

Guidelines
for the
Operations and Decision-Making
of
Isokan Yoruba of Ottawa - Canada

Guidelines for the Operations and Decision-Making of Isokan Yoruba of Ottawa-Canada

Background

The Executive Committee (EC) was asked at the May 2010 general membership meeting to provide initial ideas on possible policies and guidelines for the association with respect to the following initiatives:

- membership benefits;
- relationship with other associations/groups and how to respond to their request for our support of their events;
- annual budget; and
- annual membership dues

The Executive Committee met on June 27 2010 to discuss the four issues and presented its recommendations to the association at the July 10 and September 11 2010 general membership meetings. The recommendations were included in the minutes of the executive committee meeting. These guidelines are based on the outcome of both the executive committee and general membership meeting discussions.

The supporting documents for these guidelines are: the Constitution of the association¹, the minutes of the June 27 2010 executive committee meeting², and the minutes of the July 10 and the September 11 2010 general membership meetings^{3,4}.

¹ Constitution of the association

² Minutes of the June 27 Executive committee meeting

³ Minutes of July 10 2010 general membership meeting

⁴ Minutes of September 11, 2010 membership meeting

1. Policy on Membership Benefits

The executive committee noted that for membership benefits to be meaningful, a definition of who is “a member in good standing” is required. The relevant sections on membership from the Constitution of the Association are presented below:

“Article 3.1: Membership in the Association shall bind the member to abide by the constitution and other guidelines of the association. There shall be two classes of membership: Household membership and Community group membership and that membership in the Association shall bind the member to abide by the constitution and other guidelines of the Association.”

Article 3.2: Household membership shall be open to any person(s) who supports the mission statements of the Association, he or she is willing to abide by the constitution of the Association and is willing to pay the annual membership fees as may be determined from time by the general membership of the Association.

Article 3.3: Household membership shall be determined on a year to year basis. To maintain the status of a “household in good standing” in any particular year, the household must have paid the membership fee for that year. The obligation to maintain and renew household membership on an annual basis shall be on each household”.

Therefore, the definition of “*Household membership*” was adopted as the basis for defining membership benefits in this document. It is noted that Community group membership benefits is not covered by the provisions in this document.

1.1 Life Events

The selected life events that qualify for the \$100.00 honorarium that the association currently gives to members are presented below. In addition to the honorarium, a card shall be sent to the member for these life events. The association shall honour invitations by members to their special occasions/events. The general membership reserves the right to modify these guidelines as needed for the successful operation of the association.

List of Life Events for Membership Benefits

- Member bereavement
- Member’s passing (next of kin shall receive a flower arrangement in addition to the honorarium)
- Celebrated birthday
- Naming ceremony for member’s children (grandchildren not included)
- Member’s wedding
- Wedding of member’s children
- Member’s graduation
- Member’s retirement
- House warming
- Any other special occasion (as defined by the Association)

The guiding principles for the honorarium are:

- It shall be given to members that formally invite the association to the event *or as reasonably informed (i.e. as in member's bereavement or passing)*.
- The current amount of the honorarium for each life event is \$100.00.
- The honorarium shall be given a maximum of two times or events per year per household.
- The honorarium shall be paid from the Association's budget.

1.2 Minutes of meetings

The minutes and agenda of our meetings shall be sent to the members of the association by email.

In addition to e-mailing, the minutes and agenda of meetings, and other documents shall be mailed to the members on as need basis.

1.3 Courtesy Visits

The association shall continue with its current practice of making condolence visit to bereaved members. Members of the association are encouraged to honour calls for participation in making condolence visits. In addition, the association shall continue the current practice of courtesy visits to members having visiting family members.

2. Policy on Relationship/Partnership of Isokan Yoruba with Other Associations/Groups

The association shall build relationship/partnership with other associations that share similar interests.

The association shall be guided by the Constitution in dealing with other associations.

A list of other associations that may be invited to Isokan Yoruba's special events and activities shall be maintained.

The association shall continue its current practice of donating \$100.00 to associations that specifically request for financial support.

The association shall have the flexibility in responding to extraordinary requests for financial support (e.g., the January 2010 Haiti earthquake) that are consistent with the mission and objectives of the association.

The guiding principles for the honorarium shall be as follows:

- The current value of the honorarium for each event is \$100.00.
- The association shall organize special fundraising event on as need basis for special events *and/or extraordinary requests*.

3. Annual Budgets and Statement of Accounts

As required by the constitution, *"The Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall work jointly to render a statement of account and prepare a yearly budget for the Association by January 31 for a presentation to the executive members and to the general membership in March"*.

The annual budget for the association shall be set based on the regular repeated yearly expenses, and other items shall be individually assessed on as need basis

The Association shall be prudent in the management of its funds, and donations to other associations/groups shall be guided by stated annual budget for such events.

The budget of the association shall focus on the following administrative and general expenditures:

- Membership benefits
- Support for other associations/groups
- Annual Picnic
- End of the Year Party
- Office expenses (mailing, photocopying, etc.)
- Supplies (office and others)
- Legal, accounting and other professional services
- Rental of facilities (e.g., rooms for meetings and social functions)
- Telephone and other utilities
- Website
- Cultural programs (e.g., Yoruba School, cultural dance, etc.)
- Support for our youths
- Entertainment allowance at bimonthly meeting
- Miscellaneous

In addition, the association shall set aside in the budget for the acquisition of capital assets such as the following:

- Laptop

4. Annual Membership Dues

The main source of revenue for the activities of the association is the annual membership dues.

As noted under membership benefits, Household membership dues shall be determined on a year-to-year basis.

To maintain the status of a “household in good standing” in any particular year, the household must have paid the membership due for that year.

It shall be the sole responsibility of each household to maintain and renew household membership on an annual basis.

A motion was passed at the September 11, 2010 meeting that membership dues shall henceforth be based on Household; and, that the annual membership dues shall be \$100.00 for *couple household* and \$75.00 for *single household*.

The general membership agreed to make the new membership dues effective January 2011.

In accordance with the Canada Not-For Profit Corporations Act, the Guidelines for the Operations and Decision-Making of Isokan Yoruba of Ottawa Canada is amended to include a section on Financial Management as follows:

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Conflicts of Interest – Executive Members:

- Each member of the Executive shall disclose “the nature and extent of any interest in a material contract or material transaction, whether made or proposed, with the Association” if he or she is a party to the contract, a director or officer, shareholder, partner or has another interest in the party.
- The executive member shall disclose the relationship promptly; and shall not vote on such contract.
- Members are entitled to access disclosures.
- Failure to disclose entitles members to commence court action to annul such contract.

Procurement:

When purchasing goods and/or services for the Association, price quotes shall be solicited from not less than 3 (three) bidders. The lowest bid for goods and/or services of equal value shall be the winner.

Travel:

When travelling on Association business, the mode of travel shall be the most economical possible.

Reimbursements:

All reimbursement requests from the Association shall be supported with original receipts/documentation.