



Government Libraries Section

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## **Youth posters: the conservation of an historic collection**

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### **Abstract**

During the 1980s and 1990s, a collection of posters concerning youth issues was created. At that time, the poster was the means of communication used by the Catalan Government to publicise its activities and bring its actions closer to young people.

The presentation focuses primarily on setting out how the collection of posters has been treated and showing the DVD made to publicise it. The DVD contains a selection of the posters and a fact sheet for each one.

### **Keywords:**

Posters, collection and conservation, youth, young people, digitalisation, digital preservation

### **Social and political context**

Youth policies were promoted by the Catalan Government right from when the Generalitat of Catalonia was restored. This period was a time when institutions and democracy itself were recovered and when institutional support was given to a range of initiatives that had been put in place by civil society during the difficult years of the dictatorship, and which were often led by young people.

Over the past 30 years, the social and political context has called on the various Catalan governments to respond to the needs and situations of young people in Catalonia. It has also been important to articulate the proposals and demands of social and political agents in the field of youth issues, which often come out of analysis and discussion processes in which young people have taken an active role.

Most of these youth policies have been mapped out using cross-cutting and all-inclusive approaches. They have been designed not only to cater for the needs of young people and deliver services, but also to work from a global perspective which interrelates the various areas of young people's lives such as education, work, housing, health, democratic participation, regional balance and social cohesion.

Momentum and consolidation were the characteristic features of the early 1980s, driving and strengthening institutions, associations and culture, on the one hand to get to know the most illustrious personages of Catalonia and on the other to nurture creativity and the promotion of young artists. Fostering health care, preventing unemployment and promoting participation and social commitment characterised the initial stages of democracy, which

already bore the mark of the work done by the various departments of the Catalan Government. This interdepartmental effort later took on a more structured and systematic shape which led to the approval of two interdepartmental plans for 1993/94 and 1995/97.

In 2000, the Catalan Parliament unanimously passed the National Youth Plan of Catalonia, an instrument that set up a methodological framework and brought youth policy into its mature stage. Nowadays emancipation and participation policies help young people to implement their own personal and social life projects.

### **The collection of youth posters**

The Youth Documentation Centre specialises in youth issues. It is a public centre in the Documentation and Archive Service at the Youth Secretariat, which in turn is part of the Catalan Government's Department of Social Action and Citizenship.

The Documentation Centre was set up in 1984 and its mission is to obtain, select, classify and conserve documents relating to youth to ensure their *preservation and dissemination* by making them available to social, political and academic agents and to youth policy professionals.

During the 1980s and 1990s, a collection of posters concerning youth issues was created. At that time, the poster was the means of communication used by the Catalan Government to publicise its activities and bring its actions closer to young people.

A poster is a still image obtained from a drawing or photograph which is accompanied by messages and of which multiple copies can be made at low cost using photomechanical processes and printing techniques. Posters were hung in stores, universities, youth centres, organisations, etc. Their format means they can be looked at by members of the public as they go about their daily business.

As a result of this work of conservation and preservation, in 2006 the Youth Documentation Centre began to digitalise and catalogue the posters in order to:

- Protect them
- Publicise the poster collection

Thus over the period from 1980 to 1994, a collection of 2,030 posters was built up of which 1,273 were digitalised. Under the terms of a cooperation agreement signed in 2002 with the National Archive of Catalonia and the National Youth Council of Catalonia, the body which brings together youth organisations and associations from across the country, the Youth Secretariat placed the *Collection of Youth Posters* in the National Archive of Catalonia for treatment and preservation.

The digitalised collection consists of 303 posters produced by the Generalitat, 916 by youth organisations and 54 international youth posters.

The posters were digitalised at actual size in JPEG and TIFF formats. This was done both to make them easy to access and also to enable premium quality reproduction for a range of purposes.

Cataloguing the *Collection of Youth Posters* involved a number of descriptive items contained in a fact sheet for each of the posters. The basic elements are: cataloguing unit, author, title, description of the visual content of the poster, subject descriptors, place names, generating organisation, legal deposit, printing, place of publication and year of publication.

Subsequently a plan to publicise the collection was mapped out and work done to make a DVD. Part of the collection, a total of 301 posters from institutional campaigns geared towards young people that were produced by the Catalan Government, was selected. There

are also posters which were used to publicise various initiatives that were supported by the Youth Secretariat, at the time called the Directorate General for Youth.

The DVD contains two videos: a TV spot broadcast by Televisió de Catalunya in May 1985 to promote summer activities entitled "Viu l'estiu" (Live the summer) and another ad also broadcast by Televisió Catalunya to mark the launch of the Carnet Jove (Youth Card) in 1986.

On the DVD the posters are sorted by subject, following the Youth Documentation Centre's classification scheme that was draw up at the beginning of the century as part of the National Youth Plan of Catalonia.

They have also been sorted chronologically within each category. The categories are: youth policy, democratic participation, social cohesion, education, culture, health, work, environment, leisure, information and documentation.

Analysis of the content of each category shows the impact on cultural and educational issues, in their various facets, what interdepartmental actions have been taken and what the political priorities have been. The analysis emphasises aspects of the lives of young people that have been constants over the years: associations, human rights, multiculturalism and combating racism, values, risk prevention, addiction, promotion and the consumption of culture, creativity, leisure and jobs.

The project for digitalisation, description and preparation of the DVD also provided work experience for librarianship, documentation and archivist students acting as interns. The interns worked with a tutor who directed and guided their work.

I would like to emphasise the professionalism of the head of the Image Collection Department at the National Archive of Catalonia, Ms. Imma Molleví Navarro, and acknowledge her availability, because without her this project would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Ms. Raquel Porto Díaz and Mr. Francesc Sánchez Mata, interns, for their dedication and interest, and all the members of the team at the Documentation and Archive Service for their daily work. Nor could I forget the people, managers and librarians alike, who have worked at the Youth Documentation Centre since 1984, and without whose firm commitment to the preservation of youth documentation this *Collection of Youth Posters* would never have been created.

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