



Theodora Anavhe Adamu Foundation (TAAF))

Institutional Memory Policy

Introduction

Institutional Memory is essential for ensuring continuity, learning, and accountability within TAAF. It represents the sum of experiences, knowledge, documents, practices, and historical records that enable TAAF to sustain operations effectively despite changes in staff, leadership, or external environments. This framework sets out how TAAF will build, safeguard, and use institutional memory to enhance resilience, effectiveness, and credibility.

Purpose

- To systematically capture and preserve organizational knowledge.
- To ensure smooth transitions during staff turnover or leadership changes.

- To build a repository of lessons learned that informs future decision-making.
- To enhance transparency and accountability by maintaining comprehensive records.
- To strengthen organizational identity, culture, and credibility with stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to:

☒ All personnel including staff, volunteers, board members, consultants, implementing partners, and affiliated organizations engaged in the organization's ☒ activities. ☒ All organizational knowledge, records, and data systems.

Definition of Terms

- Institutional Memory: The collective knowledge, experiences, practices, and records that are preserved to sustain organizational operations, culture, and strategic direction.
- Knowledge Management System (KMS): An IT-based solution for capturing, organizing, storing, and disseminating knowledge within an organization to improve collaboration, decision-making, and innovation

Policy Guidelines

TAAF adopts the following principles in its approach to institutional memory:

- Continuity – Knowledge and practices must be documented and transferred to prevent disruptions during staff transitions.
- Accessibility – Institutional memory resources must be well-organized, indexed, and easy to retrieve for staff and decision-makers.
- Confidentiality and Integrity – Sensitive and personal data must be protected from unauthorized access, manipulation, or misuse.
- Sustainability – Systems must be durable, regularly updated, and adaptable to technological advancements.
- Collective Responsibility – Building and maintaining institutional memory is a shared responsibility across all staff, not just management.

Role & Responsibilities

- Board of Trustees ○ Ensure institutional memory practices are reviewed in board meetings.
- Executive Director ○ Provide oversight and ensure TAAF's strategic direction is preserved. ○ Allocate resources for knowledge management systems and training. ○ Enforce compliance with documentation and archiving standards.
- Knowledge Management Officer (KMO) (or designated staff) ○ Administer the KMS and digital archive. ○ Train staff in documentation and record keeping. ○ Conduct annual reviews of institutional memory systems.
- IT Department ○ Ensure secure storage, encryption, and backups.
 - Maintain access controls and ensure compliance with data protection standards.
- Department Heads and Project Managers ○ Ensure timely documentation of activities, reports, and lessons.
 - Conduct knowledge handovers when staff exit or projects close.
- All Staff
 - Participate in documentation and knowledge-sharing activities. ○ Upload relevant documents and information to the KMS.
 - Safeguard organizational information in their custody.

Preservation Mechanisms

To achieve the above objectives, TAAF will employ the following mechanisms:

- Knowledge Management System (KMS) ○ A secure, cloud-based, or server-based repository will be developed.
 - The system will store organizational policies, project reports, proposals, contracts, monitoring and evaluation data, and financial records.
 - All staff will be trained on how to upload, access, and manage documents. ○ Regular back-ups will be scheduled to ensure data protection.

- Documentation Standards
 - Uniform templates for reports, minutes, project trackers, and knowledge products will be adopted.
 - All major activities (meetings, trainings, projects, advocacy efforts) must be documented and uploaded within 7 days of completion.
 - Reports must include key lessons learned and recommendations.
- Exit Protocols and Knowledge Transfer
 - All existing staff are required to complete a Knowledge Handover Checklist (see Annex).
 - Exit interviews will capture tacit knowledge, experiences, and recommendations. ○ Department heads must ensure a smooth handover to incoming staff or team members.
- Archiving and Retention Policy
 - Digital Archiving: Records will be stored in digital formats with metadata for easy retrieval.
 - Physical Archiving: Hard copies of legal, financial, and compliance documents will be securely stored in a designated archive room.
- Retention Periods:
 - Financial records – minimum of 7 years.
 - Legal documents – permanent storage.
 - Beneficiaries’/Stakeholders’ data: Retained per consent agreements, maximum 10 years
 - Project reports – minimum of 5 years post-project completion.
 - Staff records – 5 years post-employment.
- Oral Histories and Storytelling
 - Long-term staff and key partners will be interviewed periodically to capture tacit knowledge and organizational culture.
 - Audio/video recordings will be archived alongside written records.
 - Beneficiaries’ stories and impact case studies will form part of the institutional memory system.
- Learning and Knowledge Sharing Platforms
 - Monthly learning sessions will be organized where staff share experiences and lessons learned.
 - An annual “Knowledge Review Report” will synthesize major insights from the year.
 - Internal newsletters will highlight best practices and updates from different departments.

