CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON EXTERNAL LOCAL STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. PREAMBLE

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) recognises that active, respectful, and structured engagement with external local stakeholders is essential for mutual socio-economic development, peaceful co-existence, impactful research, and community-oriented education across all campus host communities.

The University is committed to establishing formal institutional mechanisms for systematically identifying external local stakeholders—including traditional leadership, host community unions, local government authorities, civil society groups, regional businesses, and local educational institutions—and engaging them in meaningful, transparent, and collaborative partnerships.

This Policy establishes the University's institutional strategy, mapping methodology, consultation protocols, and governance framework for external local stakeholder identification and community engagement.

The Policy operates consistently with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Anambra State chieftaincy and local government administration laws, the University's enabling statutes, regulations, and Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- provide a structured and transparent framework for identifying and mapping external local stakeholders across host communities (including Igbariam, Uli, and Awka);
- establish inclusive mechanisms for regular dialogue, consultation, and collaborative decision-making with host communities;
- align University research, agricultural extension, and community outreach initiatives with local socio-economic priorities;
- facilitate peaceful resolution of land, infrastructure, and environmental concerns through proactive stakeholder consultation;
- promote economic opportunities, local employment sourcing, and vendor engagement for host community members;
- ensure institutional accountability and mutual trust between the University and external host entities; and
- provide an institutional governance framework for monitoring, evaluating, and recording stakeholder engagement outcomes.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies across all campuses, faculties, directorates, research institutes, and operational units of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, and covers:

- all academic, administrative, and technical officers involved in community relations, outreach, and external affairs;
- researchers conducting field studies, clinical trials, or agricultural projects within local host communities;

- university physical planning, land management, and estate officers;
- external local stakeholders, including traditional rulers (Igwes), Town Union Executives (PGs), youth associations, women groups, local government councils, local traders, and non-governmental organizations; and
- contractors and developers operating on projects impacting host community boundaries.

Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as authorising unauthorized commitments, legal obligations, or financial expenditures on behalf of the University without express authorization from the Vice-Chancellor or Governing Council.

4. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING METHODOLOGY

4.1 Categorization of External Local Stakeholders

The University shall maintain a comprehensive Stakeholder Registry categorizing external entities into: (a) Traditional and Cultural Authorities; (b) Community Development Unions and Civic Groups; (c) Local Government Administration and Law Enforcement; (d) Local Business Owners and Commercial Associations; and (e) Local Educational and Healthcare Institutions.

4.2 Mapping and Needs Assessment

The Directorate of University-Community Relations shall conduct biennial stakeholder mapping exercises to evaluate community needs, identify emerging local leadership, assess environmental/social impacts of campus operations, and update contact registers.

5. ENGAGEMENT MODALITIES AND CONSULTATION PROTOCOLS

5.1 Structured Town Hall Meetings and Consultative Forums

The University shall host bi-annual Community Consultation Forums at each campus location (Igbariam, Uli, Awka) to share university development plans, receive community feedback, and discuss shared infrastructural or security priorities.

5.2 Collaborative Educational and Socio-Economic Initiatives

University academic units shall actively collaborate with local stakeholders to deliver adult literacy programs, agricultural technology transfer, health outreach clinics, and youth skill empowerment initiatives tailored to community priorities.

6. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND GRIEVANCE REDRESS

The University shall establish a joint **Town-Gown Liaison Committee** for each campus to serve as an early-warning and dispute-resolution mechanism for land, boundary, security, or student-community friction, ensuring peaceful out-of-court resolutions based on mutual respect and traditional protocol.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Members of the University community engaging with local communities shall:

a. respect local cultural norms, traditional institutions, and community leadership structures;

b. channel all formal institutional communications and project proposals through the Directorate of University-Community Relations;

c. ensure ethical conduct and informed consent when conducting research involving local community residents; and

d. report emerging community grievances or security concerns promptly to university management.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The University Management shall:

a. allocate appropriate administrative and logistical resources to support sustained community engagement;

b. ensure university physical developments respect host community environmental and cultural heritage sites;

c. prioritize qualified local candidates for non-academic employment and local vendor contracting opportunities where feasible; and

d. maintain open, transparent communication channels with traditional and civic leadership.

9. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE OVERSIGHT

The University shall mandate the **Directorate of University-Community Relations**, under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor's Office, to:

- a. manage and update the official COOU External Stakeholder Database;
- b. coordinate all formal host community dialogues, MoU executions, and joint projects;
- c. monitor compliance with community engagement guidelines across all university units; and
- d. submit an annual External Stakeholder Engagement and Community Impact Report to the Vice-Chancellor and Senate.

10. PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

This Policy shall be published on the official University website and distributed to traditional rulers, town union offices, and local government headquarters across host communities. An official policy control log detailing approval dates and review schedules shall be maintained.

11. REVIEW AND REVISION

This Policy shall be formally reviewed at least once every three years or earlier where required by host community developments, statutory updates, or Council directives. Every review shall be officially documented and approved.



Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr

Vice Chancellor **Date:** 24/10/2026