



## **ASSITEJ**

International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People  
Association International du Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse

# **Constitution**

**approved by the General Assembly of ASSITEJ in  
Malmö, Sweden,  
May 24, 2011**

## **Preamble**

Since the theatrical art is a universal expression of mankind and possesses the influence and power to link large groups of the world's people and considering the role that theatre can play in arts education of young generations, an autonomous international organization has been formed which bears the name of the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People. The Association shall be known by the acronym **ASSITEJ** (Association International du Theatre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse).

**ASSITEJ** recognizes the right of all children and young people to enrichment through the arts and their own cultural traditions, especially theatre culture. Theatre respects its young audiences by presenting their hopes, dreams, and fears; it develops and deepens experience, intelligence, emotion, and imagination; it inspires ethical choices; it increases awareness of social relationships; it encourages self-esteem, tolerance, confidence, and the free expression of opinions. Above all, it helps future generations find their place and voice in society. To this end, **ASSITEJ** endorses Article 31 of the 1989 United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child that affirms the right of children to leisure time and the enjoyment of arts and cultural activities. It shares common values with UNESCO's Cultural Policy, calling for the rights of children and young people to cultural participation and activity. It holds with the belief of the 2005 UNESCO Convention about Cultural Diversity, that children and young people must be allowed a cultural identity and to be visible everywhere in society. **ASSITEJ** is an advocate for the promotion of theatre for young audiences in principle and practice. It calls on all national and international organizations that recognize the potential of children and young people and their capacity to contribute to the development of society to recognize and support this constitution.

## **Article 1 - Mission**

1.1. **ASSITEJ** proposes to unite theatres, organizations and individuals throughout the world dedicated to theatre for children and young people.

1.2. **ASSITEJ** is dedicated to artistic, cultural political and educational efforts and no decision, action or statement of the Association shall be based on nationality, political conviction, cultural identity, ethnicity, or religion.

1.3 **ASSITEJ** promotes international exchange of knowledge and practice in theatre in order to increase creative co-operation and to deepen mutual understanding between all persons involved in the performing arts for young audiences.

## **Article 2 – Aims**

Recognizing that children and young people make up a large part of the world's population and that they represent the future, the aims of the Association are:

2.1 To work for the rights of children and young people to artistic experiences especially designed and created for them.

- 2.2 To work for the recognition and acknowledgement of theatre for children and young people.
- 2.3 To work for improvement of the conditions of theatre for children and young people all over the world.
- 2.4 To improve the common knowledge of theatre for children and young people worldwide, thus drawing the attention of international and national authorities to the importance of taking children and young people and the artistic work created for them seriously.
- 2.5 To give people working with theatre for children and young people the opportunity to learn about the work of colleagues from other countries and cultures, thus enabling them to enrich theatre for children and young people in their own country.
- 2.6 To help to form in all countries, ASSITEJ centres and networks which function in accordance with the mission, constitution and policies of the Association. These centres and networks shall unite all theatres, organizations, and persons interested in theatre for children and young people.
- 2.7 To help to establish international artistic networks to explore different aspects of artistic work for children and young people, to increase the artistic competence of artists and to benefit them.

### **Article 3 – Means**

The means of achieving these aims will be:

- 3.1. Organization, promotion and support of national, regional, and international programmes, congresses, conferences, festivals, study tours, exhibitions, and other activities.
- 3.2. Promotion and support of exchange of experiences between artists from all countries.
- 3.3. Encouragement of circulation and exchange of plays, texts, and other literature pertaining to theatre for children and young people.
- 3.4. Collection of material and documentation on theatre for children and young people.
- 3.5. Promotion of theatre for children and young people through all media.
- 3.6. Co-operation with other international organizations with related interests.
- 3.7. Introduction and support of proposals made by centres and networks in order to advance the work of theatre for children and young people to appropriate national and international authorities and agencies.

### **Article 4 - Members**

**ASSITEJ** is created to facilitate the development of theatre for children and young people at the highest artistic level and no theatre, organization or individual can be refused admittance to membership of ASSITEJ on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, disability or ability, sexual orientation, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction.

