



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



International Association of
Theatre & Performing Arts for
Children & Young People

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ASSITEJ mission and values

ASSITEJ International is the global Association of theatre and performing arts for children and young people, with 82 members and 12 Affiliates represented over 6 continents. ASSITEJ International unites theatres, organisations, and individuals throughout the world who make Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People.

Our values: Generosity, Transparency, Representativity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Ecological Sustainability and Creativity.

Summary

So much is achieved in our community worldwide each year and 2025 was no exception. We saw an increase in the desire for connection felt by many members and the desire for more information. We noticed the high percentage of people attending for the first time at our gathering in Marseille. We saw an increase in membership due to extra focus across the year, and that the fee structure changes that were agreed to at the last General Assembly have shown a healthy spike in our member contributions while creating more equity in our membership fees.

We also saw a trend across the world where cultural funding was decreasing, where children's access to the arts through their education systems was being cut back, where artistic freedoms and survival is under threat. In each of the member contexts the issues are startling similar. We noticed the shared experiences and strength in connection that this association can offer and the importance of advocacy, partnerships, cooperation, alliances and policy at every level. ASSITEJ International is gaining recognition for the unique focus it provides – children and young people, theatre and performance, and the global community.

Meet the Executive Committee



Sue Giles AM
President
ASSITEJ Australia (Theatre Network
Australia)



Louis Valente Sørensen
Secretary General
ASSITEJ Denmark



Paulo Merisio
Vice President
ASSITEJ Brazil (CBTIJ)



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Selloane (Lalu) Mokuku
Vice President
ASSITEJ South Africa



Seok-hong Kim
Vice President
ASSITEJ Korea



Émilie Robert
Treasurer
ASSITEJ France



Bebê de Soares
Young Dance Network (YDN)



Carole Umulinga Karemera
ASSITEJ Rwanda



Gonzalo Moreno
ASSITEJ Spain



Jon Dafydd-Kidd
ASSITEJ UK (TYA UK)



Julia Dina Heße
ASSITEJ Germany



Shoab Iqbal
ASSITEJ New Zealand



Stavros Stavrou
ASSITEJ Cyprus



Theis Irgens
ASSITEJ Norway



Yannick Boudeau
ASSITEJ Belgium



Meet the Staff



Louis Valente Sørensen
Secretary General



Chris Blois-Brooke
Digital, Research & Partnerships



Marissa Garay
Project Producer & Membership



Beatriz Aguilar Barreda
Communication

The work of the Association has increased massively since success with multi-year funding from the European Union for the second time, covering the years 2025 - 2028. The Executive Committee work is divided into working groups and committees. Each working group connects with staff members who assist with tasks within the groups. The EC also attends conferences, runs workshops and training, and attends festivals as ASSITEJ representatives around the world.

The Executive Committee meetings in 2025 were held in Marseille in France during the *ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering and Bright Generations Festival*, and also in Montreal, Canada hosted by the inaugural *La Mèche Courte Festival*. There were three online EC meetings during the year plus the General Assembly in May.

Meet the Working Groups

Communication Working Group

- New staff position co-funded by ASSITEJ International and ASSITEJ Spain. Beatriz joined the staff team in September 2025
- advocacy messages for the members worldwide on social media
- Focus on the World Day Campaign
- Newsletter every month

Membership Working Group

- Connecting one on one with Members to know the state of each National Centre and Network and following up with members on specific questions or challenges.
- Umbrella sessions to share information and focus on specific topics
- Working on connection between National Centre's members and the International Association
- Active work with International Professional Networks to develop capacity
- Day to day connection and correspondence with members



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Management working group

- Staff management and contracts
- Policy and protocols creation
- fundraising and finance

Partnerships Working Group

- Engage with potential partners
- Seeing global possibilities in connection and fundraising
- Attendance at Performing Arts Coalition meetings
- Advocating for a better recognition of Performing Arts for children and young people towards funders

