

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
AFRICAN LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION ASSOCIATIONS
AND INSTITUTIONS (AfLIA)**

FOUNDED IN 2013

THE AFRICAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS (AfLIA)

Article 1 NAME

- 1.1. The name of the Association shall be the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions. It is referred to throughout this Constitution as “the Association”.
- 1.2. The acronym by which the Association is known is: AfLIA.
- 1.3. The official languages of the Association are English, French and Portuguese.
- 1.4. The Association is incorporated in accordance with the Laws of Ghana.

Article 2 INTERPRETATION

In interpreting the Constitution and Bye-laws, except where the context otherwise requires:-

- i. Words in the masculine gender include the feminine, the singular includes the plural and the plural includes the singular.
- ii. “Financial Year” means the period between 1st January and 31st December, both dates inclusive.
- iii. “Paid-up Member” means any member whose subscriptions, as laid down in the Bye-laws are fully paid up to 31st December immediately preceding the current financial year.
- iv. “Voting Member” means any paid up member or an accredited representative of any paid up institutional member.

Article 3 VISION

To be the association of choice for strategic growth of the library and information profession in Africa.

Article 4 MISSION

It is the trusted African voice for the library and information community, and drives equitable access to information and knowledge for all

Article 5 OBJECTS

5.1. The Association is an independent, international, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization, which pursues the interests of library and information associations, library and information services, librarians and information workers and the communities they serve.

5.2. To achieve its purpose, the Association shall:

- i. encourage the library and information profession to anticipate and respond to the needs of communities in Africa;
- ii. drive high standards in library and information services and professional practices;
- iii. encourage widespread understanding of the value and importance of high quality library and information services in the public, private, academia, government and voluntary sectors;
- iv. promote libraries and information centres as vital institutions that enhance people's lives through equitable access to knowledge and information by:
 - creating strategic alliances;
 - enhancing professional education;
 - developing professional standards;
 - sharing best practices;
 - advancing relevant scientific and professional knowledge and
 - promoting open access to information and knowledge and open source applications.
- v. Advance research and development of relevant services to indigenous knowledge and information of local communities and preservation of cultural heritage;
- vi. enable all its members to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion;
- vii. embrace the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Article on African Charter of People's Rights;
- viii. place library and information professionals in a position to offer relevant services to:
 - assist the realisation of the UN and AU Development Goals and the WSIS objectives;
 - document and package oral culture and information;

- make research information produced on the continent globally available;
 - deploy the use of ICTs and the internet revolution in accessing information;
 - train library and information workers to offer current information services to users.
- ix. Support the establishment and strengthening of regional and national library and information associations in Africa;
- x. forge links with other relevant institutions, organisations and associations;
- xi. put the library and information profession on the national and continental agendas;
- xii. do all other things that will support the development of LIS on the African continent.

Article 6 MEMBERSHIP

6.1. The Council shall admit members to the Association.

6.2. The AfLIA membership shall consist of the following:

- i. International / Regional Library Associations;
- ii. National Library Associations;
- iii. National libraries;
- iv. Academic libraries;
- v. Public libraries/ Community Libraries;
- vi. Special libraries;
- vii. School Libraries;
- viii. National Library Consortia
- ix. Information and Documentation Centres
 - x. Library and Information Education/ Training Institutions
- xi. Library and Information related Businesses
- xii. Friends of AfLIA with approval by the Council
- xiii. Library NGOs
- xiv. Libraries & Library Institutions in the Diaspora
- xv. Institutions/ organisations related to libraries and information that the Governing Council will approve.

Article 7 GOVERNING COUNCIL

7.1. The governing body of the Association shall be the Council, which shall have power to act on behalf of the Association, in all matters except those reserved in the constitution to members at an Annual or Special General Meeting.

7.2. Composition of the Governing Council

The Governing Council shall consist of:

- i. President
- ii. Vice President
- iii. Treasurer (elected from among the Governing Council members)
- iv. Immediate Past President
- v. One elected representative from each of the five regions- East, West, North, South, Central - of Africa
- vi. One elected representative from Portuguese speaking Africa
- vii. One elected representative from French speaking West Africa
- viii. Chairpersons of the Sections
- ix. Executive Director
- x. Ex-officio members

7.3. Casual vacancies among the Regional representatives shall be filled by the Governing Council, by co-option. A casual vacancy among Chairpersons of Section shall be filled as laid down by the Section.