#### **4.1 Members of the Association are:**

1. *national centres* representative of theatre for children and young people in their own countries;
2. *professional, international networks* of theatres, organisations and persons who share a common artistic need or interest that serves the growth of theatre for children and young people;
3. *individual members* (theatre companies, organisations, or persons) dedicated to theatre for children and young people, who are not able to participate, for whatever reason, in other forms of ASSITEJ membership.

#### **4.2 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP:**

1. **Full membership**  
National centres and networks
2. **Corresponding membership**  
Those national centres and networks that are unable to meet the full criteria for membership, but can meet less stringent criteria as defined in Article 4.3.
3. **Non-voting membership**  
Individual members (theatre companies, organizations or persons) dedicated to theatre for children and young people, who are not able to participate, for whatever reason, in other forms of ASSITEJ membership.

#### **4.3 DEFINITIONS OF MEMBERS:**

##### **4.3.1 National Centres:**

1. National centres are networks of theatre companies, organisations and persons working in that country in the field of theatre for children and young people.

##### **2. Categories of membership within national centres are:**

- 2.1. Professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people.
- 2.2. Non-professional theatre companies or artists performing for children and young people.
- 2.3. Organizations, institutions, associations or persons actively engaged in the work of theatre for children and young people.
- 2.4. Supporting organizations, institutions, associations, or persons interested in theatre for children and young people.

##### **3. Criteria for full or corresponding membership:**

3.1 To qualify for full membership in the Association, a national centre must be a network comprising of at least three (3) professional members (2.1), or five (5) members with at least two (2) professional members (2.1) and three (3) non-professional members (2.2).

3.2 To qualify for corresponding membership, a national centre must be a network of theatre companies, organisations, and persons which does not achieve the above criteria.

#### **4.3.2 Professional Networks**

1. Professional networks are formal, international networks of theatre companies, organisations, and/or persons working in and supporting the field of theatre for children and young people.

2. Professional networks can be formed on the basis of common interests or needs related to the work of theatre for children and young people.

3. Criteria for membership:

3.1 To qualify for **full** membership in the Association, a professional network should be a global network which includes members from at least seven (7) countries from two (2) or more continents.

3.2 Those professional networks which do not meet the above criteria, but include members from a minimum of five (5) countries, may apply for **corresponding** membership.

#### **4.3.3 Individual members:**

1. Individual members are theatre companies, organizations or persons dedicated to theatre for young audiences, who are not able to participate, for whatever reason, in other forms of ASSITEJ membership.

2. Individual members are non-voting members.

### **Article 5 - Rights and Obligations**

#### **5.1 Full members**

have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings, to be elected to the Executive Committee, and to vote according to the rules detailed in Article 9.

## **5.2 Corresponding members**

have the right to make proposals at constitutional meetings and to vote according to the rules detailed in Article 9. Corresponding members do not have the right to be elected to the Executive Committee.

## **5.3 Non-voting members**

have the right to participate in the work of the Association, including giving proposals at constitutional meetings, but do not have the right to vote according to the rules detailed in Article 9. Additionally, non-voting members do not have the right to be elected to the Executive Committee.

## **5.4 All members, full, corresponding, and non-voting, have the following obligations:**

- to work to achieve the aims defined by the Association,
- to maintain its statutes,
- to act upon the decisions made by the Association,
- to pay their membership fees,
- to keep the Secretary General informed of their activities on a regular basis,
- to appoint a correspondent,
- to provide a permanent address,
- and to communicate to their members the information sent from the Secretary General's office.

**5.5 All full and corresponding members** must use the acronym “ASSITEJ” either in the name of the centre or network or in the description in the subtitle.

## **Article 6 - Application, Resignation, Suspension, Expulsion**

6.1. Written applications for membership shall be addressed to the Secretary General. These applications will be considered, approved, or denied by the Executive Committee. In the case of a denial by the Executive Committee, the applicant may appeal to the next General Assembly.

6.2. Any member that wishes to resign from the Association should inform the Secretary General in writing. The resignation will take effect from 1st January in the following year.

6.3. The Executive Committee may decide, by a majority of two-thirds, on the rejection, suspension, or expulsion of any member whose work conflicts with the fundamental aims of this Association, or who has failed several times in one of the obligations mentioned in Article 6.4. Any centre which has been rejected, suspended, or expelled loses the right to use the acronym “ASSITEJ”.

