



GHANA
ASSOCIATION OF
HAMILTON

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
GHANA ASSOCIATION OF
HAMILTON ONTARIO

PREAMBLE

Recognizing our common Ghanaian heritage and our continuing ties and interest in Ghana, we the Ghanaians of Hamilton and vicinity hereby combine our efforts to form an Association.

ARTICLE 1: NAME

- a. The name of the association shall be known as The Ghana Association of Hamilton hereinafter referred to as Ghana Association.
- b. The seat of the association shall be in Hamilton, Ontario.
- c. The Association shall be registered with the Provincial Government of Ontario as a Not-For-Profit Corporation.

ARTICLE 2: AIM

- a. To project the image and identity of Ghana.
- b. To dedicate ourselves to the promotion of unity among members.
- c. To promote a sense of community, wellbeing and support for all Ghanaians in the Hamilton area.
- d. To portray Ghana socially and culturally.
- e. To contribute to and participate in the development and welfare of the city of Hamilton.

ARTICLE 3: MEMBERSHIP & DUES

- a. Membership shall be opened to all adults of Ghanaian descent who are willing to accept and abide by the Constitution of the Association.
- b. Application for membership shall be by registration.
- c. Annual dues shall be determined by the General Assembly.
- d. Each member shall pay the stipulated annual dues in full at the beginning of the calendar year in January, with a 3-month grace period (until the end of March), after which a \$10/month late payment penalty shall be levied.
- e. There will be no separate dues for couples and single members. Members who are couples will each pay their dues individually.

ARTICLE 4: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- a. The meeting of membership shall be known as the General Assembly.
- b. The General Assembly hereinafter referred to as G.A shall have the sole power to authorize all activities of the Association.
- c. The quorum of the G.A. meetings shall be 50% or 7 members, whichever is smaller of the registered membership and a register of the attendance should be kept.
- d. The Association shall have not less than 2 G.A. meetings per calendar year.
- e. The G.A. shall elect the Association's officers by a Simple Majority of the members present physically and remotely.
- f. Language at meetings shall be English. Where there is a need to use a Ghanaian language at a meeting, the appropriate translation shall be provided.

- g. The G.A. shall pass resolutions and carry its normal business by a Simple Majority, except where specified under any existing by-laws.
- h. The G.A. shall appoint an Auditor who will report his\her findings when required.

ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS

- a. The Association shall have the following Executive Officers:
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Vice Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Vice Treasurer
 - Media Officer

ARTICLE 6: DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

- a. Lead Officers shall collectively draw the Agenda for all G.A. meetings
- b. Agree on the Calendar of Events and the associated budgets for the current year and present to the G.A. for review and implementation.
- c. Set up committees whenever necessary to oversee and implement events/projects for the year.
- d. In case of an emergency, the Executive shall collectively represent the Association and shall report back to the G.A.
- e. Meet regularly, bi-monthly at minimum
- f. Required to attend 60% of the Association’s General meetings and 80% of Executive meetings at minimum.

ARTICLE 6A: CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. All members of the Executive shall abide by the code of confidentiality.
- B. Executive Officers shall be required to desist from divulging information that might be detrimental to any member’s reputation. When brought to the Executive’s knowledge and proved to be true, such Executive will be required to step down from their position and reimburse the Association for any liability so caused.
- C. See By-Laws for: Member Rights and Responsibilities; Code of Conduct; and Conflict Resolution standards.**

ARTICLE 7: DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

- a. He/she will preside over all G.A. meetings.
- b. Countersign all checks and all other documents of the Association.
- c. Appoint when necessary, representatives to represent the Association.
- d. Temporarily appoint a delegate to fulfill the functions of any of the officers in their absence or upon their resignation.

ARTICLE 8: DUTIES OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

- a. Act on behalf of the President in the latter's absence.
- b. Assist the President in performing all duties and functions related to the office of the President.

ARTICLE 9: DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY

- a. Record accurate minutes of any meeting, regular or otherwise, of the GA or the Executive.
- b. Compile minutes and distribute to the Association's Executives.
- c. Co-sign minutes, records and all other documents with the President.
- d. Distribute minutes of the previous meeting to the GA before the commencement of another meeting.
- e. Notify members of the time and place of all meetings.
- f. Responsible for the writing and distribution of emails and other notices to the GA, informing them of any meeting or other gathering of the Association.
- g. Responsible for all correspondence and records for the Association.