7.4. Any decision of the Governing Council may be overruled by two-thirds majority of the members voting electronically.

7.5. Ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held at least three times in each financial year, at least one of which should be face to face.

7.6. An Extraordinary (Special) Council meeting shall be called by the Executive Director on receipt of a written request from at least 1/3 of the membership of the Governing Council, within three weeks of receiving such a request.

7.7. The quorum at Governing Council meetings shall be eight including an Officer as stated in Article 8.1

Article 8 OFFICERS

8.1. The Officers of the Association shall be the President, Vice President, Executive Director, and Treasurer. They shall take office immediately after the adjournment of the Annual General Meeting in the election year.

8.2 There shall be an Executive Director who shall be appointed for an initial term of four years renewable once or as decided by Council upon satisfactory performance. He shall be the head of the Secretariat and lead the implementation of the activities of the Association.

8.3. **Casual Vacancies.** If the Presidency becomes vacant, the Vice President shall automatically assume the office and powers of President. The Council from among the elected Councillors shall fill other casual vacancies.

8.4. If the Treasurer is absent or incapacitated the Council may appoint an Acting Hon. Treasurer from among the elected Councillors, and he shall assume the powers and duties of Treasurer until the return of the Treasurer.

Article 9 MEETINGS

- 9.1. The Annual General Meeting is the highest governance level of the Association that carries out the following activities:
- i. Determination of the purposes and values of the Association;
 - ii. Approval and amendment of the Statutes;
 - iii. Determination of the conditions of membership;
 - iv. Receipt and approval of the annual financial report and accounts.
- 9.2. An Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be rotated among cities in Africa through a bidding process and the meeting shall be regulated as provided for in the Bye-laws.
- 9.3. A Special General Meeting shall be called by the Executive Director on receipt of a written request, signed by at least 15 members and stating the reason for requesting the meeting, within eight weeks of receiving such request.
- 9.4. Other Special Meetings may be called by the Council at any time.
- 9.5. The quorum at Annual and Special General Meetings shall be one quarter of the total paid-up membership.
- 9.6. Annually, and no later than six months after the close of the Association's year, Unless the General Meeting extends this period by five months at most on the grounds of special circumstances, a General Meeting shall be held, which shall deal with, inter alia, the annual financial report and the annual accounts.
- 9.7. The Governing Council may convene an extraordinary General Meeting to decide upon matters of urgent and extreme importance, on which decisions cannot be delayed until the next ordinary General Meeting.
- 9.8. Upon receiving a written request, signed by at least as many Members as shall be authorized to cast one tenth part of the votes in the General Meeting, the Governing Council shall convene an extraordinary General Meeting. Such an Assembly shall be held no later than four weeks after the date on which the request is received by the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall send convening notices to all Members entitled to attend, together with the agenda, at least two weeks prior to such a Meeting. Should no response have been given to the aforementioned request within fourteen days the Members submitting the request may themselves convene a meeting.

Article 10. VOTING RIGHTS

- 10.1. Only paid-up members shall have the right to vote either at meetings or in elections. Any member may challenge another member, if he has good cause to think that the other member is not eligible to vote. In case of challenge, the ruling of the President, or in his absence the Chairperson of the meeting, shall be final.
- 10.2. **Election of Officers and Council.** Each voting member shall have a vote, which shall be exercised as provided for in the Bye-Laws.

