The Challenge

Whilst the TYA sector is described as extensive, diverse, and impactful, evidence for this is almost always anecdotal. Unlike fields such as medicine or psychology, the TYA field can be challenging to trace because much of its work is embodied, undocumented, or documented in ways that are not easily accessible. Around the world, there is very little in the way of systematically collated, solid evidence or hard data to support claims about the impact of the Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) sector. Yet, without such systematic collation of impact studies, the sector lacks wide-scale proof of its artistic, cultural, social, educational, health, developmental, and other impacts. Where collated evidence does exist, it often fails to capture the breadth of work done in communities, workshops, training, professional development, collaborations, co-productions, access programmes, young people's participation, and work in areas such as disability, health, prisons, and detention centres, among others. Furthermore, and equally as important, there has not been a collective effort to identify gaps in impact-focused research outputs either.

Project Overview

This Terms of Reference proposal is for a multi-phase research project that engages with National Centres of ASSITEJ International, selected via an Open Call, to curate and synthesise existing impact-focused research from across the field. The primary focus is on knowledge synthesis - collecting, curating, and signposting to pre-existing published and grey (unpublished) literature that qualifies and quantifies claims on the value and impact of theatre and the performing arts for children. As such, this research aims to validate the claims of ASSITEJ International and its members about the impact of the sector and to provide members with easily accessible materials to (a) support their case for advocacy and funding, as well as to (b) provide a comprehensive global evidence base of linked impact evaluation resources to assess the value of theatre and performing arts for children and young people.

Project Scope

Whilst the funding for this research project ultimately comes from the European Commission, this project is not designed to benefit the European members of ASSITEJ International exclusively. Despite the funding source, as a global Association, this project must retain a global focus - and it can do so without a need for bias towards gathering data from European countries.

Nevertheless, research data and evidence are often situated within specific, national, or sub-national contexts. Therefore, this project is designed to create a framework



that allows for global comparisons while simultaneously allowing for local adaptations, which is why ASSITEJ National Centres are directly involved in the project activities.

This prioritises a move towards researching the situated child or young person, rather than the universal child or young person. It is important not to aim for encyclopaedic research outputs that remain unrealistic and reductionist, but to prioritise situated and context-rich data, which is why quantitative research expertise is being complemented by qualitative research expertise within the project team.

The research will cover both qualitative and quantitative impact studies and will ensure a comprehensive analysis by looking beyond English-language literature. This process will involve accessing and interpreting research from various languages and cultural contexts. Studies about the value of children and young people's involvement in theatre and performing arts range from investigations of discrete projects of varying sizes to broad meta-analyses of multiple reports. The study will also incorporate grey literature from both English and non-English-speaking contexts, such as theatre company reports, NGO studies, and other relevant documents, to provide a more complete picture of the subject.

We have been very aware in the design of this research project of the dynamic, ongoing arguments around whether quantitative and qualitative evidence of impact should even be required or whether artists should push back on demands to demonstrate value and impact. We acknowledge the place for those discussions and debates. Still, the ongoing research will take it 'as read' that evidencing and using evidence for advocacy is a necessary opportunity / burden (depending on one's standpoint). Nevertheless, the debate about the necessity or obligation to prove the value and impact of the sector will undoubtedly continue for many years to come, which is a discussion we continue to welcome in other fora.

Project Aims

Specifically, the project's aim is:

To collect, curate, synthesise, and signpost pre-existing published literature, as well as grey (unpublished) literature, that qualifies and quantifies claims on the value and impact of theatre and performing arts for children and young people.

Grey literature may include reports from TYA programmes, evaluation documents, meta-analyses, or any other materials that practitioners consider relevant.



This will, in turn, provide the sector and other stakeholders with collated, annotated, and segmented evidence on the value of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People. The "segmented" dimension is particularly significant - prioritising data that takes into account:

- a diversity of Performing Art-forms (e.g. Drama vs Storytelling vs Clowning),
- a diversity of geographically situated materials,
- a diversity of working and reporting languages¹, and
- a diversity of types of impact (e.g. Artistic vs Social vs Educational).

This research aims to enable ASSITEJ members, other sector professionals, and cultural / political stakeholders (including policymakers) to understand and apply the findings on the value and impact of theatre and the performing arts in the lives of children and young people. In this sense, the project is designed to fulfil an advocacy role and champion practical and policy-driven outcomes of data collection, rather than focusing solely on contributing to the academic discourse surrounding the value and impact of TYA (though this is not necessarily precluded).

It will encompass non-English texts, providing a comprehensive global view of existing research and articles on this subject. It will disseminate its findings through accessible, illustrated advocacy materials and compelling, unpacked summaries for diverse stakeholders.

This is a highly sought-after body of research that the sector calls for worldwide, and that offers great insight into the breadth, richness, and impact of our sector and will provide the sector and other stakeholders with a range of evidence that qualifies claims on the value and impact of Theatre & Performing Arts for Young Audiences.

Children and young people's participation and involvement, as cultural contributors and co-creators of impact knowledge, will make a vital difference in this project. Central to this is the input and responses of children and young people, focusing on the benefits they receive from and bring to the sector, valuing them as cultural citizens with agency. Tasks throughout the project embed children and young people as part of the sector, not just as audiences but as contributors to our knowledge and practice.

By documenting findings and insights, we aim for the project to inform advocacy discussions within fora such as those at the European Commission (and other contexts, wherever possible), which continues to encourage ASSITEJ International's participation in consultations, presentations, conferences, and events on matters related to cultural policy.

¹ Materials submitted in languages other than English will be translated by the Research Team using AI.



Project Outputs & Deliverables

The intended audience of the final research products is ASSITEJ members (sector professionals) and other cultural/political stakeholders. They are intended to serve as a reference for practitioners in their day-to-day working lives, for example, to boost advocacy initiatives and funding applications, offer learning opportunities, and foster networking and collaboration - all of which are beneficial to ASSITEJ members, ASSITEJ National Centres, Professional Networks, TYA practitioners, and the wider TYA community. The aim is to serve as an easy-to-use tool for industry members, educators, policy makers and other stakeholders to definitively point to literature outlining the value of TYA. As such, the research outputs will be published on an open-access basis according to a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike International license](#).

This project's outputs will not only provide evidence to qualify and quantify the value and impact of the TYA sector, but its publications will also be used to demonstrate the relevance and importance of this research and how it could be expanded in future funding rounds – a proof of concept for further study. As such, the methodological frameworks of the project, including frameworks, submission forms, and tools, are significant outputs in their own right.

At a minimum, the project will produce the following outputs and deliverables:

- A collated, interactive Evidence Map (simultaneously, acting as an Evidence Gap Map) of studies that demonstrate the value and impact of the sector²;
- Visualised data outputs - whether in the form of a visual-rich document or online visual data dashboards - that present some of the key synthesised findings from across the curated evidence in an easily browsable, graphic format;
- A curated "Quotes, Stats & Facts" document, taking inspiration from a 2007 document of the same name published by Regional Arts NSW³ which presents some of the synthesised findings from across the curated evidence in an easily navigable reference-book style format*;
- Disaggregated summaries of the relevant geographical findings from each of the above three materials on a country-by-country basis (for participating ASSITEJ National Centres);
- An accompanying qualitative discussion of the research methodology, systematic review, and key research findings*;

² A sample Evidence Gap Map, from the first iteration of the "Value of TYA" project is available here (click "Hide Headers" to optimise the display):

<https://assitej-international.org/advocacy/research/value-of-tya/evidence-gap-map/>

³ [Trezise, B. & Vincent, R. \(2007\) Quotes, Stats & Facts: An armoury for regional arts advocates. A survey of existing data prepared for Regional Arts NSW. Regional Arts NSW, Sydney](#)



- Optional academic journal publications, according to the interests and needs of the researchers.
- In-person presentation at the 2027 ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival for Children & Young People in Korea for dissemination.
- Online presentation via webinar (co-hosted by CREATE and ASSITEJ International) for dissemination.

N.B. Those items marked with a * require translation into French and Spanish, at a minimum.

Other materials, supplementary resources, and tools geared towards ASSITEJ members may also be produced. Additionally, there is some reporting required by the European Commission, which the ASSITEJ International Secretariat will complete.

The contractual obligation that ASSITEJ International holds with the European Commission is deliberately open-ended:

The [previous] research into the Value of TYA has included a systematic literature search of academic articles reporting outcomes of TYA and its value. This data is currently being analysed [at the time of application for the 2025-2028 funding] to be summarised in an evidence gap map, the goal is to publish this gap map in academic circles but for it to also serve as an easy to use tool for industry members, educators, policy makers and other stakeholders to definitively point to literature outlining the value of TYA.

This [new] deliverable will provide illustrated and unpacked research-based advocacy tools where collated and synthesised research from across the field qualifies and quantifies claims on the value of theatre and performing arts for children. The aim is to serve as an easy to use tool for industry members, educators, policy makers and other stakeholders to definitively point to literature outlining the value of TYA.

As the research is overwhelmingly skewed to publications written in English and describing educational or social outcomes, the research team's will put efforts in other cultural contexts. Further research is needed to better understand TYA impacts on health and wellbeing as well as analyse research from more non-English speaking countries. Data will be collected directly from stakeholders / ASSITEJ members in non-academic publications, such as direct data from young people, theatre makers, educators across a variety contexts and locations. Case study analysis will be used to summarise the value of TYA across multiple contexts. Cross cultural data will be collected to accurately represent these stakeholders.



Knowledge transfer of the research outcomes can help to support capacity building for advocacy and arts based dissemination [...] to advocate for the value of TYA to non-academic audiences; importantly, policy makers. Dissemination will also include more gatherings of stakeholders and pedagogically focused professional learning programs for artists, policymakers and educators.

