

Report – Meeting Regional Council for the Americas

During November 8, 9, and 11, 2023, ITI meetings were held with the participation of representatives from various international centers. Under the leadership of Jeff Fagundes (BRAZIL) and Teresa Eyring (USA); with the participation of Zhongwen Chen (ITI Worldwide), Roberto Cayuqueo (CHILE), Antonia Fernandez (CUBA), Sergio Hernández (MEXICO), Pamela Hernández (COLOMBIA), Emily Cachapero (USA), Raksak Kongseng (USA), Christelyn (CJ) Ochoco (USA), and Lloyd Nikadzino (Vice-President of the African Regional Council - ZIMBABWE).

Reconnecting with our ancestors

The first meeting began with a warm welcome from Teresa Eyring and Zhongwen Chen, who provided an overview of the session. Participants introduced themselves and shared current situations in their countries. It was noted that despite limited resources and political turmoil in Cuba, Cuban artists continue to produce notable work.

ITI Colombia emphasized its goals of sustainability, public engagement, especially with youth, and academic exchanges. Zhongwen discussed the creation and role of ITI Worldwide, clarifying the structure and responsibilities of the ITI General Secretariat. Jeff Fagundes addressed the importance of diversity within NEAP and ITI in general. The agenda was approved, with Teresa suggesting adding a section to recognize ancestors or mentors who inspire each participant.

The ITI structure includes committees with humanitarian, educational, and artistic focuses, as well as regional councils: Africa, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Arab, and the Americas. Zhongwen also clarified that ITI patronage does not involve financial or in-kind support, only the use of ITI's logo and name to increase the visibility of performing arts. The ITI organizational structure was detailed, including the General Assembly, Executive Council, and General Secretariat. Antonia Fernandez presented an idea for an ITI academy and agreed to prepare a proposal for further discussion.

Reconnecting with our neighbors

On the second day, participants shared stories about ancestors or mentors who inspire them. Raksak Kongseng summarized the notes from the first day, and Teresa Eyring highlighted migration and sustainability as key topics, with a desire to maintain connections between centers. Antonia clarified that her idea of an academy differed from the existing ITI structure, preferring the term "Escuela" (school).

An overview of current and future activities of the centers was presented. ITI Colombia is focusing more on music than theatre this year, conducting projects in various cities and with indigenous communities. ITI Cuba faces financial challenges but continues to promote events

and international collaborations. ITI Mexico and ITI Chile discussed their activities and challenges, including budget cuts and efforts to build capacity and create mentorship programs. ITI USA reported financial support for NEAP Fest 2023 and its commitment to climate issues. ITI Brazil is planning future activities, including international residencies and mental health support for artists.

The future of the Americas

The final meeting took place at MUHCAB, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participants discussed resources and needs of the centers, project opportunities, and ways to involve more centers from the Americas. ITI USA highlighted the relaunch of American Theatre Magazine and offered space to promote the centers. ITI Brazil expressed gratitude for hosting the council and festival this year and showed interest in seeing the next meeting held in another region of the Americas. ITI Chile and ITI Mexico discussed their activities and future plans, while ITI Cuba mentioned the need for support to purchase a laptop and improve communication. The ITI General Secretariat emphasized the importance of communication and suggested creating a video to introduce the centers of the Americas.

Participants agreed to maintain regular communication, work on a video for the centers, and meet every 1 to 2 months.