Article 11. ELECTIONS

- 11.1. Officers and Councillors shall be nominated by post/ email as provided in the Bye-laws. Only fully paid-up members shall be eligible to hold office as officers or Councillors, and eligible to vote.
- 11.2. For each election, the Council shall appoint three persons of good standing, at least two of whom should be members of the Association, to act as Scrutineers. At least two Scrutineers shall be present at the counting of votes and shall sign the declaration of result.
- 11.3. At the coming into force of this constitution the paid - up members of the Association shall elect a President and he shall hold office for two (2) years renewable once only. If he had served as Vice President before being elected as President, he will serve for only one term of two (2) years as President.
- 11.4. The paid - up members of the Association shall elect the Vice President, and he shall hold office for two years and is eligible to stand for election as a President after serving as Vice President .
- 11.5. The Treasurer shall be appointed from among the Council members for a two-year term and shall work with the Association's Accountant and oversee the Association's Financial matters. He shall be eligible for immediate re-election for a two-year term only.
- 11.6. The Regional representatives on the Council shall each be elected by the paid - up members in that region.
- 11.7. The period of office of all members of the Council shall be two (2) years and they, except the President whose term of office is stated in 11.3 and the Executive Director whose term of office is stated in 8.2, shall be eligible for immediate re-election for one more term of two years only.

Article 12 FINANCE

- 12.1. Membership Fee structure shall be laid down in the Bye-laws and every Member must pay an annual membership fee in accordance with a schedule of fees determined at the General Meeting.

- 12.2. Membership Fee may be changed only at an Annual General Meeting of the Association by a simple majority of the members present.
- 12.3. Other fees may be levied at the discretion of the Council by making the necessary provision in the Bye-laws.
- 12.4. The Council shall have power to make reasonable payments in respect of expenses or fees to any person performing special services for the Association at the request of the Council.
- 12.5. No payment in the nature of a fee or salary shall be made to any Officer or Councillor unless approved by the Council. An Officer or Councillor or other representative who travels to carry out work on behalf of the Association will have the approved expenses paid/refunded.
- 12.6. The Association may accept donations in monetary or other form for use that do not conflict with the purposes and values of the Association.
- 12.7. The income or assets of the Association shall not be distributed to, or used for the benefit of any private person or non-charitable organization other than:
 - i. in the conduct of the activities that are necessary for the purposes of the Association;
 - ii. as payment for property or goods purchased by the Association.
- 12.8. The Accountant shall keep all financial records and be responsible for receiving and paying out all monies on behalf of the paid-up members of the Association, and communicate this to the Executive Director from time to time.
- 12.9. The Association shall keep its funds in a Bank, except such funds are required as petty cash. The Accountant and either the President or Executive Director shall sign all cheques for payments.
- 12.10. The Accountant shall draw up a balance sheet and statement of accounts at the end of each financial year. He shall submit these for audit together with all records, receipts, cheque books, bank statements and any other documents requested by the Auditors, not later than 31st January next following the end of the financial year.
- 12.11. **Auditors.** Members present at the annual general meeting, shall approve External Auditors of the Association..

Article 13 AFFILIATION

- 13.1. The Council shall have the power to affiliate the Association to any international organization having objects of a comparable nature to those of the Association.

- 13.2. The Council may, at any time, enter into negotiation with other organizations with a view to enhancing the objects of the Association. The Council may enter into an agreement of such benefits, but any such agreement shall be binding on the Association and its Members only after being ratified by the Members as if it were an amendment to the Constitution.

Article 14 COMMITTEES and SECTIONS

- 14.1. There shall be Committees and Sections of the Association as provided in the Bye-laws.
- 14.2. No Section Bye-laws shall be valid in so far as they conflict with any provision of the Association's Constitution or Bye-Laws.
- 14.3. The Council may give loans or grants to Committees and Sections in furtherance of their work. Such loans will be properly accounted for when due to Council.

Article 15 DISCIPLINE

15.1. Professional Conduct

Every member is required to uphold the reputation of the Association and the dignity of the profession. A member is required to observe the Code of Ethics and act in strict fiduciary manner towards his clients and employers and towards any others with whom his work is connected. The Association may make, amend and rescind rules to be observed by members with regard to their conduct in any respect, which may be relevant to their position as members of the Association.

15.2. Expulsion

The Council may, by the votes of not less than four fifths of the members present, remove from the Register the name of any member who shall have willfully acted in contravention of the Constitution, or who, in the opinion of the Council, shall have been guilty of such conduct as shall render him unfit to continue to belong to the Association. Provided that, before taking such action the Council shall afford such member the opportunity of appearing before the Council or its Committee or making representation verbally and/ or in writing.

