

Tigray Community Houston



Logo of Tigray Community Houston and its connotation

Circle - Represents our unity; holding hand in hand to solve our problems and to share each other's joys!

Great Obelisk - Represents our history!

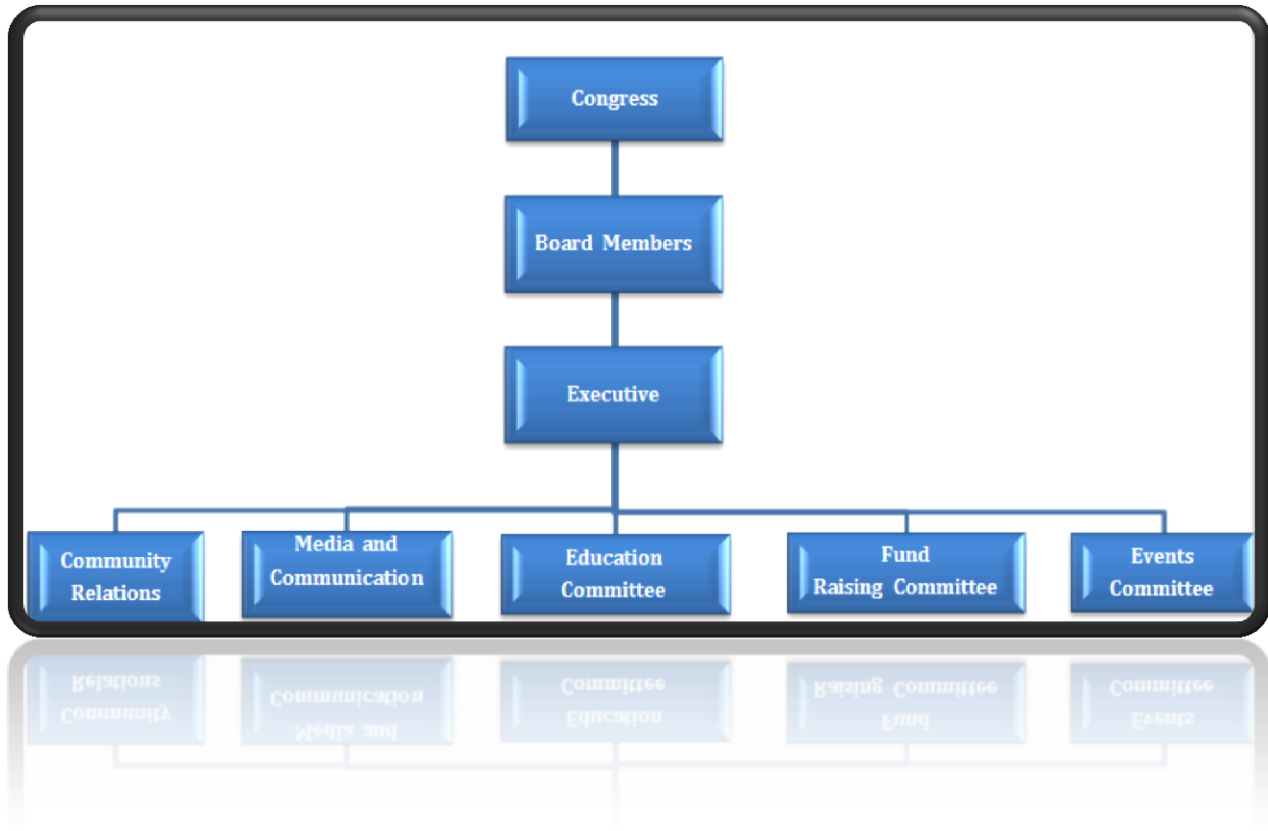
Wheat - Represents our rich agricultural background!

Books - Represents the importance of education in providing a platform for a better livelihood of the community!

Technology - Represents the future of our community, dependent on an educated and informed society!

Ribbon - Represents our beauty, inside and out!

Organizational Structure of Tigray Community Houston



Introduction

Upon perceiving the necessity, we Tigrayans and our family who reside in Houston, TX and its surroundings have adopted a non-profit institution known as **“Tigray Community Houston”** here under referred as “Community” to:

- Strengthen our brotherhood and friendship;
- Share happiness and challenges;
- Unite our skills, experience time and finance to promote our common goal;
- Bestow love, mutual respect and understanding, and our Ethiopian identity to our children;

This institution can accomplish its goals for which it has been established when:-

- Members’ participation emanates from understanding of their rights and responsibilities;

- There exists a bylaw that states clearly their powers and responsibilities. We are therefore, firmly convinced and have adopted the following bylaw to enable those leaders, who are elected by members and accepted responsibility to execute their accountability effectively and efficiently.