ARTICLE 10: DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

- a. Receive all monetary payments made to the Association, including but not limited to annual membership dues; special contributions by members plus other payments to the Association from outside sources.
- b. Deposit all monies received into the Association's bank account within seven (7) days.
- c. Keep an up-to-date record of all financial transactions for audit purposes.
- d. Be a co-signor for payments to be made by the Association.
- e. Submit a report of the Association's financial standing at least once a year and when called upon to do so by the G.A.
- f. The treasurer shall be the Chair for the Finance Committee

ARTICLE 11: DUTIES OF THE MEDIA OFFICER

- a. Provide general information on the Association to other interested parties in consultation with the executive and through media
- b. Be responsible for the dissemination of information through media, on all activities and events of the Association to members and other interested parties.
- c. Provide media assistance to Committees set up to organize all social and cultural activities in conjunction with the Executive

ARTICLE 12: ELECTIONS

- a. The fiscal year will run from January to December.
- b. The Association shall hold its general elections once every THREE (3) years
- c. Elected officers shall hold office for THREE (3) years and Outgoing Officers shall hand over duties to the In-coming officers within 30 days of the election.
- d. All members who have paid their dues and in good standing for the current year shall be eligible for election. In the event of candidate shortage, the Executive shall appoint someone to fill a position where the appointee will have to pay dues in order to be compliant.
- e. All offices shall be contested for by secret ballot.
- f. Date for elections shall be set by the Executive, with the GA notified at least 30 days before the election date.
- g. The GA shall appoint an Electoral Commissioner who will draw up the election process related to when nominations shall be received; the mode of receiving these nominations; and the length of the voting period.
- h. The election process shall be approved and the GA notified of same.
- i. The Electoral Commissioner shall conduct the elections, maintaining the rule of Secret Ballot.

STATUTES

ATTENDANCE:

- I. All members are expected to be regular and punctual at all meetings. Where a member is unable to attend a meeting or cannot be on time for a meeting, they shall notify the President and/or the Executive, prior to the meeting.

DONATIONS:

- II. The Association will make a benevolent donation in cash or kind to support a non-member who suffers a catastrophic incident in Canada e.g., unexpected demise of spouse or child, serious illness, paralysis, coma etc. within the community, as stipulated in the Benefits Framework under By-Law #1
- III. The Association will make a cash donation to support a member in times of crisis and in times of joy as stipulated in the Benefits Framework under By-Law #1
- IV. Crisis is defined as: Death of a spouse, child, sibling and parents. Joy is defined as: Wedding of a member, wedding of a member's child as stipulated in the Benefits Framework under By-Law #1

LOANS:

- V. The Association offers no loans to any person including members of the Association.

PERFORMANCE OF ELECTED OFFICIALS:

- VI. Should any officer fail to perform his or her duties as stated in the Constitution for a period of 2 months with no explanation, the President and the Executive shall request a verbal explanation at the 2-month mark, followed by a formal request for an explanation in writing. If the officer fails to respond to the formal request, a new interim officer shall be elected at a General meeting for the rest of the term.

DUES:

- VII. Stipulated annual membership dues shall be paid in full at the beginning of the calendar year in January, with a 3-month grace period (until the end of March), after which a late payment penalty of \$10/month shall be levied.

Members who continually fail to pay their dues after the 3-month grace period shall be issued 2 verbal reminders, followed by a written reminder.

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Continued non-payment of membership dues shall render a member ineligible for ALL membership benefits as outlined in the constitution.

Where there is an identified hardship situation preventing the payment of dues, the member shall provide to the Executive in writing, the reasons for their inability to pay dues. Each case shall be reviewed on its own merit, with the Executive taking the appropriate action e.g., arranging a payment plan; deferring payments etc.

AUDITOR:

- VIII. The Auditor shall be appointed by the General Assembly (G.A.). He/she shall have free access to all financial records of the association and will report to the G.A. when required. The Auditor will also countersign all Treasury reports to the G.A.

AMENDMENTS:

- IX. Amendments to this Constitution may be made when necessary and only when at least 50% of the total membership is present. The entire membership shall be informed about the amendment.

FINANCES:

- X. The Association shall be free to solicit funds from any legally constituted organization or body approved by the G.A. An annual membership fee shall be approved by the G.A.

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS:

- XI. Each member shall conduct himself/herself in a manner to reflect dignity and order at all meetings. All meetings shall be governed by the Roberts Rules of Order.