- Knowledge Categories
 - Sensitive Data: Data in this category stands at the highest confidentiality radar for TAAF and is disclosed on a need-to-know basis alone to parties who need to know.
 - Internal Data: Data in this category involves information that can be disclosed to staff members along with internal organizational stakeholders, but confidentiality concerning disclosure to external parties must still be maintained.
 - Public Data: This level of data exists at the lowest level of the data classification level with respect to confidentiality, as information at this level is safe for public disclosure.

Accountability and Reporting

- Reporting on Institutional Memory
 - Knowledge Accountability: Program managers are required to submit periodic documentation (e.g., lessons learned, case studies, activity reports) to the institutional memory database.
 - Exit Reporting: Departing staff must complete a knowledge transfer process to ensure continuity and prevent knowledge loss.
 - Data Accuracy: Staff are responsible for ensuring that all knowledge and program records submitted are accurate, timely, and complete.

Review Cycle

- Regular Reviews: The policy shall be formally reviewed every two years by the Policy Review Committee or designated authority.
- Ad-hoc Reviews: Interim reviews will be triggered by significant events such as changes in legislation, organizational restructuring, major incidents, or critical gaps identified during monitoring and evaluation.
- Alignment with Global Standards: Each review will benchmark the policy against national laws, international human rights frameworks, and sectoral guidelines (e.g. NDPR, or donor standards).

Review Process

- Preparation: Collect and analyze feedback from staff, stakeholders, and MEL findings.
- Consultation: Organize participatory workshops or focus groups with staff, survivor representatives, and community partners to ensure inclusivity.

- **Draft Revisions:** Update the policy with proposed changes, integrating new tools, procedures, and lessons learned.
- **Validation:** Circulate the revised draft to senior management, the board, and key stakeholders for validation.
- **Approval:** Final endorsement by the Executive Director or equivalent governance body.
- **Dissemination:** Communicate updates to all staff, volunteers, and partners through orientation sessions, training, and digital platforms.

Continuous Learning Integration

- **Link with MEL:** Lessons from monitoring, evaluation, and learning will directly inform policy updates.
- **Emerging Risks and Trends:** The policy will adapt to changes in knowledge management practices (e.g., digital data security).
- **Best Practices Adoption:** Incorporate evolving global best practices in knowledge retention, data management and organizational resilience.

Communication of Updates

- **Clear Dissemination:** Updated policies will be shared through official circulars, staff communication channels, trainings, and community engagement sessions.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure updates are accessible in multiple languages, user-friendly formats, and available to staff with disabilities.
- **Training Integration:** All staff will undergo refresher training after significant revisions to ensure consistent understanding and compliance.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

- **Encouraging Innovation:** Staff are encouraged to propose new approaches, tools, or strategies that improve policy effectiveness.
- **Feedback Loops:** Establish strong feedback loops between field practice, survivor experiences, and policy frameworks.

- Commitment to Growth: TAAF acknowledges that challenges and changes in institutional memory are dynamic, requiring ongoing vigilance, adaptability, and improvement.

Staff Exit and Knowledge Handover Checklist

- ➔ Handover of all documents, files, and reports.
- ➔ Update of ongoing project trackers.
- ➔ Submission of contact lists and partner databases.
- ➔ Written summary of lessons learned.
- ➔ Access credentials returned to IT department.
- ➔ Exit interview Conducted.