1- Short Title

This bylaw can be referred to as “Bylaw of Tigray Community Houston”

2- Effective Date

Tigray Community Houston, TX bylaw will be effective from the date the congress of the community adopted the bylaw on **Month, Day, 2017**.

3- Definition

Unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and phrases contained in this byelaw will have the following meaning:-

1. Member means a Tigriyan and his/her family by birth and/or by marriage, which has completed membership form, registered as a member and pays membership fee. It also includes those who are not Tigriyans by birth but born or grown up in Tigray.
2. Bylaw means a legal document where this community is administered and directed by.
3. Family member means Tigriyans by birth and non Tigriyans related by marriage and their children.
4. Dependents mean children (including adopted) and parents who reside with and are looked after by heads of family, members, and who have registered them as dependents. Higher education students who live far from their home qualifies as dependent only and until they start earning their own income.
5. Congress means annual general meeting of members held every year.
6. Urgent congress means a general meeting of members held on necessity.
7. Houston and its surroundings mean all Tigriyans residing in Houston and the surrounding areas. Regardless of its distance, Tigriyans who reside in distant places, who satisfy membership requirements and who perform responsibility could be members of the community.

Article 1: Goals

- 1.1 To establish a non-profit forum free from politics and religion where we work united for our common goal.
- 1.2 To facilitate the process of sharing our resources such as experience, skill, finance and time and strengthen our unity while marching together as a community.
- 1.3 To create an environment of brotherhood, friendship and love among us and to preserve what is achieved so far and assure its continuity.
- 1.4 To establish an environment that enables us to line up beside members and contribute our support in time of challenges which are beyond individual capacity.

1.5 To enable our children to comprehend and realize their Ethiopian identity, culture, history and language. To empower those who were born here and for those who came in their childhood to grow up with this understanding.

1.6 To provide complete services listed in this bylaw and other services that the members deserve but not mentioned here.

1.7 To allow for an open forum that assures members participation on internet and other products of technology communications that function on complete transparency and accountability.

Article 2: Management

The Community will administer and manage its property pursuant to this bylaw. This bylaw is a document that consist relevant rules and procedures that enable to administer the community.

Article 3: Dissolution of the community

In time when the community reached in a state where it becomes unable to provide the services listed in this bylaw because of few numbers of members or other reasons and pursuant to article 10 of this bylaw the general meeting decides so, the community will be dissolved and discontinues its function.

Article 4: finance and property of the community

4.1 Any property of the community will always be in the name of the community and will never be in the name of individuals or other institution.

4.2 Finances of the community will be in a bank account number that will be opened under its name and will never be under individuals or other institution.

4.3 In the event pursuant to article 3 of this bylaw the community and stop it its function, all debts of the community will be paid off and the rest will be donated to a similar nonprofit institution in accordance with the decision of those members of that time.

Article 5: Membership

A person could be registered as a member of the community when he/she satisfies the following requirements.

5.1 Be a Tigriyan, born or grown up in Tigray, or related by marriage or adoption.

5.2 who accepted this bylaw and is willing to accept and implement it.

5.3 Who has submitted completed and signed membership form.

5.4 Legally married husband and wife will complete a single form and are considered as one member.

5.5 18 years of age and above.

5.6 Individual members who meet their membership fee requirement of \$10 monthly, and couples who meet their membership fee requirement of \$15 monthly.

5.7 Any payment paid by members will serve to the goals indicated under the bylaw. When members either voluntarily or involuntarily stop their membership, they will not be reimbursed.

5.8 A person who wants to be member but could not complete the payments because of health problem, unemployment or lack of sufficient finance, has a right to apply in writing to the board. If the board is convinced with the reasons, the person could be registered as a member and all his membership rights will be preserved.

Article 6: Rights of members

Provided others articles of this byelaw, member resisted in accordance with article 5 of this bylaw will have the following rights.

