

## The Sabah Archives and Museum: Collaborative Pathway to Memory

*JOANNA CRISPINA KITINGAN, MDM.*

Director The Sabah Museum, Jalan Muzium, 88300 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah  
e-mail: joanna.kitingan@sabah.gov.my

*MAJELLA MARJORIE TAN MARQUEZ, MA.*

Deputy Director II The Sabah State Archives, KM 4, Penampang Road, Locked Bag No. 2017, 88999  
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia Malaysia  
e-mail: majella.marquez@sabah.gov.my

The Sabah Archives and Museum: Collaborative Pathway to Memory

### *ABSTRACT*

Day by day, information continually increases if it is managed efficiently and vanishes if it is mismanaged. Several global cultural and heritage institutions such as galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) play a vital role in ensuring its information asset and heritage are well managed and properly preserved. No doubt they share one common identity that is to identify, acquire, manage, conserve, preserve, and provide universal access information of their holdings to the public. Micheal Fox (Minnesota Historical Society) memorably exclaimed that, 'museum need to become more like library and archives just as good library and archives ought to adapt certain characteristics of the museum experiences'. Although the type of medium may differ, professional practices vary, GLAM share a set of overlapping functions. By collaborating these functions would invigorate GLAM into producing multi-benefits and better pathway to an efficient and quality service to the public serving to their collective abilities. This paper seeks to address the trends and practices of the Sabah State Archives on outreach programmes over the past 33 years since its inception in 1980 and highlighting some insights on its collaboration and cooperation with other cultural and heritage institutions on outreach programmes. By empowering GLAM's information assets and cultural heritage for our present and future generation, initiatives for a proposed transformative collaboration prioritizing key areas on outreach programmes are included in this portfolio.

L'archivio ed il Museo di Sabah: un percorso di collaborazione per la memoria

### *SINTESI*

Giorno dopo giorno, l'informazione cresce in continuazione se viene gestita efficacemente e scompare musei (GBAM, orig: GLAM) giocano un ruolo vitale nell'assicurare che i propri patrimoni siano gestiti al meglio e conservati in maniera appropriata. Senza dubbio esse condividono un'identità comune, che è quella di identificare, acquisire, gestire, conservare, preservare e provvedere informazioni universali per l'accesso del pubblico al loro posseduto. Micheal Fox (Minnesota Historical Society) affermò pubblicamente che "il museo deve diventare più come una biblioteca o un Archivio, così come le buone biblioteche ed I buoni archivi dovrebbero adattare certe caratteristiche delle esperienze museali". Sebbene il tipo di media possa essere diverso, le pratiche professionali variare, il GBAM condivide una serie di funzioni sovrapposte. Con la collaborazione queste funzioni possono rafforzare il GBAM e produrre molti benefici e migliori percorsi verso un servizio al pubblico efficiente e di qualità al servizio delle loro collettive abilità. Il presente articolo cerca di mostrare le tendenze e le pratiche dell'Archivio Nazionale di Sabah su programmi realizzati nei passati 33 anni sin dal proprio inizio nel 1980, e sottolinea alcuni aspetti della propria collaborazione e cooperazione con altre istituzioni culturali e del patrimonio. Con il rafforzamento del patrimonio culturale del GBAM per il presente e per le generazioni a venire, si includono in questo rapporto le iniziative per una collaborazione che abbia come priorità le aree chiave dei programmi da sviluppare.

## Arhiv in muzej Sabah: skupna pot do spomina

## IZVLEČEK

Z učinkovitim upravljanjem količina informacij dan za dnem nenehno narašča, in izginja, če je njihovo upravljanje slabo. Številne svetovne kulturne institucije in institucije s področja varstva kulturne dediščine, kot so galerije, knjižnice, arhivi in muzeji (GLAM) igrajo ključno vlogo pri zagotavljanju dobrega upravljanja in hranjenja informacijskih dobrin in dediščine. Ni dvoma, da jim je skupno da prepoznavajo, pridobivajo, upravljajo, ohranjajo in zagotavljanje javnosti univerzalne informacije o dostopu do njihovega gradiva. Micheal Fox (Minnesota Historical Society) je nekoč izjavil, da » morajo muzeji postati bolj podobni knjižnicam in arhivom, medtem ko bi morali arhivi in knjižnice sprejeti nekatere muzejske izkušnje«. Čeprav se vrste medijev razlikujejo, prav tako tudi poklicne prakse, pa si Glam med seboj delijo niz prekrivajočih se funkcij. S sodelovanjem bi te funkcije spodbudile Glam v izdelavo multi-koristnih in boljših poti do učinkovitih in kakovostnih javnih storitev. Prispevek poskuša na osnovi programov ozaveščanja iz zadnjih 33 let, vse od ustanovitve arhiva leta 1980, predstaviti tendence in prakse v Državnem arhivu Sabah, in poudarja nekatera spoznanja o njegovem sodelovanju z drugimi institucijami za varstvo kulturne dediščine. Z omogočanjem uporabe in dostopa do informacijskih dobrin Glam in kulturne dediščine sedanjim in prihodnjim generacijam, vključuje prispevek tudi pobude za predlagano sodelovanje in opredeljuje prednostna ključna področja za programe ozaveščanja.

