

# ASSITEJ AFRICAN REGIONAL NETWORK MEETING

## MINUTES

Venue: Ezulwini Sun Hotel - Swaziland

Chair Person: **Sandile Ndzimande (ASSITEJ Swaziland President)**

Present: **Attached list of participants**

Day 1: 17 March 2007

### Apologies:

ASSITEJ Namibia: Fredrick Philander will join tomorrow (18 March 2007)

ASSITEJ Mauritius: Narraidoo Rowlandra no longer coming

In his opening remarks the President of ASSITEJ Swaziland Mr Sandile Ndzimande, chairing the meeting, officially welcomed everyone to the Kingdom of Swaziland and in particular to the meeting hosted by SWATCYP - ASSITEJ Swaziland.

### **Minute of the Previous Meeting in Tanzania: 7 – 12 March 2007**

The chairperson told the meeting that the minutes from Tanzania were not received together with the report and asked Philemon to explain what happened.

Philemon said he had challenges in taking the minute as he was unable to sit in the meeting fulltime, he therefore asked someone to take the minutes for him and the person couldn't capture everything which made it difficult for him to compile a report; however he came with the minutes. He was allowed to distribute them to the meeting.

Niclas raised a concern that this is the last meeting of the network, so it is very important to discuss everything, among other things he mentioned was the issue of the website, regional workshop to be held this year 2007, and the evaluation document.

The chairperson asked for way forward from the house as everyone had heard that the minutes are not there and the importance of the meeting as it is the last meeting of the program.

After deliberations and a number of considerations, it was proposed that the issues in the minutes be discussed in the meeting as it was the last meeting

of the program and could not be postponed. Further more this could be of relief to the Secretary General of ASSITEJ International, as he has to write a full report about the program.

It was agreed that the minutes be discussed and not be adopted as a true record of what was discussed in the meeting as there are some of the issues that were not appearing in the minutes.

Niclas said for the issues that were discussed in the meeting in question, he has the agenda, which he can print and give to members as a reminder of what was in the agenda of the meeting.

### **Financial Reports for Tanzania Meeting and Rwanda Workshop**

As per agenda with the people, it was appearing that the financial reports for the above mentioned countries were not there.

The chairperson raised a concern that lack of accountability jeopardizes the work/ project, so it is very important for everyone to make sure reports are made as they give direction and help in the identification of grey areas in the project. He further emphasized that accountability is and must be part of the game.

#### **Rwanda:**

Rwanda apologized for the delay in submitting the reports and sited the cause as other commitments on their finance people, but finally they managed to submit the reports to the Secretary General of ASSITEJ International

#### **Tanzania:**

Philemon said he brought the receipts with him and he will hand them to the Secretary General.

The chairperson then introduced to the house the interim chairperson of the board of ASSITEJ Swaziland Mr Mphosi Mamba who had come for the official opening of the meeting. Also introduced was Peter Penning from the Swaziland Information and Broadcasting Services (SBIS) who had also come for the official opening.

## **Country Reports.**

#### **Zambia: copy submitted**

ASSITEJ Zambia has employed an administrator who runs the office on fulltime bases.

The events held include commemoration of International World Day of Theatre for Children, workshops on areas of adjudication working with a recognized organization in Zambia; the Zambian Adjudicators Panel. They also held five provincial festivals where the winners were taken to the National Festival. The winning group will represent the country in India where they have a memorandum of understanding to send one group every year.

The Jacaranda Awards and the President's Awards are some of the activities of ASSITEJ Zambia. The awards cover: best script, most disciplined and most sensitive play on HIV and AIDS.

On the question of how they raise money for tickets for groups to go to India, they involve the schools with the school committees in the events and the schools fundraise on their own with the assistance of parents in the hosting of fundraising activities.

Cheela encouraged all the network centres to commit themselves in fundraising activities and put own resources before asking from the corporate world, the corporate world will only come in after seeing the commitment put by the centres.

### **Zimbabwe: copy submitted**

There is not much done due to financial constraints, caused by pulling out of their main donor; Save the Children UK. The donor changed policies and there are no longer interested in cultural and theatre activities. They haven't been able to get partners to assist them.

Their affiliate Chipawo is doing very well and has represented them in Germany and now, they (Chipawo) have opened their own centres in different parts of the country. Chimanikire got the sponsorship to accompany Chipawo to Germany.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2007 Chipawo will be performing in the Inter Southern African Festival coordinated by the Africa University in Zimbabwe. Chipawo has also recruited and empowered members to scout for resources in any possible way and share with the association.