Language: English, Spanish, French

N.B. All outputs and deliverables will conform to ASSITEJ International's Style Guidelines and Dictionary.

Project Phases

According to the grant agreement between ASSITEJ International and the European Commission, the research package will be completed between now and 31st August 2028. However, much sooner deadlines for the early stages of the contract are envisioned in practice.

The project will consist of five phases: (1) Project Planning & Preparation; (2) Systematic Review: Phase 1; (3) Stakeholder Engagement: National Centre Implementation; (4) Systematic Review: Phase 2; (5) Data Storytelling / Knowledge Translation; (6) Reflections. These are detailed overleaf, along with an indicative timeline which covers the first cohort of participating National Centres. Should the project prove successful and additional funding is secured, further cohorts may also complete the programme in future years.



The full Project Phase Table will be included on this page once all comments are received.





In the first row of the table above, "Project Planning & Preparation", there is a reference to "AI-driven Systematic Review platforms". A [spreadsheet of potential AI-driven Systematic Review platforms](#) has been drafted for consideration.

Participation of National Centres

Participating ASSITEJ National Centres will engage in the project by:

- A. Submitting an Expression of Interest, in response to the Open Call, outlining their motivation, any previous collation of relevant impact studies, and their capacity to engage with the researchers;
- B. Participating in webinars on (1) how to identify, collect, and submit evidence that demonstrates value and impact, (2) a joint sharing session to exhibit and inspire materials collected so far, and (3) how to use submitted evidence for advocacy, professional development, networking, etc.;
- C. Enhancing the relevance of the research by providing guidance on different geographical, cultural, and linguistic contexts;
- D. Meeting for one-to-one follow-up mentoring with the Researchers to receive tailored advice on their initiatives to contribute evidence;
- E. Collecting and submitting evidence from their national context (both published and grey literature);
- F. Acting as an informal 'advisory panel' and 'critical friend' to the researchers on project design, implementation, and review findings to ensure cultural and linguistic inclusivity.

Fieldwork Activities

It was written in the original application to the European Commission that the Researchers may conduct field work at ASSITEJ Artistic Gatherings, ASSITEJ World Congresses and Performing Arts Festivals for Children & Young People, ASSITEJ International Executive Committee (EC) meetings, and festivals forming part of the ASSITEJ International Regional Development Programme (RDP).

However, due to the limited budget for the research project, this is not achievable. Nevertheless, if further funding were to be found, then listed below are the key upcoming events in ASSITEJ International's Calendar:



- November 2025 - BABEL Project Event - Brussels, Belgium
- November 2025 - EC Meeting - Montreal, Canada
- March 2026 - EC Meeting - Mexico City, Mexico
- March 2026 - Wanderlust Project Festival (RDP) - Zavkhan, Mongolia
- June 2026 - African Vogue Project Festival (RDP) - Dakar, Senegal
- August 2026 - Wanderlust Project Festival (RDP - Kalimantan, Indonesia
- Late 2026 - EC Meeting - Chile
- May 2027 - Wanderlust Project Festival (RDP) - Bagmati, Nepal
- July 2027 - ASSITEJ World Congress - Seoul, South Korea
- December 2027 - African Vogue Project Festival (RDP) - Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- April 2028 - African Vogue Project Festival (RDP) - Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Lead Researchers & Other Partners

Professor Selina Busby

The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama

Dr Selina Busby is an academic and theatre practitioner who makes performances with community groups as well as being a National Teaching Fellow. She is a Professor of applied and social theatre at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she is also the Course Leader for the MA Applied Theatre course and the lead for Research Ethics and Integrity. Her research and practice focuses on theatre that invites the possibility of change. She uses participatory and emancipatory research methods and has worked internationally in prison settings, youth theatres, and with people living in adverse conditions. Her research investigates applied theatre with marginalised communities undertaking partnerships with theatres, NGOs, youth groups, and grassroots practitioners. Current projects include work with communities living in informal housing settlements, those living with gender-based violence in India, and a cultural heritage project in Kenya. This latter project is focused on archiving African Rock Art in order to create a digital learning resource and drama package for schools in partnership with local practitioners and the UK-based company, C&T. Recent publications include *Applied Theatre: A Pedagogy of Utopia* (2021), Methuen, and *The Routledge Companion To Theatre and Young People*, co-edited with Kelly Freebody and Charlene Rajendran (2022), Routledge.



N.B. While Selina's home institution is The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, she will engage in this research project as an Affiliate Researcher of the CREATE Centre (Creativity in Research, Engaging the Arts and Transforming Education, Health and Wellbeing) at the University of Sydney.



Professor Kelly Freebody

The University of Sydney

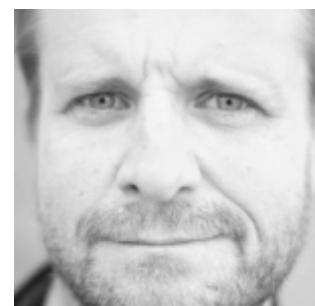
Dr Kelly Freebody is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at The University of Sydney. Her research focuses on drama, young people, education, and social justice. Her work considers the history of ideas in the fields of drama education and theatre. Kelly co-edited the recent Routledge Companion to Theatre and Young People (2022). This 37-chapter volume canvassed youth theatre practice and research from 19 countries around the world, including contributions from young people. Kelly has been an investigator on several research projects exploring drama and theatre with young people and published extensively in the area.



Professor Michael Anderson

The University of Sydney

Dr Michael Anderson is a Professor of Creativity and Arts Education at the Sydney School of Education and Social Work at The University of Sydney and is also Co-Director of the CREATE Centre. He is an internationally recognised educational leader in how young people engage with the arts and creativity. He has taught, researched, and published in this area for over 20 years, including 20 books and 60 book chapters and journal articles.



Division of Responsibilities Between Lead Researchers

It has been proposed that the research team divide responsibilities geographically, with each lead researcher managing specific geographical regions.

ASSITEJ International uses the World Bank's categorisation of countries into eleven different global regions⁴. Ideally, there would be at least one, and certainly no more than two, participating National Centres per region.

Split among the three Lead Researchers, this would involve three or four regions, and most likely, approximately three to six National Centres per person in total.

ASSITEJ International Secretariat

The Secretariat will play a supportive and facilitative role throughout the project, ensuring that the researchers can focus on leading the academic and practical

⁴ North America, Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Pacific.



aspects of the work. Its role is detailed in the final column of the Project Phase table above. The Secretariat will provide structural backing by coordinating communication between the researchers, National Centres, and the Executive Committee, while also assisting with the administration of open calls, applications, and reporting processes. Additionally, it will help disseminate project outputs across the wider ASSITEJ network, ensuring broad accessibility and sector-wide engagement. By offering logistical guidance, hosting materials on accessible platforms, and maintaining an international framework for collaboration, the Secretariat will underpin the researchers' efforts to compile the research evidence. This support role ensures that the project outcomes are embedded within the global ASSITEJ community and that the research has a lasting impact on capacity building and knowledge exchange within the field.

C&T StoryLens Project

C&T (Creativity & Technology) "is one of the UK's leading creativity & technology charities - fusing theatre, learning, and digital innovation to empower people, strengthen communities, and transform education. We help organisations, educators, and communities unlock the power of creative technology. We reimagine education through experiential, digital-first theatre practice. Our tools and workshops inspire creativity, collaboration, and confidence in classrooms and beyond. We use performance and digital storytelling to bring people together - amplifying unheard voices, celebrating local heritage, and tackling urgent social issues through creativity."

They have worked extensively with all three lead researchers in the past and have approached ASSITEJ International, seek for our partnership in their funding bid to Eureka's 'Eurostars' programme, "an international funding programme for collaborative research and development (R&D) projects led by innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)", which is "part of the European Partnership on Innovative SMEs. The partnership is co-funded by the European Union through Horizon Europe."

What follows is a description of the StoryLens project, provided by C&T:

StoryLens is an innovative digital toolkit designed to revolutionise how arts and cultural organisations collect, analyse, and present data. By blending storytelling techniques, AI, and data visualisation, StoryLens addresses the growing need for accessible, rigorous impact evaluation tools in a sector increasingly driven by data to secure funding and validate success. This platform is a game-changer, bridging the gap between funders' demands for measurable outcomes and the limited resources and technical skills available to organisations.



The arts and cultural sector faces significant challenges: funders like Arts Council England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund require consistent, measurable, yet 45% of organisations report insufficient digital skills, and 60% lack the staff time to meet reporting demands (Digital Culture Network, 2021; Arts Professional, 2023). Additionally, small and diverse-led organisations often feel priced out of current data management tools, with 52% citing cost as a major barrier (Audience Agency, 2022).

StoryLens innovatively combines traditional metrics collection and research methodologies (such as Theory of Change and logic Models) with AI-driven insights, gamified data gathering, and dynamic visualisations. Its integration of natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and real-time visual tools empowers organisations to navigate both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Unlike generic survey tools or high-cost CRM systems, StoryLens offers an affordable, customisable solution tailored to the unique needs of the sector.

With ACE's "Let's Create" strategy (2020-30) emphasising robust data collection, StoryLens meets a growing demand for tools that facilitate both accountability and advocacy. StoryLens will reduce manual data collection time by up to 50%, cutting costs by 5-10%. These efficiencies could significantly enhance funding bodies' grant-giving capacities, such as ACE's £440 million annual budget. The platform also promotes equity by amplifying diverse voices through inclusive tools and gamified interfaces (NESTA, 2021).