RESIGNATION:

- XII. A resignation by an officer shall be tendered in writing to the President. In the case of the resignation of the President, a written notice should be tendered to the Vice-President. A By-election for an officer will be held at the next general meeting.

DEFINITIONS:

XIII. Ghana:

The independent sovereign country on the west coast of Africa.

XIV. Ghanaian:

A citizen of Ghana and one who meets one or more of the criteria listed below:

- a. A person born in Ghana.
- b. A person born of Ghanaian parent(s).
- c. A person who has legally acquired Ghanaian citizenship.
- d. The spouse of a Ghanaian.

XV. Member:

A member is an individual (18 years+), who meets any of the above definitions of a Ghanaian; resides within the Hamilton area and is duly registered as a member of the Association.

XVI. Good Standing:

A member in good standing is one who:

- a. Is not more than 3 months in arrears of his/her financial obligations to the Association including dues.
- b. Has attended no less than 25% of all the Association's meetings and activities within the last 12 months.
- c. Has not been suspended or disciplined by the Association, nor in violation of any of the Association's By-laws within the last 12 months.
- d. Is willing to uphold the terms of the Association's Constitution.

XVII. Dependent:

The dependent of a member is defined as a spouse, child or parent of the member.

XVIII. Marriage:

A union through a traditional, religious or civil ceremony

XIX. Member Rights and Privileges:

Individual members of the Association shall be entitled to rights and privileges, included but not limited to the following:

- a. Receive a copy of the Association's Constitution at point of becoming a member.
- b. Receive all other applicable membership documents.
- c. Attend meetings.

- d. Receive meeting agenda/material; minutes from meetings and all related documents.
- e. Serve on various committees.
- f. Stand for executive office.
- g. Participate in the Association's Electoral Process.
- h. Request/review the Association's records where warranted.

XX. Executive Officer Eligibility

Members are eligible to become executive members of the Association. A person must be:

- a. A member of the Association.
- b. 18 years of age and above.
- c. Eligible to vote at elections.
- d. A member in good standing (see above.)

XXI. Obligations:

Member obligations are courses of action to which members of the Association are morally or legally bound by. These duties, commitments, responsibilities and moral imperatives include the following expectations:

- a. Pay stipulated annual dues within the first 3 months of the calendar year.
- b. Attend the Association's General Meetings and other meetings.
- c. Participate in the Association's activities and programs including the calendar year events.
- d. Volunteer when needed to support the Association's activities.
- e. Be an active member of at least one of the Association's Working Committees.

XXII. Benefits:

- The Association is committed to the needs of its members. Members shall enjoy a variety of benefits including, but not limited to the following:
- a. A forum to meet as a group to participate in, share and contribute to the educational and socio-economic development within the Hamilton community and Ghana.
 - b. Creating an environment for the Ghanaian youth to interact and learn from each other.
 - c. Creating an environment where members are able to help each other; promote common interests and pursue activities of mutual interest and benefit.
 - d. Staying informed about events in Ghana.
 - e. Creating an environment that allows members to pass on knowledge/teach each other including the youth about the rich and diverse cultures of Ghana.
 - f. Receiving emotional support from the Association and its members during different life events of joy and/or sorrow

 - g. Receive financial support from the Association and its members during different life events of joy and/or sorrow (see Financial Benefits Framework (By-Law #1))

BY-LAWS

The following By-Laws of the Ghana Association of Hamilton are a body of rules and standards to help maintain consistency in the running of its business; the governing of its members; and managing the actions of its members.

BY-LAW #1.

MEMBERSHIP DUES AND BENEFITS

- a) To become a member of the Association, you must register and pay a one-time registration fee of \$25.
- b) Stipulated Annual Dues as determined by the General Assembly shall be \$120 per member.
- c) Annual Dues are payable in full at the start of the calendar year in January, with a 3-month grace period until the end of March.
- d) A monthly late payment fee of \$10 shall be in effect for each month of non-payment of dues after the grace period.
- e) Members who are couples shall each pay their dues like single members.
- f) Benefits for Association Members shall include the financial benefits outlined in the chart below:

FINANCIAL BENEFITS CHART

BENEFITS	LIMITS	AMOUNTS
Illness	N/A	N/A
Birth or adoption of a child	Two (2) per member	\$200.00
Marriage/Weddings	One (1) per member	\$200.00
Bereavement		
Member's Spouse	One (1) per member	\$500.00
Children	Two (2) per member/family	\$200.00
Parents	Two (2) per member	\$200.00
Death		
Member	N/A	\$1000.00
***Non-Member Catastrophic Event within Canada	N/A	\$100.00

The Benefits Framework shall be reviewed periodically as determines by the General Assembly and adjusted as required, based on the prevailing socio-economic and other environmental factors.