## Muzium dan Arkib Negeri (SAM): Bekerjasama Ke Arah Memori

## ABSTRAK

Hari demi hari, maklumat semakin bertambah jika ia diurus secara efisien dan lenyap jika ia tidak diurus dengan baik. Beberapa institusi kebudayaan dan warisan global seperti galeri, perpustakaan, arkib dan muzium (GLAM) memainkan peranan penting dalam memastikan aset maklumat dan warisanya diurus dengan sempurna dan dipelihara dengan baik. Tidak dapat dinafikan bahawa mereka berkongsi satu persamaan iaitu dalam mengenal pasti, memperolehi, mengurus, memulihara, memelihara dan menyediakan akses maklumat sejagat terhadap bahan-bahan mereka kepada pihak umu. Michael Fox (Persatuan Sejarah Minnesota) menyatakan bahawa 'muzium perlu menjadi lebih seperti perpustakaan dan arkib menjadi perpustakaan yang baik dan arkib perlu menerapkan ciri-ciri pengalaman muzium'. Walaupun jenis perantara medium berbeza, amalan profesional yang berbeza, GLAM berkongsi fungsi yang bertindih. Melalui kerjasama fungsi-fungsi tersebut akan menggalakkan GLAM dalam penghasilan pelbagai faedah dan cara yang lebih baik ke arah perkhidmatan awam yang efisien dan efektif iaitu berkhidmat melalui kerjasama. Kertas kerja ini mengetengahkan trend dan amalan Arkib Negeri Sabah dalam program outreach sejak 33 tahun penubuhannya pada tahun 1980 dan menyerlahkan beberapa wawasan dalam kerjasama dengan institusi-institusi kebudayaan dan warisan tentang program outreach. Dengan memperkasakan aset maklumat dan warisan budaya GLAM untuk generasi kita pada masa kini dan akan datang, inisiatif untuk cadangan kerjasama transformatif yang mengutamakan bidang utama program outreach adalah termasuk dalam portfolio ini.

## Introduction

Information asset forms the nucleus of our nation's heritage. Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) play a significant role in ensuring its information asset and heritage are well managed and properly preserved. GLAM shares this identical role and overlapping functions. Yet they share one common goal, that is to provide an efficient and effective public service delivery to the best of their abilities. Because of its identical role and overlapping functions, there are instances library merges with museum or museum and archives or library and archives or archives and museum. According to Michael Fox of the Minnesota Historical Society 'museum need to become more like library and archives just as good library and archives ought to adapt certain characteristics of the museum experiences'.

## Trends and Collaborative Practices

In the case of The Sabah State Archives (SSA), since its inception in 1980, efforts towards establishing a collaborative partnership on education and training outreach programmes took place between SSA and The National Archives of Malaysia (NAM). NAM acted as a catalyst in providing technical training on archives administration, conservation and reprography, a priority of the former. SSA showcased various government collaboration and cooperation on search and research programmes in

conjunction with the 1981 Centenary Celebration resulting to two (2) publications - *The Commemorative History of Sabah 1881-1981 and Sabah History in Pictures 1881-1981*. Time capsule to commemorate the centenary celebration filled with contemporary records on Sabah was undertaken with the cooperation of government departments and agencies. After then it was buried in a specific place and to be opened in the year 2081, on the one hundred years bicentenary celebration.