StoryLens aligns with government goals like digital transformation and the "Levelling Up" agenda, ensuring equitable access to cutting-edge tools. It supports sustainability by reducing paper-based reporting and empowering organisations to showcase contributions to carbon reduction and cultural equity. Ultimately, StoryLens is a transformative platform, enabling arts organisations to articulate their value in a data-centric world while preserving their creative ethos.

If ASSITEJ International participated in this funding bid, and were it to be successful, the Eurostars funding would complement the existing budget for this "Stage Worthy: The Value of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People" project, as well as the concurrent "Young Audiences Count: Quantifying Children & Young People's Engagement in Performing Arts" research project. The funding would enable both research projects to have a significant influence on the design of the StoryLens platform, as well as provide supplementary funding for both projects to be used as case studies for the StoryLens research.



Campbell Collaboration

As per the previous research conducted by Professors Kelly Freebody and Michael Anderson, formal or informal links to the Campbell Collaboration might continue.

"The Campbell Collaboration is a global team of researchers and policy makers providing answers that change lives. We are the leading global source of evidence syntheses informing economic and social policy decisions. We have specialist coordinating groups in 11 major areas of global challenge, including ageing, management, climate, disability, and social welfare. We have regional centers in Europe, South Asia, and China. Our experts partner with decision makers all over the world at global, regional and local levels, making sure we turn academic research not only into decision-ready information but ultimately into better outcomes for people."

In their work, the Campbell Collaboration use two main types of methodology - "Systematic Reviews" and "Evidence and Gap Maps", information about which can be found below:

[Systematic Reviews](#)

[Examples of Previous Work](#)

[Evidence and Gap Maps](#)

[Other Tools](#)

Other Collaborators

The researchers and the ASSITEJ International Secretariat may seek support and oversight from ITYARN, the International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network (TBC).

In Appendix C, an email exchange between the researchers on the first iteration of the "Value of TYA" project and François Fogel is included. As Michael Anderson writes in reply, "If this research continues to the next phase I wonder if you would be open to extending further on some of these ideas as the research team would very much appreciate that."

There will also be the possibility to coordinate with academics working on the other concurrent research stream being commissioned by ASSITEJ International, namely "Young Audiences Count: Quantifying Children & Young People's Engagement in Performing Arts", to build collective knowledge, share resources, and amplify impact.



At the discretion of the lead researchers, students from The University of Sydney and The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama may also participate in the project activities through placements and internships. In this case, the relevant institution (The University of Sydney or The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama) will ensure that its students are appropriately supervised. As per the Research Services Agreement signed between ASSITEJ International and the University of Sydney, any such students must transfer their rights in the deliverables to ASSITEJ International and agree to meet the confidentiality requirements and follow the publication approval process outlined in the Research Services Agreement.

Existing Research

Professors Michael Anderson & Kelly Freebody have already completed a first phase pilot study for ASSITEJ International on this area, entitled: "Collated Evidence on the Value of TYA". In fulfilment of reporting requirements, this co-authored report was submitted to the European Commission in December 2024 - a copy of which can be accessed as a [PDF report](#), with further materials on this [website link](#). In these materials, their early findings and insights into how 'impact' translates in different national contexts, as well as the methodologies used to complete this vital research for the future of our sector, are reflected upon. Also available is a [webinar recording](#) of an online event hosted in late 2024 (requires users to register and log in with a free account). A [presentation recording](#) is also available of a lecture given by Professor Michael Anderson in March 2025 in Marseille (requires users to register and log in with a free account). You may also view the [Evidence Gap Map](#) from the first iteration of the "Value of TYA" project (click "Hide Headers" to optimise the display).

In addition, Professor Selina Busby has already completed a pilot study for ASSITEJ International in a related area, entitled: "Case Studies on Dissemination of Theatre & the Performing Arts for Young Audiences in Europe and Beyond". In fulfilment of reporting requirements, this was submitted to the European Commission in December 2024 - a copy of which can be accessed as a [PDF report](#). Also available is a [webinar recording](#) of an online event hosted in late 2024 (requires users to register and log in with a free account).

Both previous research reports are currently undergoing graphic design and layout. The final disseminated version of the research will be shared with National Centres upon the launch of the new Open Call and will be made available to the wider public on World Theatre Day for Children, 21st March 2026.



Project Budget

The budgets presented here represent the maximum currently allocated for **all** project costs. Where fees are paid to researchers, they include all expenditures related to the research project, including VAT / GST, personnel costs, travel, and subsistence costs (when necessary). This also includes travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs for the dissemination activities at the 2027 ASSITEJ World Congresses and Performing Arts Festivals for Children & Young People in Korea.

Unless there is a specific other budgetary line listed, the budget allocated to the research is also be expected to cover any costs incurred in their work associated with data acquisition - such as purchasing access to existing datasets where free data is unavailable - and any digital tools or platforms required for data collection, management, analysis, and data presentation other than those provided by ASSITEJ International. Dissemination costs, including the preparation of open-access publications, development of online resources or interactive tools, and hosting webinars or events to share findings with the global Theatre for Young Audiences community, would also be covered by this budget allocated to the research.

Additionally, translation costs, required to ensure accessibility and accuracy across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, will need to be covered by this figure. However, ASSITEJ International expects to be able to leverage in-kind support for this through its members.

An indicative total of 45,000 EUR (approximately 80,000 AUD) from 1st December 2025 to 31st August 2028 (total amount, as well as each cost item, is still subject to prior approval from the ASSITEJ International Secretariat and/or Executive Committee). This figure includes a 12,000 EUR contribution from the University of Sydney's Accelerator Funding Sources (received by ASSITEJ International on 11th September 2025).

- As described above, funding from the StoryLens project may also be received.
- Further funding may be secured by the appointed researchers and ASSITEJ International, who will work together to identify and apply for funding opportunities.

Ethics & Data Protection

This Research Project will conform to the standards and requirements set out by the [Ethics Office and Research Integrity Team](#) of The University of Sydney.

Whilst all project activities need to follow ethical guidelines, activities such as qualitative interviews would require more stringent ethical clearance. Prioritising



children's voices in the research (rather than just being respondents to interviews) is deeply encouraged - however, activities that involve children as co-researchers must conform to the strictest ethical guidelines, as well as to ASSITEJ International's Child Safety Policy (Appendix B) - bearing in mind that the age of majority can be very different between different national and cultural contexts.

These issues will be mitigated by encouraging ethical data practices, consent-based participation, and culturally responsive ethical and data protection frameworks, which will be developed and implemented by the researchers. Principles of, and statutory obligations for, data protection will fall under these Ethical frameworks to ensure compliance with best practices over data safety.

For reference, the ethics forms submitted for the first iteration of the "Value of TYA" project are available for viewing [here](#).

General & Other Terms

1. Undertake Research: The Lead Researchers listed above will conduct the Research in accordance with the terms of this agreement and will use reasonable endeavours to carry out the Research within the Research Period and with a view to achieving the Research Purpose.
2. Uncertainty of Research: The parties agree that due to the inherently uncertain nature of research, the actual outcomes and results of the Research cannot be assured. The Researchers will not be liable to ASSITEJ International for any loss or damage arising by reason of its failure to perform work on time or within estimated costs or at all, provided that it has used its reasonable endeavours in all respects in carrying out the Research.
3. General Assistance: Each party agrees to provide any other related assistance, information, data, equipment, facilities, resources or materials as may be reasonably required to satisfactorily perform the Research.
4. Force Majeure: No party is liable for any breach of its obligations under this agreement to the extent that the breach resulted from a Force Majeure Event (any event which is outside the reasonable control of the affected party and could not have been prevented by that party taking all reasonable steps) provided that it: promptly notifies the other parties (with appropriate details); and takes all reasonable steps to work around or reduce the effects of the Force Majeure Event. If a Force Majeure Event continues for more than 30 days or continues beyond the Research Period, any party may terminate this



agreement with immediate effect by notice to the other parties or the other parties may jointly expel the party the subject of the Force Majeure Event from participating in the Research.

5. Use of Names & Logos: According to The University of Sydney Research Services Agreement (Appendix A), "Each party must get written approval from the other before using its name, logo, or the names of its personnel or students publicly in relation to the services." In signing this Research Collaboration Agreement, all parties agree to use the institutional names, logos, and the names of personnel / students of the following institutions:

- ASSITEJ International;
- Any National Centre of ASSITEJ International Participating In This Project;
- CREATE Centre (Creativity in Research, Engaging the Arts and Transforming Education, Health and Wellbeing);
- The University of Sydney;
- The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama



Appendix A: The University of Sydney Research Services Agreement

The final version will be included in full here.

Some minor changes are required:

(1) Updating of Description

From:

The University will research the value of theatre for young people worldwide, delivering an evidence gap map and a qualitative synthesis. Tasks include protocol confirmation, literature search and screening, coding and analysis, sector consultation, and reporting.

To:

The University will research the value of theatre for young people worldwide, curating and synthesising pre-existing published evidence and grey literature. Tasks include protocol confirmation, stakeholder consultation, literature search and screening, systematic review, evidence mapping, data storytelling, and dissemination.

(2) Updating of Deliverables

From:

Evidence gap map report by 16/04/26;
Qualitative report by 16/07/26;
Executive summary by 16/10/26;
2 webinars and slides by 16/03/27

Timeline to be updated as per the Project Phase table; however, please refer to the note listed below under point 4 first.

(3) Address

From:

Nørregade 26, 1 Copenhagen K 1165 Denmark



To:

Nørregade 26, 1., 1165 Copenhagen K, Denmark

4) "Services Lasting More Than 12 Months"

The timeline indicated in this Research Collaboration Agreement lasts until December 2028. As the University of Sydney Research Services Agreement can only cover activities lasting a maximum of 12 months, we may need to split the research activities into two different University of Sydney Research Services Agreements?