6.4. Any rejected, suspended, or expelled member may appeal to the next General Assembly.

## **Article 7 - Finances**

7.1. This Association is financed from membership fees, as well as from subsidies or grants accepted by the Executive Committee.

7.2. The fiscal period of this Association runs from one General Assembly to the next.

7.3. Membership fees, which are determined by the General Assembly, are due on 1st January of each year and must be sent to the Treasurer. Members more than six (6) months in arrears lose the right to vote in the General Assembly.

## **Article 8 – Structure**

The governing body of this Association consists of:

1. The General Assembly
2. The Executive Committee

## **Article 9 - Functions of the General Assembly**

9.1 The General Assembly consists of delegations of all full and corresponding members.

9.2 A delegation from a centre or network with full membership has three (3) votes. A delegation from a centre or network with corresponding membership has one (1) vote.

9.3 Voting by proxy is permitted, and the proxy must be given in writing. A centre or network wishing to transfer its proxy must do so in writing. A delegation from a national centre can hold proxy for only one other national centre. A national centre with full membership can hold proxy for any full or corresponding member. A national centre with corresponding membership can hold proxy only for a national centre with corresponding membership. A network with full membership can hold proxy only for another network of full or corresponding membership.

9.4 Non-voting members are invited to participate in the work of the General Assembly. These members are encouraged to find ways to formally associate with others to become part of the voting membership of ASSITEJ International.

9.5. The Association shall meet in General Assembly at the World Congress at least once in every three calendar years, with the formal announcement of this meeting made at least six months in advance by the Secretary General upon instruction of the President. The General Assembly will decide on the location of the next General Assembly and World Congress, but if it should be unable to make a decision on this matter, or if a change of location should prove necessary, this decision will be left to the Executive Committee.

9.6. The Association may meet between two World Congresses. Members may propose an already existing event of international or regional significance for selection as an

“Assitej International Meeting”. These event/s will be selected by the General Assembly at the World Congress.

9.7. A special meeting of the General Assembly may be called by the Secretary General three months in advance on the written and justified request of two-thirds of the members or at the discretion of the Executive Committee in the case of an emergency or extraordinary circumstance.

9.8. The General Assembly has final control over the Constitution, and decides on any changes or amendments. Any member wishing to amend the Constitution must give notice in writing to the Secretary General at least three (3) months before the date of the meeting of the General Assembly. Any decision to amend the Constitution shall require a two-thirds majority.

9.9. The General Assembly establishes the broad outlines of the Association's policy.

9.10. The General Assembly receives for approval the report of the activities and the financial report, which are submitted by the Executive Committee.

9.11. The President of this Association is by right President of the General Assembly. In the event of his or her absence, he or she will be replaced by a Vice-President, selected by vote of the Executive Committee, or, in the absence of all the Vice-Presidents, by a member of the Executive Committee elected for this purpose by the General Assembly.

9.12. All decisions, unless otherwise stated, are taken by simple majority vote. In the case of a tie, the President will cast the deciding vote. If two centres apply to host the next Congress, the host shall be the centre that receives the most votes. If more than two centres apply for hosting, and neither receives a majority, a second vote shall be taken between the two leading candidates, and the host shall be the centre that receives the most votes.

9.13. The General Assembly determines the membership fees and other charges to be levied on the members of the Association.

9.14. A meeting of the General Assembly can only be held if the delegates of one third (1/3) of the full and corresponding members state in writing to the Secretary General their determination to be present and to participate, either in person or by proxy. This notification of attendance must be sent to the Secretary General three (3) months in advance of the meeting.

9.15 Quorum: The General Assembly can only make decisions if one-third (1/3) of the members participate either in person or by proxy.

## 9.16 Elections

9.16.1 Elections for the Executive Committee of the Association are held at a meeting of the General Assembly at least once in every three (3) calendar years.

9.16.2 The General Assembly shall elect the President and Secretary General from those standing for the Executive Committee, in this order: the President is elected first and presides over the election of the Secretary General and representatives to the Executive Committee. Candidacies for the offices of the President and Secretary General should be sent in writing to the Secretary General, three months before the date of the General Assembly in order to circulate nominations to the members of ASSITEJ.

