GrandBonny.Org

Unity And Service

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF

BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION

(BIF)

OF

USA & CANADA

Amended May 25, 2008.

Revised April 10, 2011.

Revised July 04, 2021.

THE CONSTITUTION OF

BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION

(BIF)

PREAMBLE

In the absence of an indigenous Bonny Association in North America to unite Bonny people abroad and at home, ipso facto the economic and political importance of Bonny toNigeria, the Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) was founded at the inaugural meeting of July4th, 2003, by patriotic Bonny indigenes in America for the sons and daughters of the Bonny Kingdom (OKOLO-AMA NGE KIRI FAJIE) of Nigeria resident in North America and Diaspora. Now therefore, we Bonny people resident in North America and Diaspora, with pride in our heritage, confidence in ourselves and faith in God do proclaim the following constitution for ourselves which shall be called the 2006 constitution of BIF which supersedes the 2004 constitution.

ARTICLE I - NAME AND STATUS OF ASSOCIATION

1. The name of the association shall be known, called and referred to as BONNY ISLAND FOUNDATION, whose acronym shall be BIF, hereinafter referred to as "the Association."
2. The Association shall be a non-for-profit umbrella organization of all Bonny. people resident in north America and Diaspora, that is, maintain the United States of America status for a non- profit organization and no member shall be entitled to benefits from the status., except on paid labour.
3. Notwithstanding, Article 1.2, does not preclude the Association from establishing for-profit subsidiary organizations which shall be registered as separate legal entities.
4. The Association will cooperate with other organizations with similar objectives.

ARTICLE II - MISSION STATEMENT

1. To project Ibani cultural heritage, language and history, and foster unity and progress in the cultural development of Bonny Kingdom.
2. To provide an avenue for the discussion of cultural issues and dissemination of important information.
3. To raise awareness about cultural issues that are pertinent to Bonny Kingdom.
4. To promote unity and progress among the Ibani at home and abroad.
5. The Association shall promote educational, scientific and charitable projects in Nigeria and North America.
6. To encourage mutual understanding between all nationalities and The Bonny Kingdom.

ARTICLE III - MOTTO AND SLOGAN

1. The motto of the association shall be "Unity and Service."
2. The slogan shall be "United Grand Bonny Organization."
3. Árù bilé bilém kuma Mb̠ápá bilé biléàghá

ARTICLE IV - REGISTERED OFFICE

1. The operational and registered offices of the Association shall be in Maryland. and Banking is in New Jersey.

ARTICLE V - ETHICAL VALUES

1. Members shall promote moral values of Accountability, Compassion,Gratitude, Integrity, Patriotism, Sharing, Sacrifice, and Self Discipline.
2. Maintain decorum in all meetings and social functions of the Association.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership of the Association shall be open to Bonny indigene; by birth, marriage, or adoption, irrespective of religious affiliation, gender, social or economic status, provided that the person seeking to be a member shall:
    a. Not be below 18 years of age.
    b. Spouses shall be considered as individual members.
    c. Pay the prescribed registration fee of Ten Dollars ($10.00) and other dues and responsibilities of the Association as an active member.
    d. Accept to be bound by the constitution, and by-laws of the Association and applicable laws of our host Country.
    e. Honorary membership: A non-Bonny indigene may be admitted to the organization as an honorary member if the following criteria are met:
        i. The person is recommended by an active financial member.
        ii. Meets all the membership criteria listed above and
        iii. Has approval of the Executive Board and the General Membership.
2. Members shall pay an annual membership fee of ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY US ($150 dollars). The membership fee is subject to annual increment as deemed necessary by the general membership without constitutional amendment.
3. There shall be three categories of members.
    a. Financial members, who shall be up to date with their dues.
    b. Non- Financial members, who owe or are not up to date with their dues,
    c. Student members and unemployed.
4. Every member shall endeavour to pay membership dues in a timely manner. Any member delinquent with dues for three consecutive meetings shall become a non-financial member and be deemed voluntarily inactive.