The only assistance they get as a centre is on specific projects with the assistance of the local NGOs.

Chimanikire also announced to the meeting that he was recruited to the National Arts Council board of Zimbabwe; this will afford them a chance to have a voice for the development of theatre and arts in general.

On the question of how they operation with Chipawo as they have their own centres like the mother body, Chimanikire said they harmonized the operations and some of their leaders are part of ASSITEJ Zimbabwe executive.

The house asked for centres to share information especially regarding to the festivals and other activities that can be shared by centres for networking purposes, also assist with information regarding participation in HIFA as they are involved as a centre.

The chairperson congratulated Chimanikire for the recognition in the National Arts Council Board and saw that as a sign of recognition in the development of children and young people's theatre.

### **Uganda: Copy not submitted**

They have the institute of theatre, and there are students who will be graduating in June. They are involved in fundraising activities where they use

music and drama performances than relying on moving with proposals from one institution to the other asking for funding and or donations. They are now planning to move out to the communities with the performances in a fundraising campaign.

ASSITEJ Uganda has also been able to send groups to international festivals, they recently got recognition and been co-opted in the organizing committee for CHOGAM, that gives them a chance to advocate for the arts. Currently they are involved in the project with the Queen Mother for children with disability/ special needs.

### **Break for Official Opening by - The Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Youth Affairs: Hon Hlob'sile Ndlovu**

Copy of the speech provided

### **Tanzania: Copy submitted**

ASSITEJ Tanzania is involved in a training program with the National Arts Council where ASSITEJ Tanzania provides with resource persons. They host an annual children's theatre festival in May and some of their groups have also participated/ performed in the Zanzibar festival.

### **Cameroon: copy submitted**

In 2005 – 2006 ASSITEJ Cameroon was involved in a recruitment exercise where they were recruiting artists nation wide. ASSITEJ Cameroon hosts Younde International festival, this is a small festival and they cannot afford performance fees at the moment but can only assist in selling the show to the European promoters whom they invite to the festival to scout for groups/ or shows that they can buy for the European audience. Instead of performance fees, they offer participation fee amounting to 800 Euro per participating group.

The next festival is in November 7 – 14, 2008

### **Kenya: copy submitted**

ASSITEJ Kenya is just 2 years old; they used people who have interest in children's theatre and this helped them in establishing the centre, currently planning to have schools festivals that will include universities where they will put festival organizers on board so as to get the opportunity of selling the performances to international promoters/ festival organizers.

The groups they are using are out of school youth groups who are in the communities; these groups develop their plays from schools set books and perform in schools. This in turn helps the students with the better understanding of the books.

ASSITEJ Kenya has entered in a partnership with Nairobi University, and the university will even support them financially. They are also promised funding by the Japanese.

**Nigeria: copy not submitted**

Due to financial constraints, ASSITEJ Nigeria has not done much. They had some awards called "Future Awards" on multimedia; these were held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January. There are workshops that they hold on the last Sunday of every month.

**Rwanda: copy submitted**

ASSITEJ Rwanda was officially launched in 2006. They have trainings going on for children in acting and they commemorated the World Day of Theatre for Children in 2006. There is an internet program for Rwandan and Scottish kids where they do some plays confronting genocide through the internet. ASSITEJ Rwanda has a children's publishing house where they have developed good literature for children and done for radio. They are now joined by a Belgian woman who has come with good skills and ideas to develop children's theatre. Through this partnership, they have developed a new program called the 3 Bs, and are reaching out to schools with literature for children and children's performances.

The centre has got in another partnership with the National Commissioner of AIDS and they will be using theatre to reach more kids in the streets on HIV and AIDS issues.

This program is intending to be taken to other countries, so ASSITEJ Rwanda will share information with other centres in case their countries can be in the list.

There was a suggestion that there is need to develop children's stories from the African Traditional Folk Tales or adapt them for stage, this is a good way of reviving and maintaining our cultural identity as these tales are good for children and are very educative, children like such stories and are very much exciting to them. The African Union can support this as it has the department for African Languages and it supports children's stories.

Suzana from ASSITEJ Rwanda is the member of the steering committee of that department of the African Union.

**Botswana: copy not submitted**

In February ASSITEJ Botswana held a workshop on creative writing, this was held for the first time 2006. In May in the same year the material was put together and taken to the curriculum department in the Ministry of Education to be incorporated in the in the curriculum.

