

*Main needs and
challenges of
the NGOs in
partners'
countries*

SPAIN



NGEnvironment

Foster European Active Citizenship and Sustainability
Through Ecological Thinking by NGO's

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1. Introduction

A research has been developed in Spain to assess the main needs and challenges of the NGOs. The research has been developed at several levels:

- Online research for studies that address this topic.
- Questions to our NGOs network.
- Own experience as NGO.

The results have helped the consortium to identify the main elements that the “Survival Guide for NGOs” must provide to citizens willing to create their own NGOs or to take part of an existing one in an educated way.

2. Future challenges of the NGOs

Through the analyses and studies carried out for the Strategic Plan of the Third Sector in Spain, a broad coincidence between the entities is verified in a set of future challenges¹.

- **Internal collaboration and networking:** entity initiatives such as shared management tools, projects developed by various entities, strategic alliances and mergers.
- **Political dialogue, articulation and advocacy:** strengthening of dialogue with public administrations, greater participation in their consultation mechanisms, greater social visibility and capacity to influence society. There is broad agreement that the articulation of the sector in recent years has produced benefits, based on the fact that greater political influence requires both improving the mechanisms of influence in public powers and a more solid articulation of the sector. The economic crisis and the new forms of social mobilization have determined new spaces and scenarios for citizen participation in Spain. The social image of the sector is not bad, but the knowledge of the public about its ethical and economic contribution to social cohesion is insufficient today. Overcoming this situation requires significant reflection as well as determining the most appropriate channels to gain visibility and social prestige.
- **Financial sustainability:** greater diversity of financing sources, greater stability in public financing, generalization of social clauses in public contracting, more stable ways of accessing credit, change in VAT regulations, improvement of tax incentives for donations and a greater boost to the social and solidarity economy.
- **Effectiveness, quality and impact:** greater professionalization of entities and improvements in organizational management and their quality systems.

¹ Elaboración del tercer Plan Estratégico del Tercer Sector de Acción social. Diagnóstico y cuestiones para la reflexión estratégica. 2016. Plataforma de ONG. Spain. Consulted online 2/02/2021

https://www.plataformaong.org/ARCHIVO/documentos/biblioteca/Diagnostico_III_Plan_Estrategico_Tercer_Sector_Accion_Social.pdf

- **Collaboration with other actors:** explore new collaboration formulas with companies, promote volunteering from the perspective of greater participation and involvement and generate initiatives to increase the participation of users in the management of their projects.
- **Innovation:** new community responses that go beyond the approach that can be addressed from specific groups; more synergies between the technological and social dimension, cooperation with universities, laboratory spaces to emerge ideas.
- **Volunteering managing:** the weight of volunteer personnel within the set of human resources of NGOs—including both voluntary and paid personnel—has grown 15 percentage points since 2008, reaching 71.5% on average, as well as the percentage of entities that have volunteering in their organizations, going from 83.5% to 90.1%. There is a Spanish law that regulates volunteering and NGOs need some tools and information on how to manage volunteers.

3. Training needs

The Coordinator of NGOs for Development in Spain has carried out a study to detect training needs in the NGO sector². Organizational processes in an NGO can be divided into two types: NGO-specific processes (identification of social needs, search for funding, planning and execution of projects, monitoring and evaluation) based on social participation, and processes that are transversal to all organizations (administrative management, communication and awareness). 63% of the group of professionals in Spain indicate that their respective NGOs have a training plan, although there are large differences between the large (83%) and the small (43%). Clearly, the diagnosis of training needs depends on the size of the NGO. In the small ones (10-15 workers) it does not make much sense to make a diagnosis. More than half of the INGs indicate that the professional group participates more often in training than the volunteer group. NGOs have bonus credit for continuing training, and almost half of them say they have used this credit. 93% of the professionals who have received training have applied all or most of the training received, which indicates that it is a very practical and useful training.