Appendix C: Email Exchange with François Fogel

At the end of the first iteration of the "Value of TYA" research, the research team received an email from François Fogel. Presented below is first, Michael Anderson's reply, and then the original email:

Dear Francois

Many thanks for your thoughtful response. One of the reasons we are doing this research is to receive submissions such as yours. I appreciate the time and effort you have take and I hope we can integrate your responses into the upcoming report. If this research continues to the next phase I wonder if you would be open to extending further on some of these ideas as the research team would very much appreciate that.

Regards

Michael

Dear friends,

I am writing you in reaction to The Value of TYA: A Global, Advocacy-Focused Research Seminar which took place in Havana during the Congress of ASSITEJ.

As one of the raised topics was to identify potential gaps, I caught the occasion to express my concerns about what looked like a rather univocal way of considering the meaning of « value » and « advocacy ». I reported, for instance, that, neither « art » nor « culture » or « emancipation » figured in your chart « The value of theatre for young audiences », along with « health », « education » and « social ».

I am very used to the many articles published in western, anglo-saxon regions, from the often quoted New Victory study to the literacy gathered by Imaginate under the title « Building your case », and I have often recommended my French colleagues to take inspiration from these approaches, because almost nothing comparable is published in France. But I think, as I've told at the workshop, that on many regards, they tend to address a very large and complex topic only in terms of social utility: How does art enhance the social performance of children? How much is the ROI of such cultural program at school, in terms of crime rate, employability, health expenses, and so on (as measured in « Does the arts perform at school? » by Pro-bono economics, or « Social Return on Investment Study Helium Arts Creative Health Hub Programme » by Helium arts).



I feel, however, rather complicated and contradictory to discuss and explain the value of TYA without integrating the benefits of a more humanistic approach of education developed in Europe, from Montaigne to Jacques Rancière, through Rousseau, Piaget, Françoise Dolto and others. To these names, in these times of global political uncertainty, I would add the tragic legacy of Janusz Korczak, because of its hyperbolic significance in terms of priorities: children or society?

Not being a researcher, I've taken on myself, as a contribution to the debate, to translate the speech that my friend the artist Marie-Ève Huot presented about her way of working, at the recent Symposium on the structuration of the TYA field in Senegal, organised in Dakar by the Djarama arts center. I hope this will contribute to keep open the dialogue upon a field where diversity takes a prominent part in what I would definitely not call the "chain of value".

Text from M.-E Huot, artistic director of Le Carrousel:

« I'm the daughter of Monique Rioux, Marie-Francine Hébert and Suzanne Lebeau, three theatre-makers, three grande dames of our dramaturgy for children and young people. I'm their descendant, and my approach is rooted in the same soil as theirs. After more than 15 years of creating theatre for children, I've come to realise that my commitment to young audiences is a philosophical one, and that it's an integral part of the artistic approach I'm pursuing relentlessly: that of responsibility and the quest for meaning. My aim is to empower children as spectators by inviting them to connect with their sensibility and intelligence.

Quebec's children's theatre is rooted in a relatively short tradition and finds its impetus somewhere between the early and late sixties. At that time, as elsewhere in the world, a new generation of creators was rising up against a system that was imposing an extremely effective form of passivity that was preventing real change in society and, by the same token, in theatrical creation. Everywhere, in the streets, factories and homes, people were talking about a quiet revolution and ardently asserting the need for far-reaching social transformation.

In the theatre sector, it was the beginning of a new, vibrant, patriotic era. A number of artists were combining their passion for their art with their passion for politics, losing interest in institutions in favour of collective creation and a commitment to speaking out. Others were concerned with the minorization of one social group, children, and consciously chose them as their specific audience.



All of these artists have chosen to put aside the normative "international French" they were taught in theatre school and put the language spoken in Quebec at the heart of their shows: Québécois.

It was at this time that the Parent (1963-1966) and Rioux (1966-1969) reports were published, leading to "a democratisation of education, new pedagogical approaches, a secularisation of society, and an explosion and renewal of cultural practices ". This context, which favoured reflections on the emancipation of the child-spectator, enabled a number of creators to move away from the only two ways in which it seemed appropriate to address children: the marvellous and didacticism. These artists take a genuine interest in their audience, learning about their development and becoming familiar with their way of thinking, their problems and their language. Some work with teachers, psychologists and sociologists to measure the impact of their performances on children.

Over the past fifty years, Quebec artists and cultural workers have created from scratch a repertoire, distribution networks and a coherent practice capable of reaching very diverse, captive audiences; they have created a desire to go to the theatre in audiences who were unaware of it; and they have been able to raise the issues (the role of intermediaries, the specificity of audiences, taboos and censorship, distribution venues, etc.) that are still keeping the practice alive today.

In Quebec, as elsewhere in Canada, encounters with young audiences have evolved considerably over time. At first perhaps more improvised, the relationship between the artists and the audience now unfolds on a territory of exchange that engages the children in a real act of thinking by and for themselves, with lucidity, imagination and a spirit of collaboration. The multiplicity of encounters between artists and children, and the many ways in which they are organised (philosophical debates, participation in the creative process, spectators witnessing experimental performances, etc.) undoubtedly contribute to the development of children's emancipation, as understood by the philosopher Jacques Rancière: « The emancipation of the spectator is the affirmation of his ability to see what he sees and to know what to think about it and what to do with it". Being a spectator is no longer seen as a passive attitude, but as a decisive act in the child's ability to analyse a representation of the world and his or her own relationship to society.

Convinced that children are capable of perceiving the symbolic dimension of a work of art, I create shows that engage children in a critical reflection on



contemporary society, tackling sensitive, powerful and delicate themes and daring to experiment with different forms.

I approach directing with absolute confidence in the children I am working with. Open and sensitive to contemporary theatrical writing, I find in it a space of freedom and experimentation. I approach the text as a score, seeking to highlight the poetic and political power of writing that opens up windows of dialogue with the world for young people. Turning away from the nostalgia often associated with the world of childhood, I seek to develop contemporary scenic languages that echo the words of the authors with whom I create each of my shows.

(...)I went by conviction into the territory of young audiences, which is neither the most visible nor the most valued of creative spaces. I work there with the certitude that through the words addressed to the youngest there is a place of individual and collective reparation.

(...) Françoise Dolto, French paediatrician and psychoanalyst, says: "Childhood is unfortunately considered to be a transitory state and the child a human being in the making. Yet childhood is never experienced as a passage by the children themselves, who are in the absolute and decisive present... They are not waiting for... They live rooted in the present with an astonishing ability to make no hierarchy in their occupations and to become totally absorbed in what they are doing".

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the French philosopher, considers children for what they are, what they experience, what they do and not for what they will become; unfortunately, so many people consider childhood as a mere preparation before reaching adult status.

(...) Children belong to the same society as adults. They feel its pulse, witness its evolution, its profound transformations. Children are not sheltered from real life: they walk the same streets as grown-ups, they are the only ones to open their eyes to television and the Internet, where life, in all its good and bad aspects, is revealed with great impudence. I have a deep respect for children and young people, who inspire me a little more every day. Their open-mindedness, their moral strength, their ability to adapt and their infinite interest in the world are qualities that give me courage.

For 15 years now, I've been working to remain a free artist, listening to children and avoiding the dominant posture of the adult in a position of moral and intellectual authority in front of the young viewer. As an empathetic person, I



try to get to know young people a little better every day - which allows me to get to know myself better. According to Csíkszentmihályi (1997), works for young audiences push back the chaos of existence, without denying it, by giving meaning to life's events; this is what I learn when working with and for children."

Sincerely yours

François FOGEL





YOUNG AUDIENCES COUNT: Quantifying Children & Young People's Engagement in Performing Arts

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Terms of Collaboration

This Terms of Reference proposal has not yet been reviewed or approved by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee - it has been written in collaboration between the ASSITEJ International Secretariat, Dr Lanora Callahan, and Dr Kai Roland Green. The final decision to proceed with the project, including the proposed team and budget as written, will be confirmed by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee by the end of 2025.

Once this document has been approved, it will be modified into a Research Collaboration Agreement to be signed between ASSITEJ International, Dr Lanora Callahan, and Dr Kai Roland Green. This agreement outlines the agreed-upon terms of payment, as well as any statutory, legal, or financial obligations that may be applicable. It is subject to Danish law.

Context

ASSITEJ International

ASSITEJ International unites theatres, organisations, and individuals throughout the world who make Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People. ASSITEJ International is dedicated to the artistic, cultural, and educational rights of children and young people across the globe and advocates on behalf of all children regardless of nationality, cultural identity, ethnicity, or religion. ASSITEJ International brings people together so that they can share knowledge and practice within the field of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People in order to deepen understandings, develop practice, create new opportunities, and strengthen the global sector, on behalf of all children everywhere. The members of ASSITEJ International are National Centres, Professional Networks, and Affiliates.

More about ASSITEJ International can be found on its [website](#).

The Rationale

As part of ASSITEJ International's '[Creating Cultural Equity](#)' (CCE) project (which is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission), ASSITEJ International is appointing researchers to assist in its vision to collect and disseminate data, information, practices, ideas, and solutions around the theme of Quantitative Data - that captures insights into the children and young people who access, and engage in, theatre and performing arts around the world.

Often, the TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) sector is described as extensive and diverse - not only geographically and culturally, but also in terms of practice. However, evidence for this is almost always anecdotal, and there is often very little in the way of solid evidence or hard data to back up claims about who the sector is, what the sector is doing, and - most importantly - who the sector is serving. As such, this project is intended to quantify and qualify ASSITEJ International's claims about who is served by the sector it represents.