Their groups participated in the Maitisong Arts festival and Dzalobana festival in March and November 2006 respectively. The centre was also instrumental in the formation of the Botswana Arts Activists, the body advocating for the development of arts in the country. Currently ASSITEJ Botswana is organizing a festival to coincide with the Independence Day celebrations in Botswana on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2007.

On the issue of the website, ASSITEJ Botswana was able to meet the deadline and designed the website though it is currently not active because subscription wasn't paid.

### **South Africa: copy submitted**

ASSITEJ South Africa is not yet established. Yvette requested contacts of people who attended ASSITEJ meetings before so that she can put them onboard and establish the centre. However she said there are people who she thinks fit well in the programs of ASSITEJ whom she will try to approach and these are the creative voices, it is run/ involves teachers in arts and culture in schools and are well supported/ recognized by the ministry of education. There is a lot happening in South Africa in the arts fraternity, but the challenge is on bringing people together.

The meeting advised Yvette to first of all try to find out the legal status of the organization to ascertain if it was registered before or not to avoid controversy/ misunderstanding to some.

### **Swaziland: copy submitted**

ASSITEJ Swaziland held a national children's program in partnership with the ministry of education, supported by UNICEF Swaziland. This was addressing issues of HIV and AIDS; teachers were trained to understand the philosophy of children's theatre and how to work with children in crafting a play. The dramas developed in schools were staged in the constituencies in form of competitions and all the winning schools represented their constituencies in the national competitions.

The centre has just entered in a partnership with Yale University from the USA, and they will be coming to the Kingdom in June 2007 for a month long program coordinated by ASSITEJ Swaziland. ASSITEJ Swaziland has also embarked on an audience building exercise where they are coming up with professional productions staged at the theatre club as the country has no paying theatre audience.

## **Day 2: 18 March 2007**

The chairperson (ASSITEJ Swaziland President) welcomed Fredrick Philander from ASSITEJ Namibia who couldn't make it to the meeting on the first day. After the welcome remarks, the chairperson briefed Philander on what was covered in the first day including the official opening of the meeting by the Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Youth Affairs, Hon Hlo'bsile Ndlovu.

The chairperson then invited Philander to deliver his country report.

### **Namibia: copy not submitted**

ASSITEJ Namibia is working on a national structure which now is nearing completion. They have decentralized their operations to the rural areas and by June 2007 they will have 18 centres operational with 2 fulltime facilitators. The centre has a board which is composed of representatives from each of the centres around the country; they are supported by the Finish Gvt. Philander reported in the meeting officially that he was appointed to the National Arts Council Board.

In August, which they call the "theatre season", they will have 2 productions running with aim of raising funds.

The chairperson congratulated Philander for his appointment in the Board of the National Arts Council.

Philander further asked the members to try and approach the Finish Government for support, they have funds for arts, Namibia and Zambia are being support. It is important for other ASSITEJ centres to try and create some links/ relations with the Finish.

### **Kigali Workshop: 7 – 13 November 2006 (Copy submitted)**

This was a play writing workshops focused on developing children and young people's plays. Hope in her reported mentioned that it was a success and all the participants' interests and expectations were covered as they were identified before the start of the workshop.

The chairperson thanked Hope for the report and suggested that such workshops should be followed up with programs. People must not just enjoy attending workshops only, but must implement after such workshops in their respective centres/ countries.

Philander from Namibia said they are currently using the girl they sent to the similar workshop to use the skills she acquired from the workshop to introduce puppetry inn their programs and it is working very well for them and the girl is very active in implementing the project.

ASSITEJ Zambia has now opened the school of drama. All the people in the country who have attended ASSITEJ workshops are used as resource persons in the school. This is highly appreciated by these people who have attended workshops as they are given the platform to share what they gained from the workshops.

The chairperson applauded such efforts by the two centres and further requested Cheela from Zambia to share the information about the school of drama; he (chairperson) is personally interested into it.

The meeting suggested that each person attending a workshop must make a written report for record purposes for the centres than just letting the person go with all the literature and the centre remains with no information/ any hand outs.

Following some of the issues that were raised during the workshops, it was suggested that there mustn't be any discussions that will need centres to commit themselves, especially those that are administrative. This is because in some cases the people who attend such workshops are artists who cannot

decide for the country and at times not having full information about the operations and other details about the centre.