ARTICLE VII - RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS

1. A member shall pay such fees, levies and dues as may be prescribed from time to time by the Executive/membership of the Association or by the committee of the Association authorized to do so.
2. Every financial member is entitled to participate actively in the affairs and activities of the Association including standing for and being elected to the Association offices.
3. Without prejudice to ARTICLE VII. 2, eligibility for the offices of the President and General Secretary of the Association shall be reserved for only Bonny persons, naturalized or by birth who clearly bear a Bonny paternal name or a person who agrees on having a hyphenated Bonny surname during his/her term of office. (In case of a dispute on a Bonny paternal name, it shall be referred to a select committee to determine). This does not preclude the chairing of any committee of the Association.
4. Every member is eligible to vote and be voted for at the Association meetings, provided that such member is not barred by the provision of this Constitution and provided such a member is a current financial member of the Association.
5. Every member shall be loyal to the Association and shall not do anything that is inconsistent with the Constitution.
6. The Association reserves the rights to discipline erring member(s) when necessary.

ARTICLE VIII - OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. This Association shall have the following elected officers:
   a. Executive Board:
      A. President
      B. Vice- President (At-Large)
      C. Vice President (Eastern Zone, USA)
      D. Vice President (Western Zone, USA)
      E. General Secretary
      F. Assistant Secretary
      G. Provost
      H. Public Relations Officer
      I. Treasurer
      J. Financial Secretary
      K. Welfare Officer
   b. Board of Trustees. (shall not exceed 5 members)
   c. The immediate past President (ex-officio member)

ARTICLE IX - FUNCTIONS OF OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

A. PRESIDENT

1. Shall preside at all meetings of the Association.
2. Shall be the Chief Executive Officer in-charge of general management of the

affairs of the Association but must ensure that all matters binding the B.I.F are deliberated and endorsed by the Executive Board**.**

3. Shall ensure that all resolutions and policies are enforced.
4. Shall be a signatory to the bank account of the Association.
5. Shall review, approve, and sign all press releases, publications, and advertisements with the Public Relations Officer.
6. Shall conduct official negotiations and correspondences for the Association as he/she deems fit and necessary after consultation with the BOT.
7. The President, after due consultation with the Board of Trustees and acting in good faith for the organization, can remove and replace (in an acting capacity) an intransigent elected officer of the Association.
8. The President shall be an Ex-Officio member of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and shall report the state of affairs of the Association when required by the BOT.
9. The President shall present an Annual statement of the affairs of the Association, at the end of the year, or when requested by the Board of Trustees.

B. VICE PRESIDENTS (VP at-Large, VP East, and VP West)

1. In the absence of the President, the Vice President at-Large shall have all the rights and privileges set forth above under the duties and responsibilities of the President.
2. In the absence of the President and the Vice Presidents At Large, the VP East, alternating with the VP West, shall preside at meetings of the Association.
3. In the absence of the President and the Vice President at-large, the Vice-President (East or West) shall preside at the zonal meetings of the association and shall have all rights and privileges as set forth above under the duties and responsibilities of the President.
4. The Vice presidents (East or West) shall actively assist the President in coordinating membership and other affairs of their zone.
5. Each Zonal Vice President shall establish and head local chapters of the Foundation.
6. Vice Presidents shall serve in other capacities as deemed fit by the Executive Board.

C. GENERAL SECRETARY

1. Shall collect and preserve all records, correspondences, statistics, and other valuable documents of the Association.
2. Shall keep a book of minutes of all meetings.
3. Shall attend at all official correspondences of the Association.
4. Shall maintain and update the membership list, emails, and phone numbers of members.
5. Shall keep records of all business transactions of the Association.

6. Shall be signatory to all official letters, minutes, and other correspondences as directed by the President.
7. Shall be alternate signatory to the Association's bank account in the absence of the President or Financial Secretary
8. Shall issue notices and agendas of meetings, in consultation with the President. This includes issuing of notices for the convening of Executive Board meetings, and General meetings of the Association, and will be responsible for the setting up of Virtual Meetings and Teleconferences.
9. Shall be an alternate signatory to the Association's bank account in the absence of the President or Financial Secretary.
10. Shall maintain and update membership list, addresses and phone numbers of members.