Secretariat work

- Digital innovation and maintenance
- Production and operations
- Payments and accounting
- Coordination and producing of events
- Newsletters and everyday communications with membership
- Website maintenance and social media
- Research coordination
- Partnership development
- Fundraising and grant writing
- Assistance to working groups



Member data from 2025

Member map



Members

9,526

Members of ASSITEJ National Centres & International Professional Networks

77

National Centres

with
8,315 members

5

Professional Networks

with
1,211 members

10

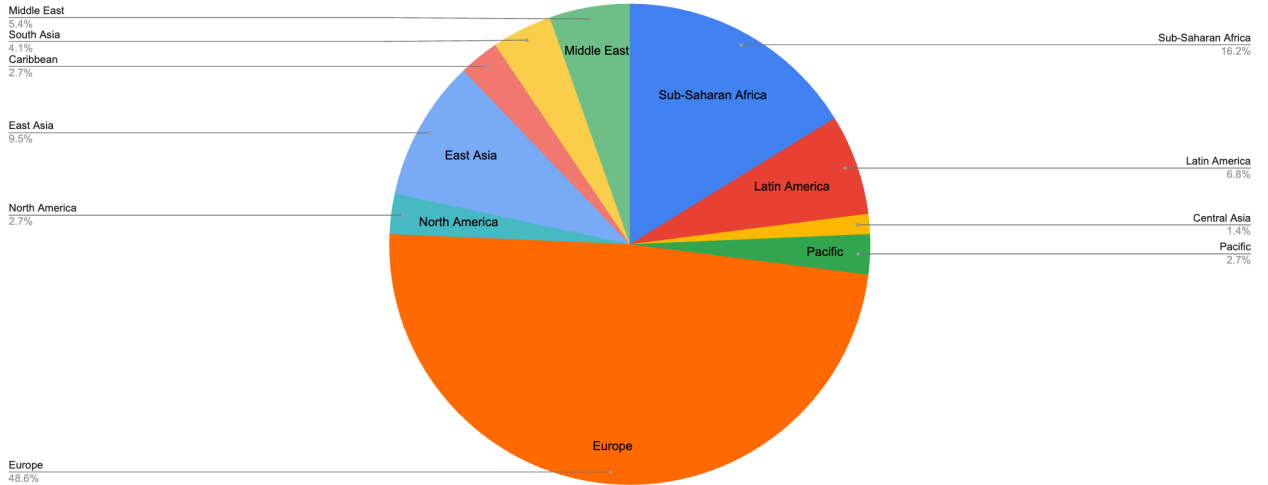
ASSITEJ Affiliates

87

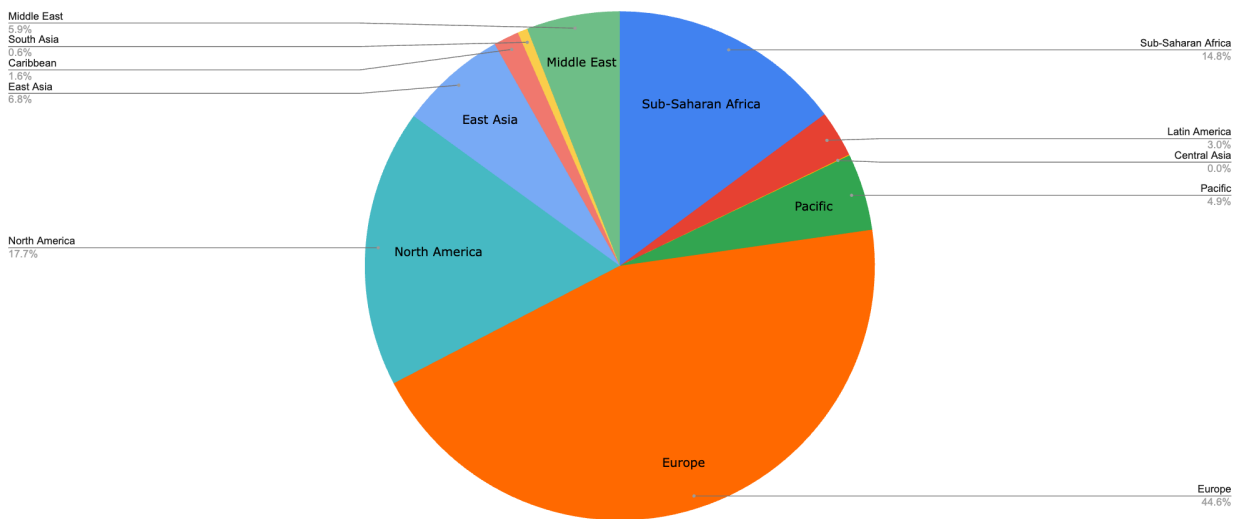
Countries



Geographical Spread



Members Of Members:



New members in 2025

- ASSITEJ Burundi
- ASSITEJ Ghana
- ASSITEJ Greece
- ASSITEJ Indonesia
- ASSITEJ Montenegro