When SSA merged with The Sabah Museum to become the Department of Sabah Museum and State Archives under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in 1984, archives section and functions was centralized at the Museum located at a different site. 12 SSA staff then followed suit. Technical training and cooperative initiatives continued at the SSA. Although operating at two different locations, the department had a centralized budget at the Museum. Nevertheless, the department was able to exhibit, publish a complimentary book entitled the History of Labuan - Past, Present and Future and cooperated with the Education Department into producing a documentary film entitled, *The Historical Development of Labuan or Sejarah Perkembangan Labuan*. Three (3) senior Archives officers were privileged to attend yearly seminars organized by Southeast Asian Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (SARBICA) and The International Council on Archives (ICA). The Sabah Museum and State Archives participated in an international project sponsored by UNESCO which successfully published, *A Guide to the Sources of the History of the Nations*. An Oral History Programme was introduced in 1986 giving due emphasis to public administration, politics, family history and Second World War.

In early 1987, the deputy director post was filled by an officer from the Sabah State Library and another staff filled up the post of curator (history) upon completion of a three year study leave. To heighten public awareness on Sabah's history, *Do You Know?* programme in collaboration with Radio Malaysia Sabah was aired and an exhibition entitled *Archives and the Community* was held.

The year 1988 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sabah as a state in the Federation of Malaysia. To celebrate the occasion, the Sabah Museum and State Archives organized a historical display of Sabah's history. An organized quiz drew the interest of the public towards the exhibition. A complimentary commemorative book entitled *Guide to Archives Materials Pertaining to Sabah's Independence Within Malaysia* was published. Study visits to the National Archives, Malaysia and Singapore was conducted. The Oral Documentation Programme which serves as a means to enrich historical heritage through acquisition received a boost. Former colonial British Governor, district officers and veteran politicians were interviewed. During the year, series of records management courses for government departments were organized with the cooperation of National Archives of Malaysia. This was in line with the State Archives Enactment 1980, which aims to have a standard Records Management System in all government departments. Following these courses, a Records Appraisal Committee was formed and a Departmental Records Officer was appointed in seven government offices in 1990.

The continuity of providing search and research facilities to users and institutions was another outreach programme which The Sabah Museum and State Archives Department initiated. Two (2) major exhibitions were held and the department participated in the research and exhibition on *The Historical Development of the Civil Service* in conjunction with the Civil Service Week and *The Hakkas in Sabah* in conjunction with the World Hakka Congress. Two (2) complimentary publications were published in these events, *Guide to Archives Materials Pertaining to the Civil Service and The Hakkas in Sabah*. Historical research for *Today in Sabah* was undertaken. Throughout the year 1990, a total of 699 student and public visitors visited the State Archives to undertake search and research work. And a total of 141,716 visited the Sabah Museum.

Records management courses continued to progress not only in government departments but also to various districts. Another two (2) major exhibitions was organized in conjunction with the Sabah Museum and the British Council called *China and Its People*- John Thompson photographic collection together with a side exhibition entitled *Early Scenes of Chinese Life in Sabah*. The second exhibition entitled *The Story of a Building* was held in conjunction with the opening of the Sabah Tourism Promotion Center new building. In 1991, marked a considerable increase in the number of searchers and researchers compared to previous years as the functions and objectives of the Archives and Museum became better known. Colonial History Project under the Oral History Programme was conducted in England. 27 British ex-patriates were interviewed by the deputy director. As a result, most of their private papers were donated the department.

On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1992, The Sabah State Archives (SSA) officially separated from the Sabah Museum and officially became an independent department on its own under the purview of the Chief Minister's Department. A new chapter in an information age requiring a shift in administrative practices and methodological approaches. Some of the Archives staff from the museum were transferred back to the Archives. The deputy director eventually became the newly appointed director.

The State Archives Department also welcomed back an archives officer, the first in Sabah to have obtained a masteral degree in records management and archives administration from University College London. In 1996, SSA had a total of three (3) graduate qualified archivists from the same university. The education, training and research outreach programme continued. Newly recruited staff was sent for technical training to India and London. The number of searchers and researchers multiplied a thousand fold. A collaboration with the local newspaper, Daily Express to publish *Passages From the Past* was implemented.

Three (3) major exhibitions were organized, *Something Old, Something New: Private Papers Collection- 30 donors private papers were being exhibited to encourage public viewers to donate their historical and private collection to the Archives*. The second exhibition entitled *Newspapers: Public Mind Opener* basically to create public awareness on the types of newspapers the department preserves dated 1883 onwards and that these records are available to the public search and research. The third exhibition held was basically to acquire as much information and materials as possible to enrich our missing gap collection- of World War Two: Japanese Occupation. Each of these exhibitions were accompanied by their respective publications and were circulated free of charge except for the World War Two book.

In 1996, SSA had a new director. Records management programme was a priority and SSA participated in the Kota Kinabalu exhibition and publication. As years went by, replacement of directorship was frequent. Only then in the year 2000, SSA had a director that served for 12 years until 2012. Education and training, search and research, exhibition and publications delivered significant benefits immensely both local and national level at SSA.