The training areas identified for which training needs have been detected are:

- Communication and strategic vision in NGOs: awareness and fundraising campaigns, new technologies for social participation, strategic direction and management of NGOs, education in values and for development, corporate social responsibility (CSR).
- New trends in NGO management: quality and results-based management, networking, code of conduct, volunteer management, NGO advocacy, human rights approach, transparency and accountability in NGOs.
- Economic management and project management in NGOs: NGO taxation, economic justification of subsidies, project formulation for European calls, methodology for project formulation, monitoring and evaluation by impact or objectives.

² Detección de necesidades de formación en el sector de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales. Elaboración de itinerarios formativos. 2013. Coordinadora Estatal de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo. Consulted online 02/02/2021 https://coordinadoraongd.org/old/1064/original/Informe_necesidades_formativas.pdf

- Skills for social intervention: Social and health care for the elderly, social intervention, job orientation for groups at risk of social exclusion, gender strategies, dependency law.
- There is a high lack of knowledge of the training offer. The traditional offer of courses does not interest them because they are generalists and need specific training.

4. Financing needs

A basic need of any NGO, whatever its nature, is to get the necessary funds to stay in operation, design new intervention projects or implement improvements in those that are already in operation. Although volunteering is a very important and vital part of the NGO, this does not mean, far from it, that resources are not needed economic to invest both in the administration of the organization as in the headquarters of the different countries and, even, at local levels, wherever the NGO has a presence. Both for a new project and to keep those that the infrastructures and all the machinery are already in operation that is needed for the NGO to move forward it is essential to achieve a stable economic flow, arriving through two ways main: public funding (from Administrations Public and international organizations) and private (donations, fees of partners, sponsorships ...)³.

5. Communication needs

The Foundation HazloPosible has published a [report on communication needs](#) in NGOs, whose main conclusions are:

- The crisis and the changes we are experiencing will modify the communication of the NGOs in the coming years: their efforts will focus more on reaching civil society, the media and companies.
- Collaboration with companies is presented as an area to be developed. Although there are still unresolved internal debates within NGOs, these are relationships you will invest in in the years to come.
- The priority communication objectives for the NGOs in the coming years will be to raise funds, promote social participation and citizen mobilization, and seek collaboration between NGOs.
- NGOs need to reinforce their brand identity to differentiate themselves in a society where they are barely distinguished. To do this, larger NGOs seek greater visibility with their communication while smaller NGOs focus on close relationships with their most direct interlocutors.
- The use of new technologies and social networks will increase dramatically in the coming years: web 2.0, Facebook and Youtub will be the applications most used by NGOs, although LinkedIn, Twitter or mobile applications have grown a lot.

³ ¿Cómo es una ONG por dentro. Intermon OXFAM. Consulted online 20/01/2021
<https://recursos.oxfamintermon.org/guia-gratuita-ong-por-dentro>

- One-way channels predominate in NGO communication, but two-way channels that imply participation and interactivity are increasing. Those responsible for communication express the need for training to take advantage of these channels, especially digital ones.
- NGOs increasingly have communication professionals in their teams, although they allocate few resources and communication management is still a pending issue in NGOs.

6. Legal needs:

The Madrid Bar Association has carried out a study of the legal needs of NGOs in Spain⁴. NGOs increasingly need to turn to technical experts, especially legal experts, to improve their public interest strategies (advocacy). More than 50% of the non-profit entities have lawyers on staff, who perform program, strategic or administrative functions, in this order. More than 80% have experience in using free legal services, although they also have to resort to external paid services. The main reasons that lead NGOs to resort to this type of service are:

- Advice that the non-profit entity needs to comply with the legislation or know the rights.
- Administrative law and everything related to grants: Within the framework of administrative issues, non-profit entities indicated that the most demanded areas are, in this order, “Data protection and privacy”, “Grant agreements”, “Compliance / regulation” and “Employment and HR”.
- General or specialized legal consultations on human rights and other legal issues related to the groups they work with.
- Procedural law, concrete defence of matters through assistance in trial and writing of judicial documents.

The association highlights the training needs of their staff in the first three areas.

⁴ Estudio de necesidades jurídicas de las ONGs en España. 2017. Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Madrid. Consulted online 02/02/2021
https://www.plataformaong.org/ARCHIVO/documentos/noticias/1558/1500885076_estudio_necesidades_on_gs-analisis_resultados_jun17.pdf



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