6.1 Attend in general meetings organized by the community, share ideas and opinions either in support or against the suggested notion, when an opinion is brought for decision, cast his/her vote or can abstain

6.2 Has the right to elect board member and other offices, be a candidate to be elected to serve in those positions and provide service when elected.

6.3 A board member who has completed his/her term of office can compete as a candidate for the second time. However, he cannot be elected more than two times consecutively.

6.4 Has full right to raise any question without any limitation and at anytime and anywhere (including regarding finance and property) and get an answer and suggestions for his questions.

6.5 When a member or member of his/her family faces a problem, the member will be subject to receiving non-monetary relief, including and not limited to moral, physical and emotional support, when the congress or the board upon considering the bylaw and other capacity of the community decides so.

Article 7: Responsibility of Members

Provided other articles of this byelaw remaining constant, one who is registered member under article 5 of this byelaw shall comply with the following responsibilities

7.1 Accept and implement provisions of this byelaw and other rules adopted by the community

7.2 Participate in meetings and campaigns organized by the community, inform the board in case of impossibility to attend.

7.3 Pay annual and monthly fees pursuant to article 5. One who has not paid for three or more months could be banned from the rights listed under article 6 until the amount is paid in full.

7.4 A member who could not satisfy the due payments because of unemployment or illness could apply to the board in writing. If the board considers the reason, the member may resume the membership and rights.

Article 8: General Meetings

The community has the following three meetings.

8.1 Registered members under article 5 and those who fulfill their responsibilities listed under the bylaw can attend a congress meeting held at least once annually.

8.2 In a board meeting conducted at least once in three months.

8.3 In an executive meeting conducted at least once every month.

8.4 Urgent congress will be assembled when the board deems its importance or when more than one third of the members of the community request under their signature

8.5 Urgent meeting of the board can be assembled when the chairperson of the board finds it necessity or when more than one third of the members of the board sign and request.

8.6 In case of emergency, chairperson of the executive body can hold urgent meeting of the executive members.

Article 9: Meeting Procedures

9.1 Agenda for the day will be presented by the secretary and be approved.

9.2 The secretary registers minutes of the meeting.

9.3 Participants will get chance without discrimination to express their opinions.

9.4 The Chair person can dismiss a meeting and postponed it in case of disagreement of participants of the meetings and in a situation of impossibility of conducting peaceful meeting.

Article10: Congress

Formal (annual) meeting performs the following activities.

10.1 Listens and evaluates report of performances of the board, executive and other committees.

10.2 Determines the plan and budget for the coming year, upon board recommendation.

10.3 If necessary, it can elect board members and other sub committees.

10.4 Discusses and decides on different issues of the community listed in the agenda.

10.5 When situation requires so, it can amend provisions of the byelaw, repeal or adopt new articles.

10.6 Dismisses peace disrupters and violators of byelaw from membership.

Article 11: Urgent congress

The board can call an urgent meeting when one of the following circumstances is satisfied.

11.1 To discuss and pass a decision of the survival of the community.

11.2 When number of members is less than two third.

11.3 When at least one third of members who satisfied their responsibility request for urgent meeting.

Article 12: registration of congress attendants

Members who came to attend a meeting can attend the meeting after verifying their responsibility and being registered in a meeting file.

Article 13: Quorum

Above half or 50% registered members under article 11 who satisfied their responsibility could satisfy a quorum to conduct a meeting.

Article 14: Procedures in the Congress

14.1 The chair person could open meeting of a congress to commence its activity.

14.2 Meeting is conducted after the chair person approves all rules of the byelaw are met.

14.3 Minutes will be registered by the secretary.

14.4 The meeting of the congress comes to an end by the chair person after the chair person, vice chair and secretary read and signed the minutes.

Article 15: Agenda of the Congress

15.1 The secretary reads agendas suggested by the board and by members attending the meeting.

15.2 Points of discussion will be those topics listed in the agenda.

15.3 If the members of the congress permit so topics not listed in the agenda could be discussed.

Article 16: Voting in the Congress

16.1 One member will have only one vote.

16.2 Though spouses are registered jointly, each of them will have one voice.

16.3 Only attendants of meeting can vote.

16.4 Voting could be accomplished by card or by raising hands.

16.5 The chair person declares the result of the vote to meeting participants.

Article 17: Decision of the Congress

Provided other articles of this byelaw remaining constant, an opinion is considered accepted when it is supported by the majority of the attendants.