If no centre or network has presented candidates for these offices, the Executive Committee at its last meeting before the General Assembly shall recommend a candidate for each of the offices and inform all members of this recommendation.

9.16.3 The General Assembly shall elect the members of the Executive Committee as representatives of centres or networks with full membership. A centre or network with full membership may have only one representative on the Executive Committee. Where a centre and a network nominate candidates from the same country, the candidate of the national centre takes preference and may stand for election. Each full member, on its own behalf, should send to the Secretary General, in writing, the name of its candidate three months before the date of the meeting of the General Assembly in order to circulate nominations to the members of ASSITEJ.

9.16.4 From amongst the members of the Executive Committee, the General Assembly shall elect the Vice-Presidents and Treasurer, who shall be nominated in a meeting of the new Executive Committee. They shall be elected in their personal capacity.

9.16.5 The officers and members of the Executive Committee shall be chosen to represent as fairly as possible the interests of the organization and the diversity of all the centres and networks, taking into account such factors as geography, ethnic origin, gender, aesthetics and cultural identity. They should also reflect strengths that serve the concerns and priorities of the working plan for the elected term.

9.17. The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, can give the titles of Honorary President and Honorary Member for exceptional service to the Association. Both shall have a consultative voice, but no right to vote, and they cannot represent their country.

9.18. On the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the General Assembly shall appoint an accredited financial officer to conduct the audit of the accounts.

9.19. The agenda, with its enclosures, and candidates for the President, the Secretary General and the Executive Committee, should be sent from the General Secretariat to all centres no later than two (2) months in advance of the General Assembly.

9.20. Only those items which are set down on the agenda may be voted upon in the General Assembly.

### **Article 10 - Functions of the Executive Committee**

10.1. The Executive Committee is composed of a maximum of fifteen (15) members having the right to vote, including the President, three (3) Vice-Presidents, the Secretary General and the Treasurer.

10.2. In the event of the death or resignation of a member of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall authorize the centre or network which nominated the member to appoint a deputy for the remaining period of the term of office. The exceptions are: in the case of the President, where the replacement shall be from amongst the Vice-Presidents; and in the case of one of the Vice Presidents, where the Executive Committee is authorized either to leave the office vacant or, if it judges it necessary, to elect a replacement from amongst its own members. In the case of the death or resignation of the Secretary General, the Executive Committee will appoint a suitable person to the office in an acting capacity, until the next General Assembly.

10.3. The Executive Committee has the right to co-opt persons as members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee also has the right to appoint Counsellors for the period of its mandate, who may attend, without voting rights, meetings of the Executive Committee during their time in office.

10.4. Any member who cannot attend a meeting of the Executive Committee can be replaced only by a permanent deputy nominated by his or her centre for the duration of his or her term of office. The Secretary General must be notified of the deputy's name as soon as possible after the General Assembly.

10.5. A meeting of the Executive Committee may be held only if at least half (1/2) of the members express to the Secretary General their determination to be present and participate, either in person or represented by a deputy. The presence of half (1/2) of the members shall constitute a quorum.

10.6. The Executive Committee will meet at least once each calendar year; the Committee will decide by majority vote if it is necessary to hold additional meetings, and will choose the places and dates of such meetings. The committee must be notified three (3) months in advance. Meetings will be called by the Secretary General at the request of the President.

10.7. The Executive Committee may decide upon urgent matters by correspondence if it proves impossible to hold a special meeting. In this case the Secretary General, by agreement with the President, shall send to each member of the Executive Committee a questionnaire, to which each member will reply in writing. Decisions will be made by a two-thirds majority vote. The decisions will come before the Executive Committee at their next meeting for ratification. The replies will be placed in the records of the Association where they will be available for examination by members of the General Assembly.

10.8. Each member of the Executive Committee possesses one vote, which he or she may use in person unless delegated to his or her permanent deputy.

10.9. The President of the Association is also Chairperson of the meetings of the Executive Committee. In the event of the President's absence, he or she will be replaced by a Vice-President, selected by vote of the Executive Committee, or if all the Vice-Presidents are absent, by a member elected for this purpose by the Executive Committee to chair the meeting.

10.10. All motions are carried by a simple majority vote, except decisions taken by correspondence or regarding Article 6.3.