- ASSITEJ North Macedonia
- ASSITEJ Slovakia
- ASSITEJ Malawi



The European Union Networks Grant project: Creating Cultural Equity

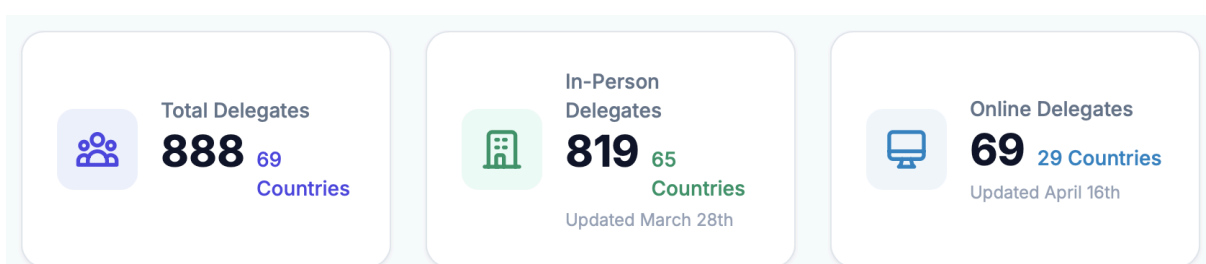
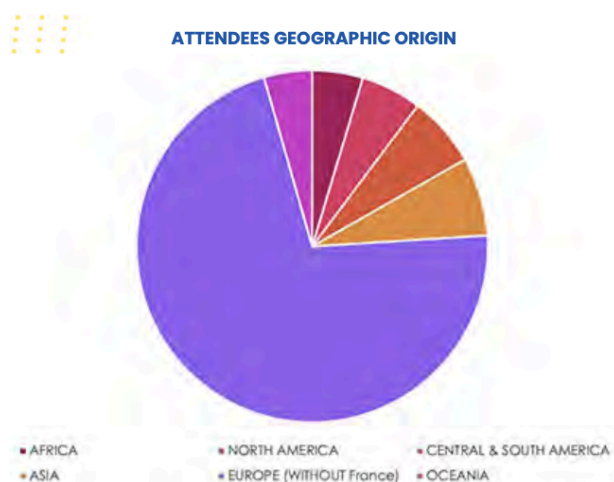
This is the second round of Creative Europe Network funding received by ASSITEJ International. It started in January 2025 and ends in December 2028. This grant supports the existing activity of ASSITEJ International as well as new projects and, importantly, the salaries for Secretary General and staff. The project is designed to remove barriers to participation and growth in ASSITEJ International's network of cultural workers in Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People (TYA).

The budgets for 2026 and financial statements for the income and expenditure in 2025 are explained in the Treasurers report.