Article 16 BYE-LAWS

- 16.1. The Council may, at any time, make Bye-Laws for the purpose of implementing the Constitution, or for the purpose of regulating matters not covered by the Constitution, but no Bye-laws shall be valid in so far as they conflict with any provision of the Constitution.
- 16.2. Bye-laws, except one specifying the rates of Membership Subscriptions, may be amended or revoked by the Council at any time.

16.3. Any amendment or revocation of the Bye-laws shall be notified to all members within four weeks thereof, and shall not come into effect until six weeks after the Council Meeting at which the amendment or revocation was made.

Article 17 AMENDMENT

17.1 The Constitution may be amended only by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members voting electronically. Any proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be made in writing to the General Secretary not less than six weeks before the Annual or Special General Meeting at which the amendment is to be considered, and shall be circulated by him to all members, at least at the meeting at which the amendment is being considered.

17.2. Minor modifications may be made to an amendment duly notified as aforesaid if those modifications are approved by the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting at which the amendment is being considered.

Article 18 DISSOLUTION AND SETTLEMENT

18.1. The Association may be dissolved by a resolution of the Annual General meeting.

18.2. In the event of dissolution, the proposals for dissolution shall provide that the liquidation surplus shall be applied for the benefit of the common good of library and information associations and service in accordance with the purposes of the Association.

18.3. The settlement shall be carried out by the Council.

18.4. After dissolution, the Council shall continue to exist until settlement of its assets. During the settlement, the provisions of the Constitution shall remain in force as far as is possible. In documents and announcements issued by the Council, the words "in liquidation" must be added to its name.

18.5. The settlement shall end on the date on which there are no assets known to the Executor of the settlement.

18.6. The accounts and documents of the dissolved Association will be kept for seven years after the dissolution. The custodian shall be appointed by the Executors.

Adopted on the **3rd** day of **July** in the year **2013** and **Amended** on the **2nd** day of **June** in the year **2015**

BYE-LAWS

1. ADDRESSES

- 1.1 The Association has its headquarters in Accra, Ghana
- 1.2 The Association shall rent a Post Office Box, have an e-mail address and a website which shall be the official addresses of the Association, and shall be used in all correspondence.

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 All applications for membership shall be submitted to the Executive Director, who will forward them to the Council for consideration.

3. MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

- 3.1 Subscriptions for members joining the Association after 30th June shall in respect of the remainder of that financial year be half the annual subscription, with no voting rights.
- 3.2 All subscriptions shall be due on 1st January of each year. The Executive Director shall notify any member who has not paid his subscription. Any member who is 12 months or more in arrears shall be automatically suspended from membership and shall have no voting rights until reinstated by the Council. Reinstatement shall be at the discretion of the Council, upon payment of all arrears of subscriptions.

3.3 Membership Fees Structure (Annual)

The Governing Council shall determine amount of fees to be paid annually by categories of members, which may be subject to revision at a General Meeting of members of AfLIA. The categories of members are as follows:

- i. **International / Regional Association**
- ii. **National Library Association**
 - Small 1-100 members
 - Medium 101 -250 members
 - Large over 250 members
- iii. **National Consortium**
- iv. **National Library**
 - Small - 1-50 employees
 - Medium - 51- 100 employees
 - Large - over 100 employees
- v. **Academic Library**

Small 1-5000 students
Medium 5001-10,000 students
Large 10,001 – 50,000 students
Very large - over 50,000 students

vi. **Public Library**

vii. **Small Public Library (Community Library)**

vii. **School Library**

viii. **Special Library**

ix. **Information & Documentation Centre**

vii. **Library and Information Education/Training Institution**

xiii. **Library and Information related NGO/Institution**

xv. **Corporate member**

4. PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

4.1. In addition to the provisions of Article 15 of the Constitution of the Association, the following condition shall also apply:

There shall be established a five (5) member Disciplinary Committee of Council to whom all cases of indiscipline / misconduct shall be referred for investigation. Such cases must be decided within 3 months and recommendations forwarded to Council for consideration.