10.11. The Chairperson of the meeting has the right to vote as a member of the committee. If a majority decision cannot be established by this means, the Chairperson may cast a second, deciding vote.

10.12. The Executive Committee will submit a working plan of activities to the General Assembly. It manages the affairs of the Association between the meetings of the General Assembly and carries out the decisions of the General Assembly. The Executive Committee will remain in office for the period between one General Assembly and the next, which will be three years or thereabouts, at which time its members shall be eligible for re-election.

10.13. The Executive Committee will accept or reject new applications for membership made to the Secretary General. A rejection may be appealed by the applicant at the next General Assembly.

10.14. The budget is administered by the Executive Committee according to a working plan established by the General Assembly.

10.15. The Executive Committee entrusts to the Treasurer the administration of funds, the preparation of the budget, and the accounts. The accounts of the Association must be audited before the presentation to the General Assembly (Article 9.18).

10.16. The Executive Committee may take initiative in matters not anticipated by the General Assembly, provided that these matters are in keeping with the mission and aims

of this Association, and provided that the Executive Committee takes the first opportunity to report on these matters to the members.

### **Article 11 – Functions of the Officers**

The Officers of this Association are as follows:

- The President
- Three Vice-Presidents
- The Secretary General
- The Treasurer.

11.1. The Officers are charged with specific functions in carrying out the Association's program and submitting reports to the Executive Committee.

11.2. In case of any urgent matters not foreseen by the Executive Committee, the Officers are given the right to act at their discretion and will take the first opportunity to report on these matters to the Executive Committee.

### **Article 12 – Languages**

12.1. Working languages at the General Assembly will be the language of the host country, English, and at least one other language as determined by the Executive Committee according to the needs of the meeting. On the occasion of international events, the working languages will be the language of the host country and English, with the option of one more language according to need.

When the host country is English-speaking, it must provide at least two other languages for the General Assembly. For other international events, at least one other language must be provided, if so determined by the Executive Committee, according to the needs of the event.

12.2 The working language of the Association for written communication will be English.

### **Article 13 – Duration**

13.1. This Association is created for an unlimited period.

13.2. This Association shall cease to function when, for any reason, three-fourths (3/4) of the members, on the basis of their number of votes, shall express in writing to the Secretary General the desire to dissolve the Association. In this event, the Executive Committee shall be authorized to declare the Association dissolved, and any funds

remaining in the Association's accounts will be given to international organizations pursuing similar aims.

#### **Article 14 – Constitutional amendments**

All amendments or changes to the constitution shall come into force at the moment of their approval by a General Assembly.

*Latest amendments adopted by the General Assembly in Malmø, May 24, 2011.*

#### **Definitions, etc.:**

General Assembly (GA) consists of attending delegations from centres and networks at a World Congress - Art. 8 & 9

Secretary General (officer) elected directly by General Assembly - Art. 9.13

President (officer) elected directly by General Assembly - Art. 9.13

Executive Committee (EC) elected directly by General Assembly - Art. 9.14 & Art.10

Treasurer (officer) elected by GA on the recommendation of EC, among members of EC - Art. 9.15

3 Vice-presidents (officers) elected by GA on the recommendation of EC, among members of EC - Art. 9.15

Co-opted (full) member of EC, appointed by EC - Art. 10.3

Counsellor appointed by EC - Art. 10.3

Deputy (for an EC-member) nominated by the EC-member's Centre or Network - Art. 10.4

Honorary President appointed by GA on the recommendation of EC - Art. 9.16

Honorary Member appointed by GA on the recommendation of EC - Art. 9.16

Auditor: An accredited financial officer elected by GA on the recommendation of EC - Art. 9.17 & Art. 10.15

International Events are, for example, international festivals, conferences, seminars, workshops, forums, and other activities which take place officially in the name of ASSITEJ, apart from the General Assembly – Art. 12

An ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival is a meeting of the General Assembly taking place at least once every three years, which includes both the business of the association and artistic exchange – Art. 9

An ASSITEJ International Meeting is an international event where the Executive Committee is present and where all members of ASSITEJ are invited to attend. It is primarily an artistic meeting of the organisation and occurs between World Congresses – Art. 9.6