BY-LAW #2.

MEMBER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Preamble: The specific rights and responsibilities that apply to members of the Ghana Association of Hamilton are outlined in the constitution however all members have other significant rights and responsibilities outlined in this document. The rules set out the processes and procedures for managing the activities and affairs of the association and members agree to be bound by the rules of the association unless those rules are inconsistent with the constitution or some other legal act.

Membership in the Ghana Association of Hamilton is voluntary.

ARTICLE 1: Members' Responsibilities:

- A. Members have a crucial role in ensuring that the Ghana association of Hamilton conducts itself in a way that is acceptable.
- B. The constitution of the Ghana Association of Hamilton constitutes a contract between the organization and its members.

ARTICLE 2: Members' rights

All members have the right to:

RECORDS

- A. Request to inspect and copy the association's register of members.
- B. Request to inspect and copy the association's rules.
- C. Have a copy of the association's financial report showing the financial position of the association submitted to them at the general meeting.
- D. Receive a copy of the constitution and rules when they join the association.

ARTICLE 3: Meetings

- A. Receive notice of association meetings including general meetings before the meetings takes place.
- B. Notice of meeting shall include the time, place, and object of the meeting.
- C. Receive proper notice of any general meeting at which it is proposed to alter the association's constitution or rules.
- D. Have proper notice of any meeting at which it is proposed to apply for registration/incorporation of any kind.

ARTICLE 4: Membership

- A. An individual is free to join the association at any time if they meet the membership criteria outlined in the constitution.
- B. Membership in the association can be terminated by resignation or withdrawal by the member and/or dismissal based on breaking the code of conduct
- C. A member may resign by simple announcement of his\her intention to do so and no acceptance of the resignation is required to give it effect.

ARTICLE 5: Member Discipline

If a situation arises that merits disciplinary measures, the Executive Leadership will determine the appropriate measures at the time appropriate to the specific situation.

BY-LAW #3.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Preamble: In order to effectively resolve conflict in any organization, a committee of mediator(s) will need to be appointed. To maintain fairness when addressing conflicts within the Association a mediator (s) (an Association member) will be appointed by the Executive Board when the need arises. This will help diminish biasness. Conflicts to be addressed by the association must be related to association matters only.

ARTICLE 1:

As the situation arises, the Executive Leadership as part of selecting appropriate mediators will develop a process to the specific situation.

When working through a conflict the selected mediator will give both parties the following guidelines:

- A. **Separate positions from the issues;** begin resolution by analyzing the context/position.
- B. **Active listening;** hearing and understanding the logic and reasoning of both sides is critical to the creation of a mutually satisfying resolution.
- C. **Understand and validate the issue in conflict.** They will seek to understand both parties in conflict working to validate each party's claim to what he/she believes is right.
- D. **Empathy;** the power of empathy in conflict cannot be overstated...after all, feelings were hurt in order to get to this point.
- E. **Implement boundaries and expectations;** as a mediator, your job is not to judge but facilitate a resolution. Clarifying boundaries and expectations for behaviour and outcome to demonstrate they are putting their advice to action.

- F. **Tact;** Remain sensitive to Association members' feelings to facilitate both parties remaining open to your input.
- G. **Focus;** Attack the issues and not the person(s). As a mediator, listen for anything that is personal in nature and stay on top of it. The selected mediator(s) must remain as neutral as possible.

BY-LAW #4.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Preamble: The Ghana Association of Hamilton (GA Ham) expects all members to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies the highest standards of ethics and propriety in any endeavor or activity that could impact or reflect upon the mission, purpose and the constitution.