D. ASSISTANT SECRETARY

1. Shall assist the General Secretary in the discharge of his/her duties.
2. In the absence of the General Secretary shall assume his/her duties.
3. Shall be assigned such other function as may be deemed necessary by the Secretary.

E. PROVOST

1. Shall maintain(s) order and discipline during general meetings.
2. Shall enforce any, and all regulations, policies and standing orders.
3. With the Permission of the President, shall impose varying fines on unruly. members during meetings. Where the fines imposed by the Provost are deemed to be too high, the President has the power to modify or overrule them.

F. PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

1. Shall plan public relations campaigns and strategies of the Association.
2. Shall develop newsletters, websites, and other social media platforms of the organization (except for the annual Conventions).
3. Shall sign all press releases, publications, and advertisements, with the approval of the President.
4. Shall diligently identify and recruit new members to join the Association.
5. Shall be responsible for publicizing the Foundation's activities.
6. Shall be the liaison between the Foundation and other organizations.
7. Shall be responsible for planning and implementing the Foundation's cultural and social activities.
8. Shall perform any other duties as may be assigned by the executive board or at a general meeting.

G. TREASURER

9. Shall have custody of all the funds and valuables of the Association and deposit these to the credit of Bonny Island Foundation.
10. Shall disburse the funds of the Association as may be ordered by the President and/or the Executive Board and keep appropriate records of disbursement.
3. Shall deposit all funds into the Association account within three (3) days of receipt.
4. Shall assist the financial secretary in maintaining all financial records, collecting dues, levies and fees from members and preparing financial reports.

H. FINANCIAL SECRETARY

1. Shall be the Chief Financial Officer and custodian of all checks, bank cards and other financial instruments of the Association.
2. Shall be an alternate signatory to the Association's bank account, in the absence of the President or the Secretary.
3. Shall present a financial statement at each general meeting, financial report to the executive and Board of Trustees every three months and an annual end of year Financial Report.
4. Collect dues, levies and fees from members as at when due.
5. Keep the treasurer informed of all financial transactions done on behalf of the association.
6. Conduct the roll call of members and their financial standing at meetings.
7. Prepare an annual budget for the association in consultation with the Executive Board.

I. WELFARE OFFICER

1. Shall be responsible for ensuring good sense of community and social well-being of members.
2. Shall regularly make checkup calls on members.
3. Together with the PRO, shall plan, coordinate and execute social events, after approval of the President.
4. Acknowledge life events that occur in the lives of active members (birthdays, marriages, burials, etc.) and inform the General membership.

J. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. There shall be a board of Trustees of the Association and shall constitute (5) five members, who shall not be Executive Officers of the Association.
2. The Trustees shall register the Association as a non-governmental, non-

political Association under the Maryland State Laws or Laws of the United States and shall be known as the Registered Trustees.

3. Shall accept the resignation letter of the President and appoint Acting President from the Vice Presidents to take charge of the Association affairs before the next election is held.
4. In the case of resignations of the President and Vice Presidents, shall appoint a caretaker committee for the Association.
5. Shall provide guidance, advice and direction, to ensure smooth running and stability of the foundation.
6. Shall elect a Chairman from among its members, a person who has served honorably as President of BIF. He/she will hold office for a maximum of 2 terms (6 years).
7. The decision of the Board of Trustees shall be by a simple majority vote and in case of a tie, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
8. Trustees shall cease to hold office under the following conditions:
    i. no longer a financially active member of the association
    ii. removal by majority vote of Trustees subject to ratification by the General Membership
9. Chairman, Board of Trustees shall present an end of year report to the organization.