Activities in Creating Cultural Equity in 2025

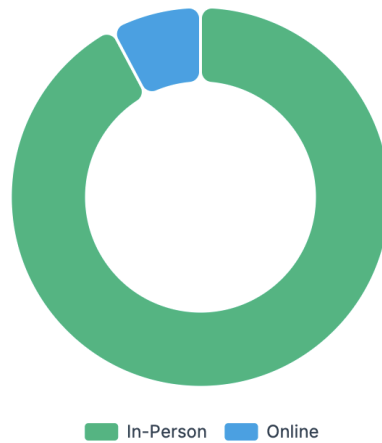
ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering and Festival Bright Generations in Marseille, France in March 2025:

- 819 delegates present from 65 countries
- 49 delegates connected online from 21 countries
- 74 professional exchange sessions
- 64 performances by 20 different companies
- 8,181 reservations and 1,975 children from 64 school classes.
- 7 partner venues in Marseille



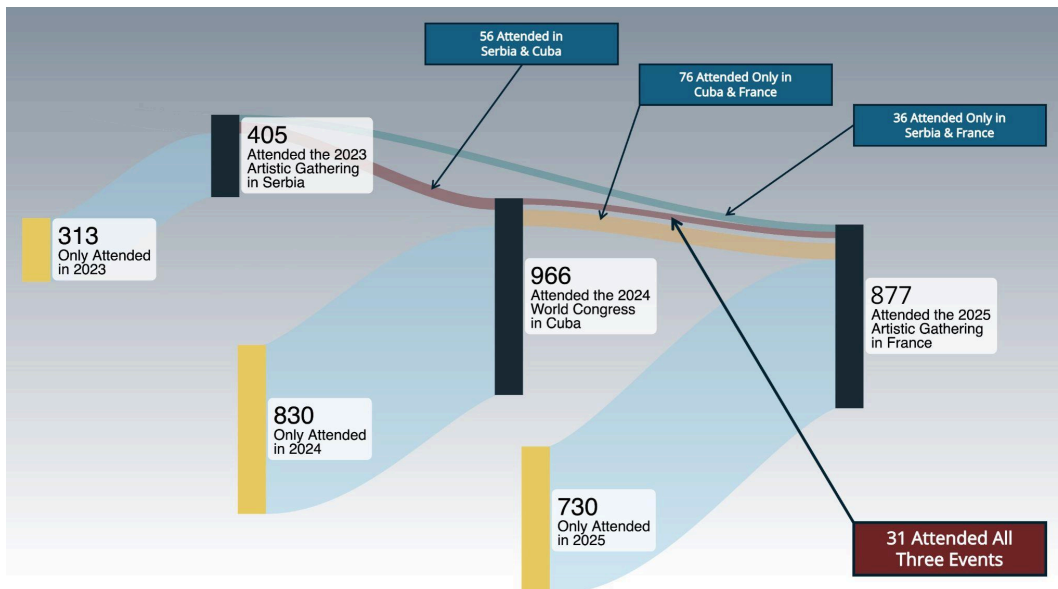


Attendance Distribution



Delegate attendance to events 2023-2025

The ASSITEJ International events reach different members every time. Below is the number of delegates, not including local audiences.



Website and digital systems - Staff production and organisation of events and projects, partnership with National Arts Festival (NAF) South Africa to set up, maintain and innovate digital systems in cooperation and communication with hosts of events. Customer Relations Manager (CRM) for National Centres is a pilot project to share our CRM capacity with Centres to enable stronger



communication. Digital tools development includes the continued development of the official website and festival platform assitejonline.org

Professional Exchange and *New Voices* selection processes for the Marseille Artistic Gathering undertaken by EC members alongside hosts.

New Voices Programme – review and refresh of the program (previously Next Generation) in response to past participants' concerns and to address gaps in lived experience and to draw new people to the Association. The first New Voices program was at the AAG and Bright Generations festival in Marseille in March.

Regional Cooperation Programme: This is a pilot funding initiative to support regional development of TYA through cooperation. EC ran the selection process and preparation for the chosen projects. 7 excellent projects were submitted by members from all continents in the world and two chosen for funding. These were *African Vogue* (ASSITEJ Senegal, Burkina Faso and Côte D'Ivoire) and *Wanderlust* (ASSITEJ Mongolia, Indonesia and Nepal).

