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The FC Barcelona Documentation and Studies Center: a specialized information unit within a centennial sports organization

Juan Antonio Ponce Lozano and Marcel Russiñol Amat. Futbol Club Barcelona Documentation and Studies Center

The Futbol Club Barcelona is a private, non-profit sports organization with 120 years of history. It is owned by its 141,846 members and is governed by deeply democratic criteria that are reflected in its statutes and are a part of the institution's values. Although it's mainly known for its football team, it's a multi-sport club with more than 2,100 athletes—women and men, girls and boys, who compete in fourteen different sports, both professional and amateur. Barça is an institution with a social vocation that is expressed in many ways, largely through the Club's Foundation. It also has a large public involvement that goes beyond just its members, with events that bring together its fans - the World Supporters Confederation, and is widely followed by the media. It's an organization that shares a cultural link and commitment with Catalonia, but with a global vocation, as proven by the 303 million fans that follow it worldwide. A club with a projection for the future and open to innovation, but without forgetting about its history or its traditions.

Given the need to preserve and disseminate this century-old legacy, the Barcelonista Documentation Center was created in 1994, as an initiative of the director and Culture delegate at that time, historian Jaume Sobrequés i Callicó. In terms of organizational structure, this new department was linked to the club's museum and became responsible for the documents and records of the of the entity's administrative archive, which was partially disposed of over time. Until that time, the documents were stored inside the stadium, without any archival processing.

The concept of a sports club creating a documentation center that was to be accessible to researchers and scholars was a pioneer initiative in Spain. In creating this center, the documentary heritage would have its own place to be stored and made accessible for viewing, and ultimately, would become a reference service that could provide the organization with the information, documentation and historical reference that it needed.

In 2006, as part of the club's overall professionalization efforts, the documentation center began a new chapter, this time under the direction of the Communication Department, and its name was changed to the FC Barcelona Documentation and Studies Center (CDiE). The purpose of this change was not merely to rename the center, but also to act as a driving force for researching and disseminating Barça history and to serve as a source of media content for the club, which was increasingly in demand. The CDiE wanted to be a modern information and resource department, which is why it requested scientific-based advice from the Faculty of Library and Information Sciences (now the Faculty of Information and Audiovisual Media), at the University of Barcelona, with whom it had a cooperation agreement in place until 2014. In addition, they sought to expand the collection by implementing a strategy for collecting new archive material, like the Horacio Seguí photo collection or the personal collection of President Agustí Montal i Costa.

At this stage, the CDiE began an integration process with other departments at the club, with the goal of carrying out a study and analysis on the types of documents that the organization generates, in order to design a classification table. At the same time, they focused a lot of attention on the process of documenting and systematically describing the collections. As a result of this work, the first library and archives catalogs were created.

The increasing importance of ICT and the production and communication needs associated with its use, meant it was necessary for the CDiE to evolve and experience a digital transformation. Beginning in 2014, a growth strategy was developed focusing on two new aspects.

First, the club's needed to find an appropriate processing method for its audiovisual collections, both historical and contemporary, in order to achieve optimal distribution and commercial use. Thus, a new document management model was born, based on MAM (*multimedia asset management*) software. Together with Barça Studios (the entity that centralizes the creation, production and marketing of the all the Futbol Club Barcelona audiovisual material, including the management of Barça TV, the club's television channel), the CDiE implemented the use of this software which allows documents to be processed at the source and distributed, in a process that involves several of the club's production departments.

The second aspect had to do with implementing a whole series of new management and regulatory policies, geared towards improving the quality of the service. The close collaboration with the organization's legal department was essential in making sure these instruments were aligned with corporate compliance.

At the same time, the construction work on the future Espai Barça prompted the CDiE to be moved to a new location in April 2019. From its location on the second floor of the museum, inside Camp Nou, it was moved to a location on *la travessera de les Corts*, along the perimeter of the Futbol Club Barcelona campus. This change made it possible to optimize the Center's physical space, by separating the viewing area and the office onto one side, and the other side, the space dedicated to displaying the documentary collections. This way, the records and documents are stored in the appropriate physical, environmental and safety conditions. Another benefit of the move was that it provided a better spot at street level, meaning it was easier to see from the outside, and consequently, more accessible to the general public.

In short, the Center is a unique document management unit. Its history is the result of a constant willingness to adapt to the club's needs, without losing sight of its inherent functions. It has been a challenge in balancing the flexibility that is unique to a private organization, with the desire to standardize processes and protocols.

The Futbol Club Barcelona Documentation and Studies Center Barcelona Documentation and Studies Center has evolved from being a passive recipient and custodian of inactive documentation in the beginning, until what it has become today: a proactive part of the organization, involved in production work and content creation, open to historical research and dissemination. A hybrid unit that provides transversal support to all the club's different departments and affiliated entities, in addition to those who want to research and learn about the history of Futbol Club Barcelona.