

Towards a complete documentary heritage of Zimbabwe. Whither oral history?

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Abstract

The history of Zimbabwe, like the rest of post-colonial Africa is replete with bias, prejudice, inaccuracies and misconceptions, since some of it was a product of colonialists who had their own interests to serve. Oral history has come as a great relief. With it, Zimbabwe can now have a balanced and more complete documentary heritage. However, the National Archives of Zimbabwe's Oral History Unit faces a number of challenges, resulting in the Unit lacking national vibrancy and visibility. This empirical study made use of the descriptive survey method, where data were collected through questionnaires and observation. Content analysis of the Directors' Reports and other secondary sources was also used. The study highlighted the centrality of oral history as a source of history and hypothesized that more resources need to be mobilized for the Oral History Unit to be more visible and more vibrant, for the nation to have a balanced and more complete record of the past.