Research and Evaluation – second stage began of *Value of TYA* through a co-funding partnership with University of Sydney and the CREATE Centre with researchers Michael Andersen and Dr Kelly Freebody and Selina Busby (UK) and development of expanded access data analysis research *Children Count* –with Dr Lanora Callahan and Dr Kai Roland Green. External Evaluators Richard Sallis and Dr Jennifer Andersen created surveys and analysis post AAG to inform internal improvement for ASSITEJ International and contribute to a greater understanding of members' needs.

Babel : the art of listening in Theatre for young audiences - this partnership EU Cooperation project enabled ASSITEJ to deliver the regional workshops program in 6 countries, and to contribute to the final conference and launch of the publication of *the Catalogue of Inspirations* (downloadable for free from ASSITEJ website) which was held in Brussels at the Import/Export festival.

Impact of Crisis and the Role of Culture: planning stages for creating a catalogue of practice working with and for children in vulnerable situations worldwide. A workshop devised for this project was trialled with the New Voices program during Bright Generations in Marseilles.

Inclusive Pathways to Participation of children and young people: desktop research into ways people are working with children in particular, in organisational frameworks. Collection of practice worldwide.

Mobility funding for EC and for Members to enable equitable access to events and meetings including through the Strategic Invitations initiative for international gatherings, support for New Voices Fellowship participants, support for Professional Exchange participants and regional workshops, support for productions and artists to attend gatherings.

Umbrella sessions in person in Marseille in March and online in October (Shaping our Future) with Members cover topics of interest and have been central to the



in-depth work done with members around organisational change and issues of successful operation.

Member development includes workshops for National Centres and for International Professional Networks around capacity, identity, operational planning and toolkits. Ex-EC member Vigdis Jakobsdottir facilitated the networks workshop at the AAG in Marseilles. Member development also involves the regional and linguistic networks and their purpose and position within the Association (continuing).

The Performing Arts Coalition (PAC) is a platform for European and international performing arts networks to collaborate on advocacy for the performing arts, conducting joint actions and research, exchanging knowledge, and pooling resources. Its mission is to strengthen the role of the performing arts in society by advocating for policies that recognise their unique value. PAC was founded in 2025 by ASSITEJ, Circostrada - European Network for contemporary circus and outdoor arts, EDN - European Dance Development Network, EFA - European Festivals Association, and IETM - International network for contemporary performing arts. As part of this coalition, ASSITEJ contributes vital perspectives of young audiences in the broader cultural landscape, as well as from our global framework, which has led to inclusion at European policy level and a significant shift in recognition. 98 members of ASSITEJ responded to a survey about cultural rights that informed a policy paper that is being circulated in 2026.

Green Team: has a focus on environmental sustainability and works alongside all events, including the AAG in Marseille. They have been instrumental in working with *SHIFT* and Culture for Climate Scotland gaining accreditation and establishing a greater understanding of ASSITEJ and its role in environmental sustainability. This project has helped us create and share the tools for gathering information and to acknowledge the work necessary for awareness raising throughout our community.

Open Door Team: the Diversity Benchmarking project drew National Centre members together to discuss levels of inclusion in their sector and goals to set for change this project continued a little way into 2025. Open Door created an access toolkit for ASSITEJ International.

World Day Campaign – in 2025 we worked towards a new approach, creating a co-funding partnership instigated by ASSITEJ Spain to share a staff member to focus on the world day. The results of the work can be experienced in the world day campaign this year (2026).

Preparation for World Congress in 2027 in Suwon, South Korea. The ASSITEJ Korea team met with the EC in Montreal and connect every month for planning meetings with the Secretariat staff and President.



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Funding and supporters

Membership fees

EU Networks funding

Babel Cooperation project

Personal contributions and fundraising of EC members and Association members towards own travel and engagement for the purpose of ASSITEJ International.



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