

Sport and culture: an oral memory exercise based photography collections

David Iglésias

This presentation will discuss the experience of the Image Research and Dissemination Center (CRDI), at the Girona City Council, in organizing a workshop to get the community engaged in the archive's amateur sports fonds, in an effort to promote community interest. The result of the experience is a virtual exposition that's included in the European project *WeAreEuropeForCulture*.

As part of the *#WeAreEuropeForCulture* initiative, funded by the European Commission, the CRDI organized a workshop to create a virtual exhibition on the subject of amateur sports. The result of this work would become a virtual exposition that would be shown as part of the centennial exhibition on the GEiEG (a sports association in Girona).

#WeAreEuropeForCulture was created with the goal of encouraging people to embrace cultural heritage. For this reason, ten cultural institutions from different European cities (Amsterdam, Budapest, Sofia, Hämeenlinna, Kraków, Pisa, Basel, Vilnius, Nicosia and Girona) were invited to create a virtual exhibition based on photographs and oral history, on a specific theme that each city would choose. The concept was created by the Catholic University of Leuven and the association Photoconsortium. A Dutch company, Noterik, provided the technology by developing an innovative app which allows users to view the digital images through an interactive system, which can be controlled with their mobile phones. Everything else, that is, the organization of the exhibitions, was up to each city.

As for the city of Girona, twenty people participated in the workshop, all of them related to the GEiEG, an organization with a hundred-year history. Involving these people in the workshop proved to be beneficial for the organization's photography collection (the GEiEG donated their fonds to the Municipal Archives on January 10, 2017, with the goal of conserving it and making it accessible to the public), but also for the other photography collections related to amateur sports. In both cases, the images were documented and more importantly, the photographs were contextualized thanks to the stories of each one of the participants, who in an exercise on historical memory, using the selected pictures, managed to provide an added value to the photographs. Some of the selected photographs, as well as the discussions about them, were later used for the virtual exhibition, first put on exhibit in Girona (from October 9 to November 23, 2019) and later, in Brussels (February 2020), the a city where the final event was organized, so that each of the institutions from the different countries could explain their experience throughout the whole process and show the results of their work.

The Girona exhibition was edited by the project managers, together with the CRDI technicians, and was integrated into the GEiEG centennial exhibition at the Casa de Cultura, which made it possible for a large number of visitors to attend, primarily due to the city's connection with the organization. We should bear in mind that the GEiEG was founded in Girona in 1919 with the initial goal of promoting hiking and other cultural and recreational activities. Soon though, it began organizing amateur sports activities, initially related to athletics, and after, went on to include all kinds of sports. Over the course of these hundred years, there were many people who were members of the organization at some point, and therefore, were interested both in the workshop as well as the exhibition.

The overall opinion on the experience was very positive, in the sense that the main objectives of the project were achieved, that is, to connect people with the cultural heritage - in this case, photography - and to include them in the task of attributing value to this digital heritage, which in Europe is mainly done on the Europeana platform. Therefore, it was clearly a European-wide initiative that was focused primarily on the user and getting them involved in order to promote and grow interest in culture, and doing this through an innovative use of technology, in a functional way, where it is used as a service for the people and heritage.



Participants in the workshop done at the CRDI.

(Author: Albert)



Visitors at the exhibition on the day of inauguration.

(Author: Albert)