

Mande Studies Association (MANSA)

Bylaws of MANSA

Adopted 6 October 2023

Chapter I. Name of the Association

The name of the organization shall be Mande Studies Association, also known as MANSA.

Chapter II. Nature of the Association

The Mande Studies Association (MANSA, hereafter “the Association”) is an independent scholarly and professional society founded in the United States and accredited as an affiliate organization of the African Studies Association (ASA). It is open to people of all nations, academic disciplines and/or professional interests who share its objectives.

Chapter III. Specific aims of the Association

Article A. To promote research, both within and outside Africa, in all fields and academic disciplines, relevant to the Mande regions, languages and peoples of West Africa, their neighbors and diaspora around the world, as well as nation-states, other institutions, and historical and contemporary dynamics that shape the existence of these peoples, all of which are integral parts of Mande Studies.

Article B. To encourage collaboration and facilitate the exchange of ideas and constructive dialogue between those engaged in the field of Mande studies as defined above.

Article C. To promote the publication and dissemination of scientific and artistic works as well as primary sources on Mande Studies and other related subjects.

Article D. To organize workshops, sessions, symposia and conferences on Mande Studies as an independent organization and/or at meetings of regional, national and international organizations.

Article E. To provide the public with information on matters of historical, sociocultural and contemporary interest in the field of Mande Studies.

Article F. To take a stand against injustices that our members may face in the exercise of their research, teaching, etc., as well as, where appropriate, against social, political and economic discrimination in the communities in which our members work.

Chapter IV. Organization of the Mande Studies Association

Article A. Executive Committee

Section 1. Management of the Association

- (a) All business of the Association shall be directed and coordinated by the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Executive Committee coordinates the activities of the Association in collaboration with its other structures.
- (c) The Executive Committee is composed of the President, the Vice-President, the Immediate Past President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the West Africa Coordinator, and the Editor(s)-in-Chief of the Association's journal.

Section 2. Relations of the Executive Committee with the Advisory Board

- (a) The Executive Committee may call on the Advisory Board for advice, suggestions, and/or decisions regarding the operation of the Association.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall convene a meeting with the Advisory Board at least once a year to take stock of the Association.
- (c) The Advisory Board may also request a meeting with the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Resignation or Dismissal of an Officer

- (a) Any member of the Executive Committee may resign at any time, provided such resignation is in writing.
- (b) Any member of the Executive Committee may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the registered members.

Article B. Voting

Section 1. Member Voting

- (a) Each member is entitled to one vote on every question put to the vote of the members.

Section 2. Election and Removal of Executive Committee and Advisory Board Members

- (a) For the dispatch of current business, the election of the Executive Committee, and the approval of the members of the Advisory Board, a simple majority vote of the participants up to date with their dues at the Annual General Assembly is sufficient.
- (b) Voting for members of the Executive Committee shall be by secret ballot.

Section 2. Other Electoral Matters

- (a) For the removal of a member of the Executive Committee or for a change in bylaws, a vote of two-thirds of the members present and up to date with their dues is required in favor of such an action

- (b) Any other action to be taken by a vote of the members shall be authorized by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting by the regular members.

Article C. Officers

Section 1. Terms

- (a) The President, Vice-President, and Past President are elected for a term of two years each.
- (b) All Officers shall attend the Annual General Assembly of the Association, whether in person, remotely or, in exceptional circumstances, by proxy.
- (c) The Vice-President, who is elected for the first term, becomes President for the second term, and finally Past-President for the final term.
- (d) When developing a slate of candidates for the position of Vice-President, care will be taken to ensure that the candidates are based, in turn, in West Africa, North America, and elsewhere (Europe, Asia, Australia, etc.), so that different world regions are represented in the positions of Vice-President, President and Past President. In the absence of a suitable candidate for one region, another region may have a second representative.
- (e) The terms of the Secretary, Treasurer and West Africa Coordinator are three years, renewable by vote at the Annual General Assembly. Preferably, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the West Africa Coordinator are elected alternately with the other officers and between these three roles.
- (f) The term of office of officers shall commence, other than that of the Editor(s)-in-Chief, upon their election by the members at the Annual General Assembly.
- (g) The Editor(s)-in-Chief of the journal of the Association is appointed by the Executive Committee for a term of four years. He/She/They is a member of the Executive Committee without the possibility of voting in relation to the decisions of the Executive Committee, except on questions relating to the journal, its distribution, and its status within the association. The term can be extended by two additional years after the first term. If the Editor(s)-in-Chief is unable to accomplish his/her/their responsibilities, the Executive Committee may appoint, after prior consultation with the Editor(s)-in-Chief, an interim Editor(s)-in-Chief to complete the current term.
- (h) Officers must be current in their dues.
- (i) Two months before the Annual General Assembly, the President issues a call to all members who wish to nominate themselves or others for any open position on the Executive Committee.
- (j) Any member who wishes to stand for election to one of these positions must send a declaration of candidacy to the Association at least three weeks before the elections by electronic mailing list of the Association.
- (k) Any officer who expects to be unable to perform his duties adequately for one year or more shall resign with the option of standing again at another time.

