



The South African National Centre of ASSITEJ
(International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People)
Patron: Gcina Mhlophe

VAT # 4090278724; NPO 066 875; PBO 930031176
www.assitej-international.org & www.assitej.org.za

18 March 2021

Dear Ms Mngoma

RE: ASSITEJ SA'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR ARTIST SIT-IN AT NAC

ASSITEJ SOUTH AFRICA is one of the African branches of ASSITEJ International, a network of artists, researchers, and others who focus on quality theatre and arts experiences for young audiences globally. We believe in the powerful transformation that theatre, arts and creativity can make in the lives of children and youth. We build the sector of theatre for young audiences in South Africa through supporting and developing artists, empowering education through the performing arts, creating strategies for access to the arts, and advocating for the role of the arts as an essential right of every child and young person.

ASSITEJ SA believes in transparency, accountability and in building a supported and flourishing creative sector for the upcoming generations of youth and children in our country.

ASSITEJ SA are in full support of the sit-in and protest at the NAC offices, demanding answers, delivery on contractual obligations and payments for artists from the PESP fund, administered by the National Arts Council. We salute you and all the courageous artist colleagues who have taken the lead in holding the Council to account.

Ha ho senyeha ke ha ho loka is a Sesotho expression that can loosely be translated to mean, it's in the chaos that order prevails. Perhaps this unprecedented sit in by artists at the NAC offices - now in Day 16 - is indicative of the chaos in the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture that needs to bring order.

South African artists are currently living under great strain; some are literally starving, and the lack of meaningful support and lack of a competent government strategy for the recovery of the arts is a national disaster. They need relief and support, but the actions and decisions of the NAC and DSAC in relation to relief funding are failing them. Artists working for and with children and young people are particularly under-valued; they have traditionally been paid at lower rates, and given less respect than artists working for adults. And yet, their work is crucial to our nation.

ASSITEJ SA will continue to support the sit-in and related activities until a workable strategy to help artists and those in the cultural industries is implemented. We call on the Minister and the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture to ensure that artists are given the immediate relief they need and deserve, and that policies are enacted that will ensure that

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Theatre for Young People

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the cultural rights of our children and young people to access the arts are respected and treated as central to the well-being, recovery and resilience of our society.

ASSITEJ SA calls on all artists to support this protest, to protect the future of the Creative and Cultural Industries in South Africa for the sake of our children and young people.

We salute you and your team for your tenacity and determination to see that the right thing is done. #ArtistsLivesMatter

Yours faithfully

Selloane Mokuku
Chairperson: ASSITEJ South Africa

Yvette Elisabeth Hardie
Director: ASSITEJ South Africa