ARTICLE X - TENURE OF OFFICE AND ELECTIONS

1. All Executive officers of the Association shall hold office for a period of two (2) years.
2. Board of Trustee members of the Association shall hold office for a periodof three (3) years. All Officers shall be eligible for re-election for as many times as they wish, except for the President who shall be re-elected for a second term only.
3. Elections shall be done by secret ballot and by proxy. Financially active members may cast their votes by sending a secure mail to the Chairman and members of the electoral committee.
4. A candidate must receive a simple majority to be elected.
5. All candidates for any office of the Association must meet the requirements in ARTICLE VII.3
6. In addition to (5) above, a candidate seeking election into any office must be in good financial standing, be found worthy in character and must have attended the last two conventions preceding the election (unless they were excused or exempted because of some unavoidable reasons by the President)

ARTICLE XI - REMOVAL FROM/REINSTATEMENT INTO OFFICE

A. Active and voting members may remove any elected officer for, but not limited to any of the following reasons:

1. Willful and persistent misconduct bordering on ARTICLE V.
2. Convicted of a felony while in office.
3 Absence from three (3) or more successive meetings of the Executive

and/or general meetings without valid excuse, that requires notification through the Secretary or President.

4 Any form of dishonest act against the Bonny Island Foundation

5 Any action or inaction, which negates the vision and objectives of this foundation.

6 Article XI, numbers 1, 2**,** 4, and 5 will also form grounds for the removal of Grand Patron, Deputy Grand Patron and Patrons of the Association.

B. The President, after conferring with the BOT, can suspend a non-performing. Executive officer.

C. A member removed from an Office of the Association, may be reinstated if he/she submits a written request to the Chairman of the BOT. The Chairman shall thereafter inform the President to appoint a select committee to investigate the matter and make recommendations to the Executive Board. The final decision shall be made by a simple majority vote by financially active members of the Association, at a general meeting.

ARTICLE XII - MEETINGS

1. The standard meeting of the Bonny Island Foundation shall be as follow:
   (a) General meetings
   (b) Emergency meetings
   (c) Board of Trustees meetings
   (d) Executive meetings
2. General meetings shall be held every two (2) months. The venue and the host of the meeting when applicable shall be chosen from among its members at two preceding general meetings at least.
3. Emergency meetings shall be called by the President, Executive member, or any other member of the Association, in consultation with the President or BOT Chairman on as needed basis.
4. Board of Trustees meetings shall be scheduled quarterly or as needed, by Chairman of the BOT.
5. The Executive Board meetings shall be as called by either the President or the General Secretary.
6. Meeting attendance shall be by physical presence (when feasible), telephone-conference or/and video conference and other approved electronic methods. Members on telephone-conference, video conference and other approved methods shall be regarded as physically present at venue of meeting.
7. A meeting quorum shall be constituted by fifty percent (50%) of the members for Executive meeting and twenty-five percent (25%) of members for General meeting, connected to the location at the scheduled time, which shall include the President or any Vice President or other Officer that may be acting at the meeting at that time.

ARTICLE XIII - BANK ACCOUNT

1. The Bonny Island Foundation shall maintain a bank account in any Bank as shall be decided by the membership.
2. The following officers to the Association may be valid signatories to the Association's bank account or other financial transactions: President, General Secretary, and Financial Secretary.
3. Withdrawals or debit instructions on the account shall be valid if authorized by the President and any of the other two signatories i.e. General Secretary or **Financial Secretary.**

ARTICLE XIV - MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

1. Upon the death of a financially active member the Association shall make a contribution from its coffers of five thousand dollars ($5000) to the next-of-kin. This precludes any activity that might require the Association**'s** further involvement as per its constitutional obligation.
2. Upon the death of an immediate family member (immediate family member in this case shall be limited to parents, spouse and children), the Association shall assist the bereaved member with a contribution of one thousand dollars ($1000). In the event of multiple deaths or qualification for multiple benefits the Association will make only a single benefit payment with the highest premium. This benefit will be made from the coffers of the Association.
3. Upon attainment of a title, honors, job related promotions and appointments, education related qualifications: the member shall be sent a congratulatory card**.,** or gift card to maximum equivalent to Two hundred dollars ($200)
4. Marriage and/or wedding or our customary Iria ceremonies: the member shall be presented with a gift package. The nature of the gift shallbe determined by the Executive committee with the help of the Welfare Officer.
5. In the event of a childbirth the member(s) shall receive a gift to be determined also by the Executive as in (4) above.
6. Financial assistance in the form of a soft loan (no interest**)** shall be granted to a member whom the house identified as in need of such assistance. Upon receipt of application from such member cosigned by two other financial members the Executive will process same up to a maximum of one thousand five hundred dollars ($1500). The payment period shall not exceed one calendar year. For a member who, due to genuine hardship, is unable to complete payment within one calendar year, a three-month extension may be granted, if the member applies for the extension prior to the due date of the loan. Any extension if granted, shall require approval by the President. Loan co-signers shall be held responsible for payment and will be held to the same standards as the

individual recipient, should the individual default on the loan.