- (l) An officer cannot hold two positions on the Executive Committee at the same time. In the event that a member of the Executive Committee is elected to a new position, he/she/they automatically resigns from the old position.

Section 2. Duties of the President

- (a) The President or his/her/their delegate presides over all meetings of the members of the Executive Committee, the Advisory Board, the Annual General Assembly, and at all business meetings of the Association.
- (b) He/She/They coordinates all the activities and businesses of the Association and is primarily responsible for it.
- (c) The President or his/her/their delegate monitors the preparation and distribution of the Newsletter of the Association.
- (d) The President or his/her/their delegate shall be provided with the updated official membership list by the Treasurer.
- (e) The President may appoint ad hoc sub-committees to perform specific tasks related to the activities of the Association.

Section 3. Duties of the Vice-President and Past-President

- (a) The Vice-President, in the absence or inability of the President, shall exercise the functions and powers of the President until the president is able to resume office or a new presidential election can be held.
- (b) The Past President shall be responsible for assisting in the organization of the International Conference on Mande Studies and any other duties assigned by the President.

Section 4. Duties of the Secretary

- (a) The Secretary shall act as Secretary of the Association.
- (b) The Secretary has custody of the archives and other important administrative documents of the Association.
- (c) He/She/They takes minutes of meetings of the Executive Committee, the Annual General Assembly, and other business meetings, and makes them available to the President and/or the person designated by the President for distribution in the Newsletter.
- (d) The Secretary prepares and distributes the Newsletter on the activities of the Association and its members.

Section 5. Duties of the Treasurer

- (a) The Treasurer shall have custody of all funds and other important financial documents of the Association. He/She/They has the authority and power to approve, on behalf of the Association, checks, bills, and other obligations, and deposit to the credit of the Association or make payment in such bank or banks as the Executive Committee may

designate. He/She/They records the receipts and expenses of the Association and provides a full written report of all funds received and paid at the Annual General Assembly of members.

- (b) The Treasurer shall deal with all membership and dues matters of the Association, including the establishment of annual lists of members up to date with their dues.
- (c) The Treasurer proposes and monitors the annual budget of the Association.

Section 6. Duties of the West Africa Coordinator

- (a) The West Africa Coordinator must reside in West Africa, assist in the recruitment of new members of the Association in Africa, and organize the collection of dues from members of the Association.
- (b) He/She/They manages the bank account of the Association located in West Africa where membership fees are deposited for Africa-based members.
- (c) He/She/They records the regional income and expenditure of the Association and provides a full written report of all transactions each year prior to the Annual General Assembly.
- (d) He/She/They works with other Officers in the Executive Committee, as well as with the Advisory Board and the Focal Points, to organize events related to the Association in Africa.

Section 7. Duties of the Editor(s)-in-Chief of the Journal of the Association

- (a) The Editor(s)-in-Chief of journal shall direct the journal of the Association for a term of four years.
- (b) He/She/They has the exclusive prerogative to appoint associate editors, editorial assistants, and reviewers to assist in the evaluation and review of manuscripts and other journal-related procedures.
- (c) The Editor(s)-in-Chief submits each year, to the attention of the Executive Committee for approval, a draft operating budget relating to the activities of the journal.
- (d) The Editor(s)-in-Chief is a member of the Executive Committee, and is in charge of keeping other members informed of journal-related activities.
- (e) He/She/They is the main intermediary between the Association and the Publisher and requests, if necessary, the intervention of the President.
- (f) At each Annual General Assembly, he/she/they must present an annual review of the activities of the journal.