The Sector

To build meaningful and inclusive audience data, it's essential to recognise the wide range of formats in which TYA (Theatre for Young Audiences) is presented. TYA takes place across diverse contexts, including TYA venues, classical venues hosting TYA, outdoor spaces such as street performances and festivals, school settings, and theatre created by children. Understanding these varied formats ensures that data collection frameworks are responsive to the full scope of TYA practices and can accurately reflect engagement across different cultural and geographic settings.

ASSITEJ International considers Theatre & Performing Arts to be a broad and diverse field that includes, but is not limited to, art forms such as applied theatre & performance, circus & clowning, cabaret, comedy, dance, live digital & online performance, drama & theatre, immersive & participatory theatre & performance, musical theatre & performance, performance art & live art, physical theatre & performance, puppetry & object theatre, storytelling & spoken word, and outdoor / street theatre & performance.

ASSITEJ International considers Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People (TYA) to be a broad and diverse field that includes, but is not limited to, the creation and delivery of the aforementioned art forms to children and young people through the varied and intersecting formats of:

- applied theatre and performing arts for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts education for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts in education for children and young people;
- theatre and performing arts performed for, by, and with children and young people;
- youth theatre and performing arts programmes.

The Challenge

This project aims to address a critical gap in the global Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) sector: the lack of consistent, comparable data on who is accessing theatre and performing arts for children and young people, and who is not. In most countries, the Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) sector lacks a systematic collection of audience statistics to track the attendance and engagement of children and young people, as well as the means to identify and quantify those who currently lack access. Unlike fields such as medicine or psychology, the TYA field can be challenging to trace because much of its work is embodied, undocumented, or documented in ways that are not easily accessible. Reliable information on the demographics, preferences, and access levels of young audiences worldwide somehow falls between the cracks. Yet, without such information, the TYA sector lacks foundational data that could be used to prove further the artistic, social, and economic relevance of TYA. Where numbers do exist, they often fail to capture the breadth of work done in communities, workshops, training, professional development, collaborations, co-productions, access programmes, young people's participation, and work in areas such as disability, health, prisons, and detention centres, among others.



Project Overview

This Terms of Reference proposal is for a multi-phase practice-as-research project that supports participating National Centres of ASSITEJ International, selected via an Open Call, to improve their capacity to capture and utilise quantitative data.

"Practice-as-Research (PaR) is an approach to research wherein the main inquiry approach is practice, and the findings of the inquiry are presented through a piece of practice. PaR usually also includes a written outcome, or an archival outcome in other forms (e.g. digital images or lecture recitals), that captures the critical reflection on practice and evidences the new knowledge gained through the process of the practice. PaR is concerned about the nature of practice. It aims to develop knowledge of operational significance and to advance professional work. PaR in a higher education context places emphasis on analysing and theorising practice rather than merely gathering reference materials for the production of an artefact or artwork."

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

As such, this research aims to validate the claims of ASSITEJ International and its members about the number of children and young people accessing theatre and performing arts in various geographical contexts and to provide members with easily accessible materials to support their case for advocacy and funding.

Project Scope

Whilst the funding for this research project ultimately comes from the European Commission, this project is not designed to benefit the European members of ASSITEJ International exclusively. Despite the funding source, as a global Association, this project must retain a global focus - and it can do so without a need for bias towards gathering data from European countries.

Nevertheless, research data and evidence are often situated within specific, national, or sub-national contexts. Therefore, this project is designed to create a framework that allows for global comparisons while simultaneously allowing for local adaptations, which is why ASSITEJ National Centres are directly involved in the project activities.

This prioritises a move towards researching the situated child or young person, rather than the universal child or young person. It is important not to aim for encyclopaedic research outputs that remain unrealistic and reductionist, but to prioritise situated and context-rich data, which is why quantitative research expertise is being complemented by qualitative research expertise within the project team.

We have been very aware in the design of this research project of the dynamic, ongoing arguments around whether quantitative evidence should even be required or whether artists should push back on demands to demonstrate relevance and value. We acknowledge the place for those discussions and debates. Still, the ongoing research will take it 'as read' that evidencing and using evidence for



advocacy is a necessary opportunity / burden (depending on one's standpoint). Nevertheless, the debate about the necessity or obligation to quantitatively prove the relevance and value of the sector will undoubtedly continue for many years to come, which is a discussion we continue to welcome in other fora.

Project Aims

Specifically, the project's aim is:

To support the participating ASSITEJ National Centres in developing and implementing their own procedures for capturing data on the children and young people who access and engage in theatre and performing arts within their country.

This will, in turn, provide the sector and other stakeholders with collated, annotated, and segmented quantitative data on access to theatre and the performing arts for children and young people. The "segmented" dimension is particularly significant - prioritising data that takes into account the different cultural, social, and economic demographics of audiences, as well as:

- a diversity of Performing Art-forms (e.g. Drama vs Storytelling vs Clowning),
- a diversity of geographically situated materials,
- a diversity of working and reporting languages, and
- a diversity of types of impact (e.g. Artistic vs Social vs Educational).

This project aims to enable ASSITEJ members, other sector professionals, and cultural / political stakeholders (including policymakers) to understand and apply the findings on data that evidence access to theatre and the performing arts for children and young people. In this sense, the project is designed to fulfil an advocacy role and champion practical and policy-driven outcomes of data collection, rather than focusing solely on contributing to the academic discourse surrounding audience data and TYA (though this is not necessarily precluded).

This is a highly sought-after body of research that the sector calls for worldwide, and that offers great insight into the breadth, depth, and impact of our sector and will provide the sector and other stakeholders with a range of evidence that quantifies and qualifies claims on the children and young people accessing Theatre & Performing Arts.

By documenting findings and insights, we aim for the project to inform advocacy discussions within fora such as those at the European Commission (and other contexts, wherever possible), which continues to encourage ASSITEJ International's participation in consultations, presentations, conferences, and events on matters related to cultural policy.

Project Outputs & Deliverables

The intended audience of the final research products is ASSITEJ members (sector professionals) and other cultural/political stakeholders. They are intended to serve as a reference for practitioners in their day-to-day working lives, for example, to boost



advocacy initiatives and funding applications, offer learning opportunities, and foster networking and collaboration - all of which are beneficial to ASSITEJ members, ASSITEJ National Centres, Professional Networks, TYA practitioners, and the wider TYA community. As such, the research outputs will be published on an open-access basis according to a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike International license](#).

This project's outputs will not only provide evidence to quantify children and young people's access to the TYA sector, but its publications will also be used to demonstrate the relevance and importance of this research and how it could be expanded in future funding rounds – a proof of concept for further study. As such, the methodological frameworks of the project, including the lesson plans, frameworks, and tools, are significant outputs in their own right.

At a minimum, the project will produce the outputs and deliverables listed in the "Project Phases" table below, as well as the reporting required by the European Commission.

Other materials, supplementary resources, and tools geared towards ASSITEJ members may also be produced. Additionally, the European Commission requires some reporting, which the ASSITEJ International Secretariat will complete.

The contractual obligation that ASSITEJ International holds with the European Commission is deliberately open-ended:

This research stream will produce quantitative access data of children and young people attending performing arts productions to document the reach and size of the sector and point to geographical and demographic gaps where children and young people are not participating in the arts. The research will be presented on an interactive map to be easily accessible to members and stakeholders.

This international comparative quantitative project will explore which, and how many, children and young people are currently accessing TYA by: (a) investigating, collating, and interpreting pre-existing data; and (b) defining, overseeing, and interpreting the collection of new data. At its core, the research asks: "Who are our audiences, and how can they be reliably measured?" The research will be advocacy-focused, and the outputs are designed primarily to be beneficial to ASSITEJ members, ASSITEJ National Centres, International Professional Networks, TYA practitioners, and the wider TYA community. The research outputs will be published on an open-access basis. The research is intended to be of reference for practitioners in their day-to-day working lives to, for example, boost advocacy initiatives and funding applications, offer learning opportunities, and foster networking and collaboration.

Language: English



N.B. All outputs and deliverables will conform to ASSITEJ International's Style Guidelines and Dictionary.

Project Phases

According to the grant agreement between ASSITEJ International and the European Commission, the research package will be completed between now and 31st August 2028. However, much sooner deadlines for the early stages of the contract are envisioned in practice.

The project will consist of five phases: (1) Training Design; (2) Training Delivery; (3) National Implementation; (4) Comparative Analysis; and (5) Reflections. These are detailed overleaf, along with an indicative timeline which covers the first cohort of participating National Centres. Should the project prove successful and additional funding is secured, further cohorts may also complete the programme in future years.