4.2. Withdrawal of Membership

A member's registration shall be withdrawn if he is found to be guilty of unprofessional conduct.

4.2.1. Unprofessional conduct is where a registered member is:

- i. Found guilty of infamous conduct in a professional respect by the Disciplinary Committee.
- ii. Convicted by any court of law which in the opinion of Council is not compatible with the status of a member of the profession.
- iii. Any offences that Council deems as bringing the name of the profession into disrepute.

4.3. Code of Ethics

4.3.1 As members of the African Library and Information Associations and Institutions, it is necessary and important to set out and publicise the ethical principles of the profession that guide the work of librarians and information workers to members of the profession and to the general public.

4.3.2 The African Library and Information Association and Institutions Code of Ethics stipulate the values, within which are the ethical responsibilities of the profession to which members must be committed.

4.3.3. The principles of this Code of Ethics are indicated in broad statements and they guide good decision making. The following statements are broad and do not refer to specific situations. Members of AfLIA will:

- i. uphold the principles of intellectual freedom to access and expression, and resist all efforts to censor library resources.
- ii. protect the right to privacy and confidentiality of every library user relating to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
- iii. provide the most effective service to all library users through all appropriate resources and policies; give equitable access to information; and offer accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests.
- iv. uphold the tenets of intellectual property rights in so far as it does not infringe on user's right to relevant information.
- v. respect, show courtesy and fairness to co-workers and other colleagues and advocate and protect the conditions of employment that safeguard the professional rights and welfare of all employees of member institutions.
- vi. not support any private interests that will have unfavourable effects on library users, co-workers, or employers.
- vii. respect the difference between personal convictions and professional/ corporate duties and not allow personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims and objectives of employers and especially the provision of access to information for all.
- viii. seek and strive for excellence in the profession by continuing professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge and skills, and also to mentor and encourage the professional development of co-workers, to assist in attracting potential members of the profession.

5. OFFICERS

5.1. The President, or in his absence the Vice-President shall be Chairman of the Council and of all general meetings.

5.2. The Executive Director shall keep minutes of all Council and General meetings, and those minutes shall be circulated to all members of the Council or the Association (as the case may be). He shall deal with the Association's

correspondence and shall keep all records except financial records.

- 5.3. Retiring Council Members must provide full handing-over notes for newly elected Councillors at the handing over ceremony.

6. COUNCIL MEETING

- 6.1. The President may call a Council Meeting at any time.
- 6.2. The Executive Director shall circulate the agenda for each Council Meeting to all members of the Council, at least one month before the date of the meeting.
- 6.3. The Council shall have power to set up a Standing Committee, as it may deem necessary.
- 6.4. The Council may at any time set up Ad hoc committees and sub-committees to deal with matters specified by the Council. The Council shall have power to co-opt members to serve on ad hoc committees and sub-committees.
- 6.5. Ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held at least three times in each financial year, at least one of which should be face to face.
- 6.6. An Extraordinary (Special) Council meeting shall be called by the Executive Director upon receipt of a written request from at least 1/3 of the membership of the Governing Council, within three weeks of receiving such a request.
- 6.7 . The quorum at Governing Council meetings shall be eight including an Officer as stated in Article 8.1

7. GENERAL MEETING

- 7.1. The Executive Director shall circulate to all members, at least two weeks before the date of the meeting, the agenda of each Annual or Special General Meeting.
- 7.2. The President of the Association shall chair the Annual or Special General Meeting. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall chair the Annual or Special General Meeting. In the absence of the Vice President, the Treasurer or another member of the Council shall chair the Meeting.
- 7.3. Only voting members may attend and vote at either an Annual or a Special General Meeting. The Council may require all members attending such a meeting to be checked against the list of paid-up members before being admitted to the meeting.
- 7.4. Any member may submit to the Executive Director notice of a motion to be discussed at the next general meeting. All motions shall be submitted at least 3

weeks before the meeting, and all shall be included on the agenda provided that Council may disallow any motion which it considers to be irrelevant to the purposes of the Association.