The ASSITEJ International Secretary General said he was personally happy about the report and said the participants were so much enthusiastic as they kept wanting for more. He further said the problem that was there before for such workshops was failing to report. It was suggested that in such workshops there must be a scribe who will capture all the proceedings and information without participating in other activities in the workshop.

### **General Evaluation of 2006**

The meeting suggested that if centres compile reports for any of workshops must send them to the Secretary General of ASSITEJ International for a comprehensive report that will be distributed to the rest of the members.

### **Evaluation Reports**

Discussions on the evaluation document for 2006 together with planning for year 2007 was postponed to be discussed on 19/03/07

### **Website: Botswana**

This was given to ASSITEJ Botswana to develop it. They managed to do it within a space of a week to meet the deadline that was given. Generally the website was said to be good though there were some information lacking. Some of the countries had not supplied information to the website, these countries were: Cameroon, Mauritius, Tanzania, Mozambique, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

In sending the information, it was said there was no specific format. It is only that the information goes through the editor Cheela Chilala of ASSITEJ Zambia and then to the publisher Clark of ASSITEJ Botswana. The editing is just for uniformity of the content and does not change information sent by the centres.

It was proposed that the questions they send to members for information must not be put in the website but remain as format for members to use in sending information.

However Clark reported that the website has since expired due to unpaid hosting for the current year. He said it was only paid for one year.

The Secretary General raised a concern that it wasn't communicated to him and he was not aware of that. Clark said he tried to communicate with the Secretary General, Niclas but his communication was unsuccessful.

The meeting resolved to come up with the committee during the meeting that will meet on the same day and see what is needed for the website and report to the meeting the following day on 19/ 03/ 07.

The members who were chosen for the committee were:

Clark – ASSITEJ Botswana, Yvette – South Africa, Etoundi – ASSITEJ Cameroon, Remy martin – ASSITEJ Nigeria and Cheela – ASSITEJ Zambia

### **Business Arising from Daresalam Meeting**

The issues arising from the Daresalam were shelved for the next day of the meeting, the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 to be discussed in detail.

### **Save This Generation**

This is a program using puppetry in advocacy on HIV and AIDS issues. The program was meant to take place in 4 countries with 2 in the Southern region and 2 in the Eastern region funded by SIDA within their contract with ASSITEJ International on the bases that the program would run rotational. The countries identified to start the program were:  
Uganda, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe

According to Cheela's report, things were moving at snail pace and the delay by the Eastern countries to send information to him, forced him (Cheela) to send a proposal for the Southern African region countries to meet the deadline for SIDA that was running out than to lose the funding and the program.

The proposal was sent and approved for Southern African countries with ASSITEJ Zambia hosting. The workshop is scheduled for the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 in Lusaka, Zambia and the money is already released by SIDA.

### **Financial Report – 2006**

The report is there and was distributed to all the members

### **Membership Fees – ASSITEJ International**

Members are encouraged to pay their membership fees on time to ASSITEJ International. It was agreed that all the members who will fail to pay their membership fees up to the last day of the EC meeting of the following year will be expelled from ASSITEJ International and if they are interested to rejoin, they will be asked to apply as new members.

ASSITEJ Centres must try all they can to raise their affiliation fees and can draw it from their membership affiliation fees.

## **Day 3: 19 March 2007**

### **Website Committee report**

Yvette Hardie of South Africa reported on behalf of the committee where their recommendations revealed that the website looked good and the members have to provide with information to be put in the website.

Regarding the issue of payment they proposed to know the budget for SIDA for the website hosting. They recommended that there's need to look for an alternative host of the website and South Africa and Nigeria had shown

interest in hosting, but the hosting and managing the website was proposed to be done rotationally.

South Africa and Nigeria suggested that with a budget of \$100 + they can host the website for a year.

When comparing the information with other websites, they recommended that there "current events" which will be for the year running be added in the website and there is need for the calendar of events page as well as documents page where reports, press statements and brochures will be found with pictures from different member centres. Yvette will make samples of the page and send to members for comments/ input. There's also a need to activate the emails and email addresses need to be linked to the site for members to receive emails.

### **Additional Menu**

The information for the website will continue in with the sending process that goes through the editor Cheela, recommended to be sent in word format for easy editing then to the publisher.

On the suggestions to have someone employed to manage the web or each country responsible for its own page, it was recommended that the country responsible for hosting will manage the website.

Some of the links are currently not working and they need to be activated and linked to the web. The committee also requested members to link other websites of the companies or organizations they are working with in their respective countries.