Project Phase	Overview & Purpose	Timeline	Outputs & Deliverables	Division of Responsibilities / Other Notes
1) Training Design	<p>Planning curriculum & framework development, collecting insights, best practices, resources, and other templates from within data sectors, the cultural sector, and aligned fields into a training course structure.</p> <p>In order to offer suitable teaching materials and workshop tools for participating ASSITE National Centres to utilise.</p>	<p>Nov 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Comments & Approval By The ASSITE International Executive Committee <p>Nov - Dec 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Open Call for Applications General Literature Review Gather Key Information from Countries involved in Previous Research <p>Jan - Feb 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Selection Of 1st Cohort Design Training Modules Compile Tools & Templates <p>Sep 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust Training Modules Based On Pilot Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory Text & Form - slides for the Open Call Literature Review Written Report Lesson Plans & Attached Related Resources for each Webinar Tools & Templates for Data Collection & Analysis & Instructions On How To Use The Basic Data Entry Dashboard (Including An Interactive Map; Available on Zoho Learn [Or Other] Platform) 	<p>The project will begin with a comprehensive literature review, assessing for example: (1) existing models of data collection within the TCA sector; (2) comparative insights from related industries (e.g. cultural music, arts, and sport) performance; and (3) approaches used by different countries to understand whether data is gathered or interpreted differently.</p> <p>Both researchers will collaboratively: (1) define research questions, outputs, learning outcomes, and data delivery and (2) co-develop the curriculum for designing and supporting participants. In reviewing the literature and drawing examples from other sectors, Lanora will focus on quantitative studies and tools, whereas Kai will focus on qualitative studies, including designing templates and survey instruments. Lanora will collate templates and surveys from previous quantitative studies, whilst Kai will incorporate qualitative methodologies and approaches.</p>
2) Training Delivery	<p>Deliver the learning course via interactive ZOOM sessions and facilitate a learning environment on Zoho Learn, along with a parallel mentoring programme, offered to participating ASSITE National Centres.</p> <p>In order to provide participating ASSITE National Centres a supportive learning environment from subject specialists within a collaborative, international framework.</p>	<p>Mar - Apr 2026 (Inclusive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Training Webinar 1st Cohort (6 Webinars) <p>May - Oct 2026 (Inclusive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly Mentoring Meetings With 1st Cohort (8 Drop-in Sessions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recordings of 6 Interactive ZOOM Webinars Short Survey Feedback from Participating Centres After Every 2 Webinars Recordings of 8 Drop-in Mentoring Sessions 	<p>Both researchers will focus on running training modules, in terms of developing vehicles, which will focus on providing OOP & guidance whilst Kai will explain statistical interviewing methods. Lanora will lead seminars and/or workshops on topics of quantitative data collection, action, etc., management, use of data tools, survey design and sampling. Kai will lead seminars and/or workshops on different approaches to interviewing or story-based data collection, developing interview guides, focusing group protocols, etc.</p>
3) National Implementation	<p>Sustaining work by participating ASSITE National Centres, collecting quantitative data about audience engagement in their country.</p> <p>In order for participating ASSITE National Centres to put their learning to use and to conduct quantitative analysis in a useful and comprehensive way.</p>	<p>July - Oct 2026 (Inclusive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalized Work By Participating Centres In 1st Cohort <p>Oct 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing Of Work Among Participating Centres In 1st Cohort <p>Dec 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination Of Work From 1st Cohort To wider ASSITE Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools & Templates For Data Collection & Analysis, Including Basic Data Entry Dashboard Available on Zoho Learn Platform Communication By Participating Centres Of Their 8 Templates Provided By Them Data Entry & Presentation Of Data By Participating Centres On Shared Data Repository Short Report From Each Participating Centre 	<p>The quantitative Tools & Templates will be uploaded to the learning platform by Lanora. More qualitative reflective tools ("What does this show?" and "How can the data be used?") will be uploaded to the learning platform by Kai. Both researchers will be available for communication from participating National Centres during the experiment. Both researchers will be encouraged to share work among participating National Centres.</p>
4) Comparative Analysis	<p>Conduct a brief comparative analysis of the quantitative data collected by participating ASSITE National Centres.</p> <p>In order to provide insights into sectoral patterns and demographic/mechanics.</p>	<p>Oct - Nov 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Analysis Of Data Collected By National Centres In 1st Cohort <p>Dec 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination Of Comparative Analysis From 1st Cohort To wider ASSITE Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative Data Visualisation (including Interactive Map) To Compare And Contrast Audience Data Practices Shared Data Repository To Present Findings, Tools, And Resources Qualitative Contextualisation Of Data Arrangements Across Countries 	<p>Lanora will clean, standardize, summarize, and analyse quantitative data, whilst Kai will thematically analyse qualitative data.</p>
5) Reflections	<p>Reflect via published research outputs on the collected materials, drawing on the training/mentoring, meta-analysis of the data, and consider future next steps, and discuss these across the sector.</p> <p>In order to increase the sector's resilience in more effective measurement and tracking of its audiences.</p>	<p>Jan 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Reporting On 1st Cohorts Findings & Reflections <p>Feb 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Of Project Outcomes At ASSITE World Congress (Seoul, Korea) <p>Aug - Dec 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarly Outputs E.g. Article Available Online In TCA Tugce, The Journal Of Cultural Policy, Or Similar Webinar Held In 2 Different Timezones For Presentation Of Project Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short Survey Feedback from Participating Centres After Cohort Completion Written Report On Each Cohorts Findings & Reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic Data Dashboard (Including Interactive Map) With Each Cohorts Findings Recording Of World Congress Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic Journal Publication Only Recording of Webinar Held In 2 Different Timezones 	<p>Both researchers will be involved in curating, drafting, and editing the published research outputs. Kai will lead on the short survey feedback from participating centres. Lanora will lead on the Basic Data Dashboard. Both researchers will present project outcomes at the 2027 World Congresses on the online webinars.</p>



Participation of National Centres

This is an opportunity for ASSITEJ National Centres to collaborate closely with a team of data research specialists in building the evidence base for TYA advocacy, planning, and policy development. Participating National Centres will play a central role in the research process and contribute directly to a pioneering international dataset on TYA audience access.

Through the project, participating National Centres will:

- Identify existing data sources relevant to the TYA audience access in their country;
- Collaborate in the creation of detailed national data specifications;
- Develop national definitions of key variables relating to demographics, access, and engagement;
- Contribute to the creation of comparable national variables with international peers;
- Support the collation and organisation of nationally comparable data;
- Participate in data analysis activities alongside the research team;
- Assist in the production of charts, graphs, and visualisations to present national findings clearly and accessibly;
- All research outputs will be made available on an open-access basis and are designed to support advocacy, funding applications, and strategic development for the TYA community.

This call will be open to all ASSITEJ National Centres that have the interest and available time to actively participate in this collaborative, structured research process during the project timeline. In their Expression of Interest, they will be asked to outline their motivation, existing data or relationships relevant to the project, and capacity to engage with the data research specialists. The selection process will consider a geographical balance of different National Centres, including a balance of regions, languages, and larger vs. smaller countries and National Centres.

To provide participating ASSITEJ National Centres with a supportive learning environment from subject specialists, within a collaborative, international framework, the training curriculum will be delivered via:

- A. Monthly Interactive Webinars On ZOOM Over Six Months
- B. A Library Of Tools & Templates For Data Collection & Analysis
- C. Instructions On Using The Basic Data Entry Framework & Data Dashboard
- D. Monthly Drop-In Mentoring Meetings On ZOOM Over Eight Months

A. Monthly Interactive Webinars on ZOOM Over Six Months

Regular (monthly) webinars will build capacity in methods of data collection and analysis, whilst also fostering collaboration between participating ASSITEJ National Centres. Each webinar will focus on a particular theme and will be led by the project researchers, Dr Lanora Callahan and Dr Kai Roland Green.

The webinars are intended to be action-oriented. At the end of each webinar, participating National Centres will be given a task to complete before the next



webinar, encouraging consistent progress towards their own data gathering and analysis activities.

Session	Content	Follow-Up Work For Participating Centres
1. Tracking Existing Data Sources: TYA In Your National Context	<p>This session sets the context for the training, describing the landscape of existing data sources and the gaps that exist at a global level, drawing on case studies from the previous iteration of the Quantitative Access Data research project. Participants will be supported to apply these investigations about existing data to their own context, drawing on the relevance of historical, political, economic, and cultural factors in forming the institutions that will later act as stakeholders for their research.</p>	<p>Participants will fill in their country data template. This template will include information on current and potential data sources and contacts along with details of the content of each data source.</p>
2. Preparation & Scoping: From Workflow To Network Development	<p>Having established the context of existing data sources within their countries, this session helps participants to make a realistic plan for beginning their data collation and synthesis. We discuss workflows, unpicking the resources available to them, ways to share and divide labour, and mapping the specific network of sources for potential data collection (as it is not possible to do this kind of work alone, they will need to create or tap into a network to gather this data).</p>	<p>Draft a workplan that includes a clear objective, desired data / information to be collected, potential sources / contacts, assigned roles, and gaps / needs in their capacity.</p>
3. Data Collection I: Qualitative Methods In TYA	<p>This session dives in qualitative data collection (interviews and focus groups), with specific emphasis on the role of these methods in knowledge creation around the audiences engaging in TYA. We also discuss how to identify the ethical protocols of data collection in the participants' own national contexts and how to apply these to their research collection with ethical integrity.</p>	<p>Draft a plan for a mini data collection exercise (qualitative in nature) to contextualise future quantitative data collection. This might be a focus group of children and parents, individual interviews with stakeholders, or more participatory methods. Reference should be made to country-specific ethical data collection practices.</p>



4. Data Collection II: Quantitative Methods In TYA	<p>This session equips participants with the essential skills for effective quantitative data collection and management. It covers principles of survey design, sampling strategies, and a review of data collection templates. Participants will also be introduced to digital tools for data entry, analysis, and visualisation - and basic practices in data management and storage. Ethical considerations, confidentiality, and compliance with GDPR are emphasised, and practical steps for informed consent, anonymisation, data security, and secure handling of sensitive information will be discussed.</p>	<p>Draft a data collection plan that includes a description of the sample / data source, a description of how data will be collected, securely stored, and managed. Bullet points on how confidentiality will be maintained, identification of at least five GDPR principles relevant to each context and plans to comply with GDPR guidelines. A sample summary table or chart showing how data could be visualised.</p>
5. Conducting Analysis: Contextualising Access To TYA	<p>In this session, we look at the relationship between the qualitative and quantitative data collection undertaken by the participants. What themes emerge across the data sets? What can they be considered 'enablers' or 'barriers' to access? Which do we think are age specific enablers / barriers, and which enablers / barriers might apply more generally? What might an audience (of the data report) need to know about country-specific traditions/values/practices to understand its conclusions?</p>	<p>Participants will draft a document describing how both qualitative and quantitative methods are being used, how they both contribute to understanding access, and the limitations of the methods used / data collected.</p>
6. Cross-Country Comparisons: Making Sense (Together) Of What We Have Found	<p>In the final session together, we look across the participants' data collection efforts to see what we can learn about comparison between countries within the TYA sector. Which similarities / differences between the different country data suggest productive avenues for synergy, and which reveal distinctive challenges to gaining a complete picture of access in the sector?</p>	<p>Participants will draft a report based on all their findings from the project.</p>

B. A Library Of Tools & Templates For Data Collection & Analysis

A library of tools and templates for data collection & analysis will be made available (likely on the Zoho Learn platform, but still TBC) for participating ASSITEJ National Centres.



