

## Strengthening the Preservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage through Oral History: A Malaysian Perspective

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### Abstract:

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) encompasses the living traditions, knowledge, and practices of communities, yet it faces increasing threats due to urbanization, generational change, and modernization. Oral history has emerged globally as a vital mechanism to document and safeguard ICH, capturing narratives that are often not recorded in written form. In Malaysia, oral history initiatives have been implemented sporadically, primarily as project-based activities, without formal institutionalization or standardization. This study explores current oral history practices within Malaysian heritage institutions, identifies challenges and lessons learned, and proposes a model for institutionalizing oral history as a sustainable mechanism for heritage preservation. Using a simplified qualitative methodology based on desk research, document analysis, and mini case studies of selected institutions, the study finds gaps in policy, capacity, and digital infrastructure. The proposed model emphasizes policy, standard operating procedures (SOPs), capacity building, community engagement, and centralized digital repositories. The findings provide practical guidance for heritage organizations seeking to integrate oral history into long-term preservation strategies.

### Keywords:

Oral history, intangible cultural heritage, heritage preservation, institutionalization, Malaysia.