- 7.5. On the demand of any ten members present, any motion submitted to a general meeting shall be decided by secret ballot.
- 7.6. No member whose subscription is in arrears may attend a meeting.
- 7.7. The Executive Director shall ensure that accurate record of the business and decisions will be taken at the meeting and presented for approval to the next Annual or a Special General Meeting.

8. ELECTIONS

- 8.1. The Executive Director shall circulate to all members by email or any other reliable postal system a notice of forthcoming elections, asking for nominations not later than a month and not earlier than three months before the election.
- 8.2. Nominations, which shall be signed by at least two paid-up members shall be returned to the Executive Director by post/email, not later than one week before the election.
- 8.3. Voting shall be carried out electronically.
- 8.4. The method of voting for Office shall be by simple majority vote.

9. REPRESENTATION

- 9.1. The Council shall have power to appoint a representative to any organization to which the Association is affiliated and to any Committee, Commission, Advisory or other body, if the Council considers that such representation would be of advantage to the Association. Decisions of any such body shall not be binding on the Association unless ratified by the Council.
- 9.2. The Council represents the Association in legal and other formal proceedings.
- 9.3. The authority to represent the Association in legal and other formal proceedings shall also belong to the President and the Treasurer acting jointly.
- 9.4. The President and the Treasurer acting jointly may authorize the Executive Director to initiate, pursue or conclude legal or other formal proceedings. Such authorization shall be in writing and shall be revoked in writing.
- 9.5. In matters other than legal and other formal proceedings the President shall act as the chief representative of the Association and provide it with professional leadership.
- 9.6. In matters other than legal and other formal proceedings, the Association can additionally be represented by the Vice President, the Executive Director

and, as appropriate, any other member of the Council; or by any other Member who has received authorisation to represent the Association.

- 9.7. The management of the Association shall be directed by a Chief Executive Officer who is known as the Executive Director.
- 9.8. The Association shall indemnify every member of the Council, individually and severally, and hold them harmless against every liability and all claims, judgments, penalties and damages that the Council member may have to bear in relation to a forthcoming, pending or terminated law suit, investigation or other legal procedures of a civil, criminal or administrative nature (“Action”) instituted by a party other than the Council in relation to actions, including failure to take action, in their capacity as Council members.
- 9.9. The Council members shall not be held harmless against claims in so far as the claims relate to personal, monetary or other benefit to which the Council members were not legally entitled or in cases in which a court determines liability of the Council members, on the basis of intent or willful recklessness.

10. COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

- 10.1. The Council shall set up the following Committees to carry out the objects of the Association:
 - i. Education and Continuous Professional Development.
 - ii. Finance.
 - iii. Membership and Accreditation.
 - iv. Research and Publications.
 - v. Appointments, Honours and Awards.
 - vi. Conferences, Seminars and Workshops.
 - vii. Ethics and Disciplinary.
- 10.2. Council may add new Committees when the need arises.

11. SECTIONS

- 11.1. The Council shall set up the following Sections to carry out the objects of the Association:
 - i. National Library Associations
 - ii. Academic Libraries

- iii. Public /Community Libraries
- iv. National Libraries
- v. Special Libraries
- vi. School libraries
- vii. Information /Documentation Centres
- viii. Library and Information Education / Training Institutions

11.2. Council may add new Committees when the need arises.

11.3. At the Inaugural Meeting of a Section the members shall adopt Bye-laws including the procedure for amending them, but no Bye-laws shall be valid in so far as they conflict with any provision of the Constitution of the Association.

11.4. Any Section Bye-laws, and subsequent amendments thereto shall before they take effect be approved by the Governing Council of the Association.

11.5. On receipt of a written request from at least twenty members, who declare that they share an interest in a Special Section or aspect of library service, the Council may set up such a Section comprising such members. Members of the Association may opt to join any Section.

12. PUBLICATIONS

12.1. The Council shall appoint an Editor who shall be responsible for the production of the Association's publications.

12.2. A full list of members' names and addresses shall be published annually.

12.3. A copy of the Constitution and Bye-laws shall be sent to each member upon admission.