Recognizing that it is not possible to address all the ways in which ethical issues may arise, the following principles are intended as a guide in making sound judgments and decisions on behalf of the Ghana Association of Hamilton and its mission, not as a comprehensive list of potential concerns. **Conduct outlined in this document refers specifically to issues or situations that could negatively impact on the Association (i.e., financial, reputation, cordial relations within the group).**

ARTICLE 1: Pledge of Personal and Professional Conduct

- A. **Integrity** -- I will demonstrate the highest standards of individual conduct, personal accountability, integrity, trustworthiness, fair dealings, considerations of the rights of others.
- B. **Honesty** -- I will communicate directly, respectfully, honestly and openly.
- C. **Respect** -- I will respect and act fairly toward all those with whom I come into contact and refuse to engage in or tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment against anyone in the association.
- D. **Responsibility** -- I will take responsibility for my actions and decisions and remain a careful steward of the funds and resources entrusted to me.

ASSOCIATION PRACTICES

The points below are not intended to be all-inclusive. Association members are expected to utilize good judgment in maintaining the highest standards of ethics.

ARTICLE 2: Conflict of Interest:

- A. I will not place my personal interest in conflict with the mission, purpose, vision, or interests of the GA of Hamilton, and will avoid any conduct that may impair my judgment with respect to the GA of Hamilton.
- B. I will not exploit or personally benefit from any donor or funding relationship, volunteer relationship, vendor relationship or organizational committee relationship.
- C. I will not use my membership with the association to obtain special advantage or gain to myself, any person related to me or any other related party.

ARTICLE 3: Assets, Financial Reporting and Transactions:

- A. I will do my part to ensure that the GA of Hamilton complies with prescribed accounting policies and procedures at all times.
- B. I will do my part to ensure that organizational assets and transactions are handled with the strictest integrity, and that each transaction is executed in accordance with applicable procedures, authorization and documentation.
- C. I will not use, directly or indirectly, the organization's name or logo; organization's funds; property; computer; connectivity; equipment; assets; copyrighted material; or any other resources of the organization for any unlawful, unethical, or inappropriate purpose.
- D. Any use of the above must be obtained through written consent from the Association Executive on behalf association.

ARTICLE 4: Fundraising:

- A. I will be truthful in communicating with others, including donors and other contributors and will seek to provide factually correct, current and accurate information.
- B. I will be accurate and truthful in fundraising activities.
- C. I will respect the informed choices of our supporters by fairly and truthfully reporting our fundraising costs and overhead.
- D. I will be clear about how donated resources will be utilized.

- E. I will honor our promises by using donated resources in the manner in which they were intended or transparently informing donors of any important alterations in the planned use of the funds.

ARTICLE 5: Professional Conduct:

- A. I will treat fellow association members, volunteers, donors, vendors, and other stakeholders with fairness, honesty and respect. This includes refraining from gender, racial or other bias, or sexual or other harassment.
- B. I will conduct myself in a professional manner at any GA of Hamilton public event where I might be considered a representative of the GA of Hamilton.
- C. I will be alert for and report any conduct described above or any other conduct unbecoming to the GA of Hamilton.

ARTICLE 6: Confidential and Proprietary Information:

- A. I will not release Association information that has not been made public to an individual or organization outside of the Association.
- B. I will not use confidential information obtained in the course of my Association membership for the purposes of advancing any private interest or otherwise for personal gain.

ARTICLE 7: Conditions:

- A. Upon receipt of the Code of Conduct, each Association member shall agree in writing to comply with the Code of Conduct.

ARTICLE 8: Questions and Reporting:

- A. If an association member knows of a violation of the Code of Conduct, he/she shall immediately report it to one of the Association Executives and shall not engage in any fact-finding related to the violation.

ARTICLE 9: Disciplinary Action for Violations:

Disciplinary action may be taken for the following violations and may include removal from the Association (or demotion from an Executive position), where appropriate.

- A. Authorizing or directly participating in actions that violate the Code of conduct.
- B. Concealing a violation of the Code of conduct.
- C. Refusing to cooperate in the investigation of a violation of the Code of Conduct;
- D. Retaliating, directly or indirectly, against an individual for reporting a violation of the Code of Ethics.

**The Ghana Association of Hamilton Code of Conduct
Certificate**

I acknowledge that I have received and read my personal copy of the Ghana Association of Hamilton Code of Conduct. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the principles of the Code of Conduct, and I confirm that I will conduct myself in accordance with the principles of the Code of Conduct.

I am in compliance with policy.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Please sign and date this certificate and return it to:

Thank you!

CONSTITUTION COMMENCEMENT:

This Constitution shall come into effect on the **30th of April, 2021** after a ratification vote by members of the Association.

Signed: _____
Secretary, Ghana Association of Hamilton

Signed: _____
President, Ghana Association of Hamilton