Section 8. Officer Vacancies

- (a) In the event that the position of President is prematurely vacant, the Vice-President succeeds him/her/them to complete the current Presidential term and then to exercise his/her/their own two-year Presidential term. Then the election of a new president will take place as soon as possible.
- (b) If a position of another officer of the Executive Committee becomes prematurely vacant, the other officers of the Executive Committee may appoint or elect a person

suitable for such office, who will perform the function required to cover the remaining term of office and until a successor is elected or appointed.

- (c) A person appointed as an interim officer by the Executive Committee may stand for election at the end of the remaining term and shall begin an ordinary term upon election at the Annual General Assembly.
- (d) In the event of a replacement of the Editor(s)-in-Chief in such circumstances, those in charge should consult with the Editor.

Article D. Advisory Board

Section 1. The function and management of the Advisory Board

- (a) The Advisory Board is composed of seven dues-paying members appointed to support the Association in its various activities (see Chapter IV. Article A. Section 2 for the manner in which the Executive Committee should call upon the Advisory Board).
- (b) Members of the Advisory Board shall attend the Annual General Assembly, and annual consultations with the Executive Committee. Members are appointed for four years.

Section 2. Election and composition of the Advisory Board

- (a) As a first step, new members of the Advisory Board are proposed by the Executive Committee for their approval by vote.
- (b) The President then circulates these names to the members of the Association by email at least two weeks before the Annual General Assembly.
- (c) At the Annual General Assembly, new members of the Advisory Board must be approved by a simple majority of the members present.
- (d) Nominees must be persons recognized in their respective fields. Every effort should be made to select members to achieve geographical and gender balance.

Article E. Focal points

- a) The Executive Committee appoints focal points in the different countries.
- b) The focal point shall promote scientific activities in the country in question as well as to serve as a relay between the decision-making bodies of the Association and the members in the country.
- c) In West Africa, the focal points are, among other things, in charge of distributing the journal of the Association to the members and promoting the adhesion of colleagues in the country.
- d) The focal point is appointed for four years, renewable.

Article F. Annual General Assembly and Business Meetings

Section 1. Annual General Assembly

- a) The ordinary Annual General Assembly takes place before the end of February each year.

- b) During this assembly, which is organized online, any vacant position on the Executive Committee must be filled by vote.

Section 2. Meetings of Members

- (a) A business meeting of members is held annually at the Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in the United States.
- (b) Other meetings of members may be convened, at the discretion of the Officers, during the International Conference on the Mande Studies or at the margins of other relevant events, such as the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS).

Section 3. Extraordinary Assemblies and Special Meetings

- (a) Extraordinary general assemblies and special meetings of members may be called by the President of the Association or the Executive Committee when necessary.
- (b) The notice of these general meetings and special meetings shall indicate the subject of these meetings.

Article G. Membership Fees

Section 1. Membership categories

- (a) Members based in Africa
- (b) Regular members with two sub-categories, by income
- (c) Sponsoring members at three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold
- (d) Student members

Section 2. Dues and Journal Subscription

- (a) All membership levels include receipt of the Association's printed journal, as well as access to back issues online, for the membership year in question.

Section 3. Review of contribution levels

- (a) Periodically, the Executive Committee reviews the financial situation of the Association and sets the level of dues for each category of members accordingly.
- (b) Any change in dues levels shall be presented to members at the Annual General Assembly and proposed for a vote (passing by a simple majority of those voting) and shall take effect on 1 January of the following year.
- (c) The President must notify all members of this vote one month in advance.

Section 4. Membership Schedule

- (a) Membership in the Association is by calendar year. Members may specify the calendar year to which dues are to be applied.

Article H. Modification and repeal of regulations

These bylaws may be amended, repealed, or adopted by two-thirds of paid-up members who participate in the election, either by email vote, by another form of online voting, or by vote at the Annual General Assembly.

Chapter V. Dissolution of the Association

The Association may be dissolved by decision of two general assemblies, one of which is the ordinary Annual General Assembly. Resources and archives of the Association shall be offered to an institution or organization pursuing a goal similar to that of the Association. In the event that the Association decides to merge with another organizational structure, the same decision-making procedures apply.