It was recommended that the member countries must volunteer to pay and host the website on yearly rotational basis, members who feel can share the hosting are free to do so. ASSITEJ Namibia through Fredrick Philander volunteered to pay for the hosting for 3 years, they are expected to pay \$300 and South Africa, through Yvette Hardie will manage the website. All ASSITEJ members who are part of the Africa Region Network are to appear in this website (Africa Arena).

### **Group presentations**

Copies of group recommendations provided/ available

## **Day 4: 20 March 2007**

### **Identification of Host Country**

Botswana was identified as the next host country for the next Regional meeting/workshop for ASSITEJ which should be sometime in the middle or towards the end of November. The meeting should be a working meeting looking at life beyond the network. The meeting should be for duration of six days including arrival and departure. Centres were urged to send people who will come back and work in the centres and the number of participants from

each centre will depend in the mode of transport that will be used. Those who will use air will be affected by the finance as travelling by air is expensive compared to traveling by road. A suggestion was put forward to the SG requesting him to look into the half prices usually offered by airlines to people traveling in large numbers to meetings. Closer countries to Botswana such as Swaziland, Zambia, Tanzania, and South Africa should use bus to save funds and those that are far away should send two people. It was suggested that gender balance should be observed when sending participants.

### **Regional Workshop/Meeting**

It was suggested that it should be a meeting coupled with a workshop. A resource person should be solicited who is well vested in the establishment and maintaining of networks of this kind i.e. structures for networks international. Centres were requested to send questionnaires for information needed and strategic plans for each centre. The presentations from each group will be used in formulating the strategic plan for the Network. Similar thoughts were observed in the groups presentations. Each centre should identify areas of emphasis where help is needed and those areas will be tackled in the meeting. Strategic plans for centres should have sustainability and be self-sustainable. Centres should also have a strategic communication plan to be followed.

### **Key Areas for the meeting**

1. Strategic plan
2. Communication strategy

Each centre should develop its own strategic plan and be brought to the meeting to be shared. National structures should be strengthened. Ceremonial chairmanship should be used in the meetings as it allows people to step in and out. Communication should also be strategized in the centres for advertising purposes. The Zambians offered to send their strategic plan to those centres that do not have.

### **Resource People**

Centres were requested to send names of people they have in mind who can be resource people for the workshop/meeting.

### **AOB**

### **Website Data**

Centres were requested to send data for the website to Yvette and two addresses for centre members to be sent also. All centres should be involved in all activities of ASSITEJ. There was a feeling that the name of the website

ATA (African Theatre Arena) be changed and children and youth are included. Suggestions were forwarded namely:

1. ACTA African Children Theatre Arena
2. ACYTA African Children Youth Theatre Arena
3. AYTA African Youth Theatre Arena

All the centres agreed on changing the name of the website from ATA to ACYTA (African Children and Youth Theatre Arena)

The SG informed the participants of the ASSITEJ World Congress to be held in Adelaide in Australia in May 9-18 2008. Centres should solicit funding and information about the congress to be checked in ASSITEJ WEBSITE.

### **Puppetry Workshop in Lusaka**

There will be a puppetry workshop in Zambia Lusaka from the 15 to the 23 May 2007. Arrival will be 15 May and departure for ASSITEJ EC members will be 21 and other participants will be on 23. Two people should attend the workshop from each centre and gender should be observed. Names of participants should be sent to Cheela.

### **Joint Policy for African ASSITEJ Centres**

The joint policy for African ASSITEJ Centres was adopted by all centres and Cheela and Yvette were tasked to edit it and put it in the web.

The Namibian centre urged the other centres to be on the lookout for sponsorship from companies and informed the house that they got a sponsorship of \$5000 from a certain company. Centres were also urged to raise funds locally. ASSITEJ Namibia contributed \$300 towards the setting up of the website. The centres who are assigned to be hosts of meetings were also requested to take care of delegates coming to their countries for the meetings e.g. immigration matters to avoid the embarrassment that occurred in the Tanzania/ Cameroon saga. Communication should be adhered to and letters of invitation should be written to centres coming to the meeting by the host country centre.

The meeting was closed by a word of prayer by: Nontokozo Maziya (ASSITEJ Swaziland)

The participants left for the children's world theatre day celebrations at the theatre club in Mbabane and there was the official closing ceremony on the same venue in the evening.

Officially closed by the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs: Mr Meshack Shongwe.