7. The Association reserves the right to modify the amount stated in Article XIV (1, 2, and 3) or to refuse a loan application on the grounds of insufficient funds in its coffers.

ARTICLE XV - BY-LAWS OF BIF

1. RULES OF CONDUCT AT MEETINGS

1. All meeting proceedings shall be in English language.
2. All meetings shall be chaired by the President or Vice President at large in pursuance of Article IX-B.1.
3. In the absence of the President and Vice President at-large, the BOT shall appoint a Vice President among the zonal Vice- Presidents to preside over the meeting without prejudice to Article IX-B.2.
4. All rules and regulations governing the conduct of any meeting shall be approved from time to time by the general meeting

2. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

1. The Association shall have the power to discipline its members for the following offences, namely: acts or conducts or utterances likely to bring the Association in hatred, contempt or ridicule, disobedience or neglect to carry out lawful decisions or directions of the Association.
2. The Association shall have the power to discipline its members for persistent absenteeism from meetings and from official duty, disorderly conduct at meetings or resort to court actions without first resolving the conflict disputes through a 3- member arbitration panel to be appointed by the Association.
3. The nature of the discipline shall be discussed and approved by Executive members.
4. In all disciplinary cases the Provost shall be mandated to implement the decisions of the Executive.

3--MEETING ETIQUETTES

1. Members shall attend/call-in to meeting on time.
2. Show decorum to others' views; only the meeting Chair has the right to put an end to a lengthy discussion.
3. Members must identify themselves by name before seeking for recognition to speak and are encouraged to keep their speech reasonably short, to allow for follow up discussion.

4. Refrain from dominating the meeting with too many questions outside the agenda items; others may have more important questions. The speaking time for each member's contribution shall be limited to 5 minutes.
5. General meetings shall not exceed 2 hours, except on special occasions.
6. Only criticize in good faith, make sure your criticism is followed by constructive proposals.
7. Say what you have to say during meetings. Do not wait until everyone is leaving before you say what should have been done or, criticize what has already been agreed upon.
8. Make sure you understand what has been decided, taking part in a meeting means nothing in itself. It is what you do afterwards that counts.
9. You must always be prepared to uphold and abide by final decisions reached at meetings in which you yourself took part. It is honorable so to do

10. Actions against these expectations may trigger disciplinary measures as documented in Article XV-2.

4. PROTOCOL FOR VIDEO AND AUDIO CONFERENCES

1. If you must leave the Audio/Video Conference endeavor to obtain the permission of the President or the Chair of the meeting. Doing otherwise is disrespectful and similar to walking out of a fully constituted meeting.
2. Choose a quiet location
3. Learn all the features of your phone ahead of time.
4. Call in on time.
5. Use the mute button when not speaking to minimize background noise.
6. Never put a teleconference call on hold.
7. When you call into a meeting in progress do not interrupt the speaker by announcing yourself until prompted to do so.
8. Use speakerphone if you are more than one and in close proximity to each other.
9. Turn off call waiting.
10. Don't leave meeting without permission of the President or Chairman of meeting.

5. BIF GROUPS AND COMMITTEES:

1. All requests for formation of a BIF group or committee must be submitted for review and recommendation to the President and Executive Board and approved by a majority vote of the General membership of the Association.

2. The submissions must include the following information:

i-Name
ii-Title of leaders
iii-Composition/Criteria for membership
iv-Functions of the group (list)

v- Frequency of meetings
vi-Estimated Annual Budget (Capital and Operations)

3. An Annual operating budget must be submitted by each group to the President and Executive Board for review and approval.