These will be drawn from:

- Quotes, Stats & Facts Document ([example here](#)), taking inspiration from a 2007 document of the same name published by Regional Arts NSW,¹ that presents some of the synthesised findings from across the curated evidence in an easily navigable reference-book style format*;
- Interactive Data Dashboards;
- National & International Level Reports to Members;
- Data Sheet with Workable Data For Ongoing Analysis by Those Accessing It;
- Information on Data Sources;
- Discussion/Visualisation of the Data;
- Methodological templates and resources;
- Academic Journal Articles.

C. Instructions On Using The Basic Data Entry Framework & Data Dashboard

Also to be made available (likely on the Zoho Learn platform, but still TBC) will be instructions on how to access and use the basic data entry and data dashboard (including an interactive map) being created for the project.

To support participating National Centres in developing and implementing effective procedures for capturing TYA data, we will explore quantitative metrics and clear, accessible visualisations that can be used to communicate results. The data dashboard might include some of the key metrics which are most easily comparable across different National Contexts, such as:

- total country population and demographics;
- general government expenditure on cultural services as a percentage of GDP;
- percentage/total amount the cultural sector contributes to GDP;
- total number of theatres in the country; and
- number of theatres or organisations presenting TYA.

In addition to national-level data, programme-level metrics will also be examined. These will include:

- number of TYA performances;
- total and non-duplicated attendees;
- gender identity of attendees;
- attendance by age group (e.g. 0–5, 6–10, 11–16, 16+);
- ethnicity (according to country-specific categories); and
- number of attendees from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Different types of data visualisation may be used to enable National Centres to track their progress, identify areas for improvement, and share the social and cultural impact of young people's involvement in the arts with funders and policymakers. These visualisation formats may include:

- bar and line charts to illustrate participation and funding trends;
- infographics that can connect quantitative findings with qualitative insights;
- heat maps showing geographic reach;

¹ [Trezise, B. & Vincent, R. \(2007\) Quotes, Stats & Facts: An armoury for regional arts advocates. A survey of existing data prepared for Regional Arts NSW. Regional Arts NSW, Sydney](#)



- and interactive dashboards.

D. Monthly Drop-In Mentoring Meetings On ZOOM Over Eight Months

To support the data gathering and analysis activities of participating National Centres throughout the programme, monthly 'drop-in' mentoring meetings will be held on Zoom.

These will start after the first Webinar and continue for two further months after the last Webinar, to support participating National Centres in completing their sustained work.

The purpose of these sessions is for participating ASSITEJ National Centres to ask questions, explore challenges, and seek bespoke advice, coaching, feedback, and technical support from subject specialists on data collection, analysis, and reporting tools.

There will be no predetermined lesson plan for these sessions; instead, they will be facilitated through small-group discussions, allowing cohort members to share experiences, troubleshoot challenges, and exchange ideas.

They will be recorded and available to all participating ASSITEJ National Centres (likely on the Zoho Learn platform, but still TBC).

Lead Academics & Other Partners

Dr Lanora Callahan is passionate about developing, analysing, and disseminating quantitative research in the arts and has extensive experience designing, developing, implementing, and managing quantitative and mixed-methods research involving young people and socioeconomically vulnerable populations across academic, governmental, and community settings. Dr Callahan completed her PhD examining the impact of community-based dance programmes on the social and emotional learning of underprivileged ethnic minority adolescents using a quasi-experimental, mixed-method approach. She is based in New York, United States of America.



Dr Kai Roland Green is a postdoctoral researcher in gender, social enterprise and the creative industries. He completed his PhD at Roskilde University, Denmark, on feminist approaches to alternative currencies, and coordinates the 'Culture and Arts in Social Enterprise' group in the EMES International Research network. He also has a background as a theatre dramaturg and works to bridge the creative arts and entrepreneurship disciplines. He is based in Aarhus, Denmark.





Division of Responsibilities Between Lead Researchers

This is listed in the Project Phase table, above.

ASSITEJ International Secretariat

The Secretariat will play a supportive and facilitative role throughout the project, ensuring that the researchers can focus on leading the academic and practical aspects of the work. The Secretariat will provide structural backing by coordinating communication between the researchers, National Centres, and the Executive Committee, while also assisting with the administration of open calls, applications, and reporting processes. Additionally, it will help disseminate project outputs, such as training resources, comparative analyses, and final reports, across the wider ASSITEJ network, ensuring broad accessibility and sector-wide engagement. By offering logistical guidance, hosting materials on accessible platforms, and maintaining an international framework for collaboration, the Secretariat will underpin the researchers' efforts to deliver training, mentorship, and data analysis consistently and sustainably. This support role ensures that the project outcomes are embedded within the global ASSITEJ community and that the research has a lasting impact on capacity building and knowledge exchange within the field.

C&T StoryLens Project

C&T (Creativity & Technology) "is one of the UK's leading creativity & technology charities - fusing theatre, learning, and digital innovation to empower people, strengthen communities, and transform education. We help organisations, educators, and communities unlock the power of creative technology. We reimagine education through experiential, digital-first theatre practice. Our tools and workshops inspire creativity, collaboration, and confidence in classrooms and beyond. We use performance and digital storytelling to bring people together - amplifying unheard voices, celebrating local heritage, and tackling urgent social issues through creativity."

They have worked extensively with all three lead researchers in the past and have approached ASSITEJ International, seek for our partnership in their funding bid to Eureka's 'Eurostars' programme, "an international funding programme for collaborative research and development (R&D) projects led by innovative small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)", which is "part of the European Partnership on Innovative SMEs. The partnership is co-funded by the European Union through Horizon Europe."

What follows is a description of the StoryLens project, provided by C&T:

StoryLens is an innovative digital toolkit designed to revolutionise how arts and cultural organisations collect, analyse, and present data. By blending storytelling techniques, AI, and data visualisation, StoryLens addresses the growing need for accessible, rigorous impact evaluation tools in a sector increasingly driven by data to secure funding and validate success. This platform is a game-changer, bridging the gap between funders' demands for measurable outcomes and the limited resources and technical skills available to organisations.



The arts and cultural sector faces significant challenges: funders like Arts Council England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund require consistent, measurable, yet 45% of organisations report insufficient digital skills, and 60% lack the staff time to meet reporting demands (Digital Culture Network, 2021; Arts Professional, 2023). Additionally, small and diverse-led organisations often feel priced out of current data management tools, with 52% citing cost as a major barrier (Audience Agency, 2022).

StoryLens innovatively combines traditional metrics collection and research methodologies (such as Theory of Change and logic Models) with AI-driven insights, gamified data gathering, and dynamic visualisations. Its integration of natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and real-time visual tools empowers organisations to navigate both quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Unlike generic survey tools or high-cost CRM systems, StoryLens offers an affordable, customisable solution tailored to the unique needs of the sector.

With ACE's "Let's Create" strategy (2020-30) emphasising robust data collection, StoryLens meets a growing demand for tools that facilitate both accountability and advocacy. StoryLens will reduce manual data collection time by up to 50%, cutting costs by 5-10%. These efficiencies could significantly enhance funding bodies' grant-giving capacities, such as ACE's £440 million annual budget. The platform also promotes equity by amplifying diverse voices through inclusive tools and gamified interfaces (NESTA, 2021).

StoryLens aligns with government goals like digital transformation and the "Levelling Up" agenda, ensuring equitable access to cutting-edge tools. It supports sustainability by reducing paper-based reporting and empowering organisations to showcase contributions to carbon reduction and cultural equity. Ultimately, StoryLens is a transformative platform, enabling arts organisations to articulate their value in a data-centric world while preserving their creative ethos.

If ASSITEJ International participated in this funding bid, and were it to be successful, the Eurostars funding would complement the existing budget for this "Stage Worthy: The Value of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People" project, as well as the concurrent "Young Audiences Count: Quantifying Children & Young People's Engagement in Performing Arts" research project. The funding would enable both research projects to have a significant influence on the design of the StoryLens platform, as well as provide supplementary funding for both projects to be used as case studies for the StoryLens research.

Student Internships

It may be possible to involve students via student internships. Given that Kai Roland Green is based in Denmark, and pending further review by ASSITEJ International Secretary General Louis Valente Sørensen, it may be possible for ASSITEJ International to involve Danish students. The higher education ecosystem in



Denmark actively supports students and young people in taking on roles within third-sector organisations, often with state subsidies. This includes the *virksomhedspraktik* (company-based internship) or *studiepraktik* (student internship). Considering ASSITEJ International's recent relocation of its legal seat from Italy to Denmark, it could be well-placed to advertise and offer such internships that support the action of this project.

Other Collaborators

The researchers and the ASSITEJ International Secretariat may seek support and oversight from ITYARN, the International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network (TBC).

There will also be the possibility to coordinate with academics working on the other concurrent research stream being commissioned by ASSITEJ International, namely "Stage Worthy: The Value of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People", to build collective knowledge, share resources, and amplify impact.