Article 18: Board

18.1 It is the highest power of the community next to the congress and it consists of 7 members elected by the congress meeting.

18.2 Term of office of the board is two years. They stay in their position until incoming members are elected, transfer of property is thoroughly completed and elected members begin their responsibility.

18.3 Members of the board are not paid for the service they provide.

18.4 The board passes reaches a resolution through vote that attained majority vote.

18.5 All reports from the executive and sub committees directed to the congress will be done in written form and through its own internet forums.

Article 19: Power and responsibility of the Board

19.1 Monitors activities of the executive and sub committees and follows the practical implementation of the decisions of the congress.

19.2 Prepares and presents annual plan and budget to the congress for approval.

19.3 Demotes and returns back to board membership those incompetent members of the executive and replaces them with other members of the board.

19.4 Approves that members are meeting their responsibility, the rights of members are preserved fully and members are achieving sufficient service and benefits according this byelaw.

19.5 Follow and control income and expenses of the community. It is the right and the responsibility of all members of the community to view and control bank account of the community through internet.

19.6 Fully control and support activities of sub committees.

19.7 If found necessary, to take proper procedural measure on members that may include suspension from membership.

19.8 Prepare legal documents that serve the function of the community.

Article 20: Executive

Executive is an organ established by the board. It effectuates decisions of the general congress, the board and runs daily activities of the community. It is accountable to the board. The following are the members of the executive.

20.1 Chair person

20.2 Vice chair person

20.3 Secretary

20.4 Accountant

20.5 Treasurer

Article 21: Powers and responsibilities of the Chair Person

21.1 The Chairperson is the leader and monitors the daily activity of the community

21.2 Together with the Vice Chairperson and the secretary prepares agendas for the congress, board and the executive.

21.3 Calls meetings of the congress, board and the executive.

21.4 Chairs meetings of the congress, board and the executive.

21.5 Is the official representative of the community, the chair person attends meetings and other activities on behalf of the community. However, the chair presents the reasons of the meeting the community is invited to participate to the board and attends the meeting after the board decides on its acceptance and importance.

Article 22: Power and responsibility of Vice Chair Person

22.1 Together with the chair person and the secretary prepares agendas of the congress and the board.

22.2 Represents the chair person in the absence of the chair person.

22.3 As representative of the executive v/chairperson leads and collaborates with public relation committee.

22.4 Performs assignments given by the congress and the board to him/her.

Article 23: Powers and responsibilities of the Secretary

23.1 Together with chairperson and vice chair prepares agendas for the congress, board and the executive.

23.2 Registers members, keeps records and delivers Identity cards.

23.3 Attends meetings of the board and the executive and will be responsible for taking the minutes.

23.4 Signs on minutes after the secretary read the minutes with the chair person and v/chair.

23.5 Ensures the minutes are signed by the board and executive members.

23.6 Disseminates necessary information to members.

23.7 Assures the proper handling of the documents of the community.

23.9 Keeps the stamp of the community and distributes letters prepared by respective community officials to indicated persons.

23.10 Represents the executive, leads the media and communication sub-committee and collaborates with it.

23.11 Performs other activities assigned to him by the board or executive.

Article 24: Powers and responsibilities of the Accountant

24.1 Keeps all accounting records of the community.

24.2 Ensures all income is collected through official receipt and all payments are done according to the budget.

24.3 Complete account's files and submit monthly reports of income and expenses to the board through board's forums on the internet.

24.4 Collaborates with the audit committee by presenting incomes and expenses during auditing.

24.5 Ensures that all incomes of the committee collected by receipt and deposited in the community bank account.

24.6 Represents the executive, collaborates with all sub-committees.

24.7 Performs other tasks provided by the board and the executive.

Article 25: Power and responsibility of the

Treasurer

25.1 Collects income of the community and provides receipt

25.2 Deposits in the bank account of the community the money collected by providing receipts.

25.3 Organizes and submits monthly report and necessary documents to the accountant.

25.4 Collaborates with audit committee in providing documents and bank account in time of auditing.

25.5 Keeps community's bank check. Performs payments permitted regular and other payments done by the executive and signed by the chair person. It submits through email copy of every check within three days to the accountant. She/he also sends detail income and expense every month to the board.