4. Current BIF Groups and their Bylaws:

A) i-The name shall be **Prayer Support Group**

ii-The title of leaders shall be Leader and Co-Leader.

iii- Membership shall be open to all BIF members and non -members.

iv. The function of the group shall be to provide spiritual upliftment and serve as intercessors.

v. The group shall meet on the Second Sunday of each month or as needed.

B) i-The name shall be **Men's Cultural Group**.

ii-The title of leaders shall be Leader.

iii- Membership shall be open to all BIF male members.

iv. The function of the group shall be to promote Bonny Culture and foster a spirit of brotherhood amongst members.

v. The group shall meet as needed.

C) i-The name shall be **Women's Cultural Group.**

ii-The title of leaders shall be: Leader and Co-Leader.

iii- Membership shall be open to all BIF female members.

iv. The function of the group shall be to promote Bonny Culture and foster a spirit of Sisterhood amongst members.

v. The group shall meet as needed.

D) i- New Group: The name shall be **BIF Youth Innovators**.

ii-The title of leaders shall be BIF Youth Ambassador and BIF Deputy Youth Ambassador.

iii- Membership shall be open to all Bonny Youths/Young adults ages 18 to 39 years.

iv. The function of the group shall be to build up and have a strong and consistent social media presence, promote, and run all BIF youth events on social media platforms such as Instagram, face book, you tube, and shall take up projects as suggested by BIF Executive Board.

v. The group shall meet as needed. Monthly to start and eventually move to Quarterly Meetings.

ARTICLE XVI- GRAND PATRON, DEPUTY GRAND PATRON, AND PATRONS

1. The Grand Patron of the Bonny Island Foundation shall be a prominent Bonny Indigene, a philanthropist and strong advocate of the Bonny cultureand traditions, who holds a Bonny tertiary title and has served the interests of the Bonny Kingdom and its people beyond reasonable doubt.
2. The deputy Grand Patron of the Bonny Island Foundation shall be a prominent Bonny Indigene of unquestionable character who has served the interests of the Bonny Kingdom beyond reasonable doubt.
3. The deputy Grand Patron shall be nominated by the Executives and presented to the general membership for appointment by a majority vote of financial members present at a meeting.
4. In the absence of the Grand Patron, the deputy Grand Patron shall performthe duties of the Grand Patron.
5. Patrons shall be appointed by the Executive Board for ratification at a general meeting.
6. Only a Financial member has the privilege to recommend to the Executives an individual, with written reasons as to his/ her suitability for appointment as Patron.
7. Eligibility of Patrons shall be determined by the Executive Board.
8. The number of Patrons shall be limited to five serving Patrons.

ARTICLE XVII - CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

1. Amendments to this constitution shall be passed by a 2/3-majority vote of financially active members*.

2. Any current and financially active member*at any general meeting can move motions for amendments, which shall be resolved by votes after extensive debate and discussion.

ARTICLE XVIII - DISSOLUTION

1. The Bonny Island Foundation shall be dissolved by the general membership. The general membership shall dispose the Association’s property through a vote by a two third majority of their members.

2. In the case of dissolution, and after payment and settlement of all its debts and obligations, the Bonny Island Foundation's assets shall be shared among its members whose financial obligations are current.

COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTITUTION

The Constitution of Bonny Island Foundation (BIF) of USA and Canada (last revision April 10, 2011) commenced in 2004. Constitutional amendments approved by BIF general membership on July 4, 2021.

Constitution ratification and final adoption **on the 4th day of July 2021**

Members present/Signature: SUBMITTED BY THE CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMITTEE: We (Peter D. Hart, Adango Miadonye, and Joy Ben -Jumbo) thanked members who made written or/and oral contributions to the committee. In our revision of the constitution, we have endeavored to accommodate your contributions while avoiding repetitions and excessive overlap of ideas. If your contribution did not translate verbatim, please bear with us.

We thank the Bonny Island Foundation membership for granting us this opportunity to serve them.

*Financially active member defined as a member who has attended at least three consecutive functions such as General meetings and Conventions of the Association.