Existing Research

Dr Lanora Callahan and Dr Kai Roland Green have already been grappling with the challenges and contexts of Quantitative Access Data within the TYA sector and have co-authored reports on initial data bottlenecks in the sector, as well as laying out proposals for creating a more robust statistical picture of our sector. Their early findings and insights into how 'access' translates in different national contexts, as well as how new co-creative methods might be developed to gather this vital information for the future of our sector, are also reflected on.

In fulfilment of reporting requirements, two co-authored reports were submitted to the European Commission in December 2024 - one report on "[Existing Quantitative Access Data](#)" and another on "[New Quantitative Access Data](#)". Also available is a [webinar recording](#) of an online event hosted in December 2024 (requires users to register and log in with a free account).

Both previous research reports are currently undergoing graphic design and layout. The final disseminated version of the research will be shared with National Centres upon the launch of the new Open Call and will be made available to the wider public on World Theatre Day for Children, 21st March 2026.

Project Budget

The budgets presented here represent the maximum currently allocated for **all** project costs. Where fees are paid to researchers, they include all expenditures related to the research project, including VAT / Sales Tax, personnel costs, travel, and subsistence costs (when necessary). This also includes travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs for the dissemination activities at the 2027 ASSITEJ World Congresses and Performing Arts Festivals for Children & Young People in Korea.

Unless there is a specific other budgetary line listed, the budget allocated to each researcher is also be expected to cover any costs incurred in their work associated



with data acquisition - such as purchasing access to existing datasets where free data is unavailable - and digital tools or platforms required for data collection, management, analysis, and data presentation other than those provided by ASSITEJ International. Dissemination costs, including the preparation of open-access publications, development of online resources or interactive tools, and hosting webinars or events to share findings with the global Theatre for Young Audiences community, would also be covered by this budget allocated to the research.

Additionally, translation costs, required to ensure accessibility and accuracy across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, will need to be covered by this figure. However, ASSITEJ International expects to be able to leverage in-kind support for this through its members.

Currently, ASSITEJ International's Operational Budget for 2025-2028 has €13,000 allocated to this project from 1st December 2025 to 31st August 2028 (total amount, as well as each cost item, is still subject to prior approval from the ASSITEJ International Secretariat and/or Executive Committee).

As described above, funding from the StoryLens project may also be received.

Further funding may be secured by the appointed researchers and ASSITEJ International, who will work together to identify and apply for funding opportunities.

The €13,000 figure would allow for the following:

1 Year Moderate Scale Project (2025-2027)			
	Year 1	Year 2	Sub-Total
Quantitative Researcher	€ 4,515		€ 4,515
Qualitative Researcher	€ 4,515		€ 4,515
Combined Travel Expenses (AWC 2027)		€ 3,000	€ 3,000
Software	€ 1,000		€ 1,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €35 per/hour • 3 hours/ week • 43 working-weeks/year (EU definition) • 129 hours/researcher • ≈ 16 work days/researcher (based on 8-hour workday) 	Grand Total		€ 13,030
		Average Cost Per Centre (6 Centres)	€ 2,171.67



Previous iterations of the budget included software and survey platform costs, totalling several thousand dollars over the project duration. ASSITEJ International can leverage its existing software, which can provide access to:

- Zoho Forms (Google Form alternative);
- Zoho Survey (Qualtrics alternative);
- Zoho Learn (Learning Management Platform to host learning resources and materials);
- Zoho Analytics (Data Analytics Platform to import and connect various data sources, transform raw data into actionable reports and dashboards, and uncover insights);
- Zoho DataPrep (AI-powered, self-service data preparation tool that simplifies the process of cleaning, transforming, and enriching data from various sources for analytics);
- Zoho Projects (Project Management Platform to coordinate workload).

This would be billed to the project at a real cost of approximately 1000 EUR per annum (included in the proposed budget above).

Whilst this budget is workable as a minimum, to support the development, implementation, and sustainability of this project, the researchers, in coordination with the ASSITEJ International Secretariat, will continue to identify and explore a range of funding opportunities. These may include network-building grants or cultural sector upskilling grants (such as EIT Culture & Creativity's calls).

3 Year Full Scale Project (2025-2028)				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Sub-Total
Quantitative Researcher	€ 5,268	€ 5,268	€ 5,268	€ 15,803
Qualitative Researcher	€ 5,268	€ 5,268	€ 5,268	€ 15,803
Combined Travel Expenses (AWC 2027)		€ 3,000		€ 3,000
Software	€ 1,000	€ 1,000	€ 1,000	€ 3,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • €35 per/hour • 3.5 hours/ week • 43 working-weeks/year (EU definition) • 150.5 hours/researcher/year • ≈ 19 work days/researcher/year (based on 8-hour workday) 		Grand Total	€ 37,605
			Average Cost Per Centre (18 Centres)	€ 2,089.17



In both budget examples, the approximate cost per participating ASSITEJ National Centre is around €2,100, based on six ASSITEJ National Centres participating per cohort.

As yet undecided, but or consideration by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee is the following idea:

If National Centres with the financial ability to contribute directly for their place on the programme were willing to contribute, then this could potentially pay for a larger number of researcher hours. This would effectively increase the size of the programme, without reducing the amount of time and attention each National Centre would receive from the subject specialists. Indeed, there could potentially be a quota for funded places and a quota for self-funded places.

Ethics & Data Protection

As this project engages with its Lead Academics on a personal basis and is not affiliated with a university or other institution that has its own ethical framework and clearance procedures, the collaborators will complete an Ethics form for submission to and approval by the ASSITEJ International Executive Committee.

The process of collecting and reporting data can raise concerns, such as perceptions of surveillance or evaluation. This project will adopt an inclusive, transparent, and co-creative methodology to ensure local ownership and agency.

Whilst all project activities need to follow ethical guidelines, activities such as qualitative interviews would require more stringent ethical clearance. Prioritising children's voices in the research (rather than just being respondents to interviews) is deeply encouraged - however, activities that involve children as co-researchers must conform to the strictest ethical guidelines, as well as to ASSITEJ International's Child Safety Policy (Appendix B) - bearing in mind that the age of majority can be very different between different national and cultural contexts.

These issues will be mitigated by encouraging ethical data practices, consent-based participation, and culturally responsive ethical and data protection frameworks, which will be developed and implemented by the researchers. Principles of, and statutory obligations for, data protection will fall under these Ethical frameworks to ensure compliance with best practices over data safety.

Some existing ethical frameworks which may inform this work include:

- [Fraser, S. ed., 2004. Doing research with children and young people. Sage.](#)
- [Greig, A., Taylor, J. and MacKay, T. \(2007\) Doing research with children. 2nd edn. London; London: SAGE Publications Ltd.](#)
- [Reeves, A. et al. \(2007\) 'Children's perspectives on participating in survey research'. London: NatCen National Centre for Social Research.](#)



Miscellaneous Related Resources

- Paul Moore's Methodology (Paul Moore (2016) Big Data and structural organisation in major arts bodies: an evolving ethnographic method) & [Academic Profile](#);
- [Datasets Spreadsheet](#) compiled by Chris;
- [Counting What Counts Report](#);
- [Measuring The Cultural and Creative Sectors EU Event](#);
- [Audience Numbers collected by ASSITEJ a few years ago](#);
- [The situation of theatre in the EU Member States](#);
- [Culture and democracy - the evidence](#) - Page 33/34.

Still under consideration is how to best equip the project (particularly the participating National Centres) with the necessary and relevant knowledge about conforming to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) best practices. Some expertise could be sourced via Kai Roland Green's contacts at Aarhus University or via Sasja from ASSITEJ Denmark (Louis to confirm?).

General & Other Terms

1. Undertake Research: The Lead Researchers listed above will conduct the Research in accordance with the terms of this agreement and will use reasonable endeavours to carry out the Research within the Research Period and with a view to achieving the Research Purpose.

2. Uncertainty of Research: The parties agree that due to the inherently uncertain nature of research, the actual outcomes and results of the Research cannot be assured. The Researchers will not be liable to ASSITEJ International for any loss or damage arising by reason of its failure to perform work on time or within estimated costs or at all, provided that it has used its reasonable endeavours in all respects in carrying out the Research.

3. General Assistance: Each party agrees to provide any other related assistance, information, data, equipment, facilities, resources or materials as may be reasonably required to satisfactorily perform the Research.

4. Force Majeure: No party is liable for any breach of its obligations under this agreement to the extent that the breach resulted from a Force Majeure Event (any event which is outside the reasonable control of the affected party and could not have been prevented by that party taking all reasonable steps) provided that it: promptly notifies the other parties (with appropriate details); and takes all reasonable steps to work around or reduce the effects of the Force Majeure Event. If a Force Majeure Event continues for more than 30 days or continues beyond the Research Period, any party may terminate this agreement with immediate effect by notice to the other parties or the other parties may jointly expel the party the subject of the Force Majeure Event from participating in the Research.



5. Use of Names & Logos: According to the Research Services Agreement (Appendix A), "Each party must get written approval from the other before using its name, logo, or the names of its personnel or students publicly in relation to the services." In signing this Research Collaboration Agreement, all parties agree to use the institutional names, logos, and the names of personnel of the following:

- ASSITEJ International;
- Any National Centre of ASSITEJ International Participating In This Project;
- Dr Lanora Callahan;
- Dr Kai Roland Green.





Appendix A: Research Services Agreement

The final version will be included in full here.

For the time being, you can click the links to view the draft for [Lanora](#) and for [Kai](#) (identical, except for the name, address, and email address fields).





Appendix B: ASSITEJ International's Child Safety Policy