25.6 Represents the executive, leads and collaborates with fund raising committee.

25.7 Performs other assignments given to him/her by the board or executive committee.

Article 26: Sub Committees

Tigray community Houston provides services listed in this bye law and other services, gathers volunteer services from its members and nonmembers to fulfill its goals through the sub committees. Accordingly, the following four sub committees are established. Each of these sub committees are led by three leaders: chair person, secretary and a member and their term of office is two years. The sub-committees are:

1. Community Relations

2. Media and Communication

3. Education Committee

4. Fund Raising Committee

5. Events Committee

Article 27: Functions and responsibility Community Relations

27.1 Is accountable to the executive committee and its relations will be with the vice chairperson of the community.

27.2 Strives to solve misunderstandings created among members.

27.3 Takes settlers who came from our country to responsible office of refugee, assists in completing forms, introduces the life in that area looks like and provides support if its capacity so permits.

27.4 Renders consultancy service to community members and non-members who are adjudicated by court to receive community advices

27.5 Retrieves to assist members who suffered from job loss due to sickness or other reasons. The source of the support could be government, non-government or from members.

27.6 Organizes a peacefully demonstration in case of violation of rights of our members or participates in demonstration where our community need to attend.

Article 28: Duties and responsibilities of Media and Communication

28.1 Is accountable to the executive and functions under the secretary.

28.2 Administers and takes care of the website of the community.

28.3 open forums of the board, students and members.

28.4 Assures the dissemination of language and other educational preparations to beneficiaries in a website as organized by education committee.

28.5 Posts message that emanate from different committees on the website.

28.6 Entertains forwarded ideas from members to encourage culture and interest of poem and short articles. For this purpose it allocates space in the website.

28.7 Entertains by assigning space on the website to arts and creativity of our school children.

Article 29: Duties and responsibilities of Education Committee

29.1 Is accountable to the executive committee and functions under the Accountant.

29.2 Provide learning tools via the community's website in Tigrigna and Amharic language to our children and others who may find it instructive.

29.3 Develop learning seminars for students during spring and summer breaks.

29.4 Makes ready books, videos and others not listed in here that helps to promote our language, culture and generally our Ethiopian identity.

29.5 Provide our children tutorial services by phone, website and other products of new technology to enhance their academic capacity and to complete their education.

29.6 Teaches English language to new comers.

29.7 It takes as its goal and teaches all members how to use internet.

29.8 Facilitates seminars for our growing youth about dangerous situations that they should be aware of.

29.9 Organize an annual picnic event to incorporate educational and sporting events intended for children and the youths as well as an interactive avenue for the adults of the community.

Article 30: Duties and responsibilities of Fund Raising Committee

30.1 Is accountable to the executive and functions under the treasurer of the community

30.2 Researches availability of funds from US government [Federal or State] and other non- government institutions that is donated to communities like ours. If it exists, it facilitates official letter to be written by the chairperson of the community.

30.3 Organizes and leads fund raising forums of our community.

30.4 Designs and coordinates the initiatives and financing of the community's culture center.

Article 31: Audit Committee

31.1 Established by the general meeting of members that is assembled before the congress meeting. It consists of three members chair person, secretary and a member.

31.2 Term of office of Audit committee is from the time it is established to regular congress meeting.

31.3 Audit committee is accountable to the General meeting.

Article 32: Responsibility of the Audit Committee

32.1 Audits the proper handling of incomes and payments and assures the board that the financial statements reflect the organization's financial condition

32.2 Assures if incomes and expenses are carried under legal documents

32.3 Assures proper handling of all properties of the community and verifies all financial affairs are carried out ethically.

32.4 All community members [from members of the board to the ordinary members] are ordained to fully cooperate with the Audit committee during execution of its task.

32.5 Oversee the audit process

32.6 After the Audit committee completes its audit, it presents its findings to the general meeting.

Article 33: Election committee

This committee serves during the transitional period between the outgoing and incoming elected members to facilitate a smooth transition. It is elected during the congress meeting by participants and consists of three members.

Article 34: Power and responsibility of election committee

34.1 Assures voters satisfy the requirements listed under article 7 and 37 of this byelaw.

34.2 Accepts nomination of candidates to the board and sub committees from congress meeting members.

34.3 Assures that candidates satisfy requirements of article 36 of the byelaw and introduces candidates to congress participants.

34.4 Voting could be done with voting cards or by raising hands.

34.5 After the completion of the voting process, it immediately counts the vote in front of voters and declares the result.