In education and training, records management programme for government officers was included as one of the training syllabus at the State Public Sector Training Institute (INSAN) and SSA officers gets invited as lecturers. Almost ninety percent of SSA officers and staff underwent technical training both local and abroad. SSA also offer opportunities for undergraduate students from local and national universities and colleges pursuing career options to undertake attachment or practicum at the department. Till to date SSA received a total of 286.

Another source of outreach programme was promoting the State Archives through exhibitions and quizzes, a direct interaction with the public. A joint search and research with the cooperation of the Faculty of Social Science, University of Malaysia, Sabah was conducted whenever a yearly exhibition is organized. 12 different exhibitions on personalities, places and events were held and a documentary film on a personality was done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Up to date, the number of searchers and researchers that flocks to SSA is close to 50,000 and visitors both local and foreign amounting to 138,900.

In this age of virtual wonders communication technologies is rushing towards us bringing with it a range of new possibilities for sharing information. The State Archives website was set up. The Information System Services (AniS), a field in the website is in the pipeline for public access. By providing pathways for exploring our collective holdings online, this methodology would be cost-effective benefiting local and foreign searchers and researchers abroad. As in the case of some libraries, museums and universities have collaborated an on-line resources known as K-Borneo. K-Borneo is a collective project of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia collaborating internationally on the identification and preservation of Borneo records and it is available at [www.kborneo.com](http://www.kborneo.com). The SSA is in its preparatory stage towards embracing into the social networking society.

## Primary Sources

1. ANS 100-22/1 Annual Report Government Records Section
2. ANS 100-21/3/1 Annual Report 1990
3. ANS 100-21/3/2 Annual Report 1991
4. ANS 100-21/3/3 Annual Report 1992
5. ANS 100-21/3/4 Annual Report 1993
6. ANS 100-21/3/5 Annual Report 1994
7. ANS 100-21/3/6 Annual Report 1995
8. ANS 100-21/3/7 Annual Report 1996
9. ANS 100-21/3/8 Annual Report 1997
10. ANS 100-21/3/9 Annual Report 1998
11. ANS 100-21/3/10 Annual Report 1999
12. ANS 100-21/3/11 Annual Report 2000
13. ANS 100-21/3/12 Annual Report 2001
14. ANS 100-21/3/13 Annual Report 2002
15. ANS 100-21/3/14 Annual Report 2001-6
16. ANS 100-21/3/15 Annual Report 2007
17. ANS 100-21/3/16 Annual Report 2008
18. ANS 100-21/3/17 Annual Report 2009
19. ANS 100-21/3/18 Annual Report Department
20. ANS 100-21/3/19 Annual Report Department
21. ANS 100-21/3/20 Annual Report Department
22. ANS 100-21/3/21 Annual Report Department
23. ANS 100-21/6 Annual Report Private Collection Section
24. ANS 100-21/7 Annual Report Historical Documentation and Publication Section
25. ANS 100-21/8 Annual Report Education and Public Relations Section
26. ANS 100-21/18 Annual Report Development Organization and Technology Section
27. ANS 100-21/21 Annual Report Public Archives and Research Section
28. ANS 100-21/7 Annual Report Historical Documentation and Publication Section
29. JMNS:100-0/3 Lawatan Am Jabatan Muzium Sabah

## Secondary Sources

1. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1981-1986
2. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1987
3. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1988
4. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1989
5. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1990
6. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1991
7. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1992
8. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1993
2. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1994
3. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1995
4. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1996
5. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1997-98
6. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 1999-2000
7. Laporan Tahunan (Annual Report) 2001-2006
8. Laporan Tahunan Muzium Sabah 1995
9. <http://www.ifla.org> Public Libraries, Archives and Museums: Trends in Collaboration and Cooperation
10. <http://www.oclc.org> Library, Archive and Museum Collaboration
11. <http://www.kborneo.com/> K@Borneo, The Key Knowledge to Borneo

## SUMMARY

A successful collaborative outreach programme including digital partnerships requires forethought and preparation from start to finish to support life-long learning, enabling universal access to the holdings. A shared vision, mission, objectives, coupled with policies and procedures, budget and human resource is critical for supporting meaningful ongoing collaborations between information services. By sharing our knowledge and experiences as a tool to promote successful collaborative projects.

Submitting date: 01.08.2013

Acceptance date: 17.08.2013