34.6 Minutes of the process and result of the voting will be registered and signed by the voting committee and submitted to the newly elected secretary of the congress.

34.7 The voting committee stays in its position until the transition from the outgoing to the incoming committee is completed.

Article 35: Election

35.1 All elections of the community are carried out by the election committee elected by the congress.

35.2 Election of different committees is conducted every two years in a formal congress and in urgent congress meetings.

Article 36: Requirements of a Candidate

All candidates who compete to serve the community in all committees of the community should satisfy the following requirements.

36.1 When they stand to be candidates to the election, they should not be leaders of any religious, political or any levels of institution (s). As such, this will avoid any and all negative influences that could be created by conflict of interests and multiple of positions.

36.2 The candidate must be a registered member at least six months before the election, who has met his/her membership fee requirements as well as other payments (pledge/donation) with no remaining outstanding balance.

36.3 Only one person from one family could qualify as a candidate for election.

Article 37: Requirements of voters

Should be registered member at least six months before the election, and paid their monthly and other payments and have no remaining balances for more than three months.

Article 38: Election Procedure

38.1 After assuring quorum of the meeting is satisfied under article 13, election committee accepts nomination of candidates.

38.2 List of candidates will be checked that candidates satisfy the requirements under article 36.

38.3 10 candidates to a congress and 5 candidates to each committee will be nominated.

38.4 Election could be done through voting cards or by raising hands.

38.5 Voting results of every candidate will declared on the same day to members.

38.6 Candidates who won the top 7 votes will be members of the board. If the 7th vote is a tie then re-election will be conducted among the two.

38.7 Three members will be elected for each sub-committee.

38.8 The board will have two and each sub-committee will have one reserve and all reserve members will be from those non-elected with highest votes.

Article 39: Electing absent members

A volunteer member who satisfies the requirements could be a candidate to a position in his absence.

Article 40: Replacing of Member of a Committee

A member of a committee who resigned from his/her position before the expiration of the term of office will according article 38 number 8 must be replaced by the reserve member.

Article 41: Property management in Transition

41.1 Newly elected board member start working in their position after files, finance and property transition from old members is completed.

41.2 Old committee transfers documents, finance and property to the newly elected committee in the presence of the election committee.

41.3 Transfer will be completed upon approval of documents, finance and property by the election committee.

41.4 All members of the outgoing and incoming executive members and election committee will sign on the transfer document and all will take copies of the quitclaim

41.5 The new executive committees start its function starting from the time it received the finance and property.

41.6 Transition should be completed within one week.

Article 42: Procedures of measures

42.1 The board passes a decision after careful survey that a member has violated procedures of the bylaw and the violation disrupts the peace of the community or affects the community. The decision could go up to suspending from membership.

42.2 One member of the board

a) If unable to perform his/her duties because of change of residence out of Houston and its surrounding.

b) If a member of the board is absent from a meeting of the board for more than one time;

c) if did not satisfy the requirements stated under article 31;

d) As stated under article 40, if he voluntarily resigns from community membership, he will be replaced by another.

42.3 Other than reasons listed under this article number 2, a member of the board is removed from his position only when the case is brought to and decided by the congress.

Article 43: Procedures for Returning Members

43.1 A member suspended from membership by the board has a right to appeal to the congress. If the congress dismisses the decision of suspension by the board, the

Member will retain his membership from the time of the suspension. His rights and obligations continue and receive any benefit affected by the suspension.

43.2 If a member is dismissed from membership by the congress, he can return to his membership when he requests the congress to forgive him and receives the forgiveness of the congress. Such member can renew his membership after he satisfies all membership and other payments paid by other members from the time he stopped his membership to the time of forgiveness. No suspended member could continue his membership in any means other than this procedure.

43.3 A member who voluntarily wants to terminate his membership has to inform the board in writing. After checking any remaining balance and completion of his membership obligations, the board approves his request. If such type of member wants to rejoin the community, he can do it after he paid the payment expected from new members.

Article 44: Bylaw

Articles of this Bylaw can only be amended, changed, cancelled, or new articles maybe added by the congress.

Article 45: Accountability

Members of the community and elected members will not be responsible either individually or as a community for loans or responsibility of resulted from the activities of the community. They are free from charges and punishments directed against the community. However, if the wrong is proved crime that emanated from carelessness, dishonesty, or from deliberate act, those leaders who committed the crime will be held responsible.