



Praxis Paper No. 5

Capacity Building: Perspectives from the NGO Sector in Spain

By Charlotte Hursey

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Executive Summary

Spain represents an interesting case for the study of capacity building in and by NGOs, given that in the course of barely twenty years it has transformed from recipient to actor in international aid. Spanish NGDOs have emerged from conditions perhaps very similar to those in countries where they are now operating, and have played a primary role in focusing attention on development assistance at a national level. This has meant contesting the policy debates and engaging directly with the public on issues of equality and justice, through activities such as the 0.7% campaign¹. In many cases NGDOs have a higher profile than the domestic voluntary or third sector organisations.

This history also means that whilst many of the organisations are young and have had little time to consolidate, and capacity building has not been an overt agenda, there has been pressure on them to deliver in terms of both services and solidarity. More recently they have been required to demonstrate their efficiency, not least in order to obtain public finance and credibility. In turn this has begun to impact on the provision of training, evaluation and consultancy to improve internal management and accountability, and to review their support to partners abroad. Coupled with the growth of confidence in decentralised government and the expansion of the Internet, new forms of organisation and networks are now starting to respond to capacity building needs across the NGO and third sectors.

¹ The 0.7% campaign refers to the agreed United Nations target of 0.7 % of the combined GNI of developed countries given in aid (see <http://www.bond.org.uk/pubs/advocacy/0.7now.pdf> for details).

1. Introduction

This is the second Praxis paper in the contextual capacity building studies series which aims to complement existing literature by depicting how the notion of capacity building is understood and applied in practice to strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) in different cultures and contexts. These studies situate capacity building in the local context, by exploring the evolution of the CSO sector and its relationship with other actors in the surrounding environment, and examining local capacity building terminology, the perceived purpose of capacity building, and the underlying values behind its application. The particularities of local approaches and methodology, as well as the emergence of central capacity building themes in the local context, are analysed, current capacity building needs and activities taking place are identified, and future challenges discussed. The extent to which capacity building is prioritised locally differs from one context to the next, and this has led to variations in the quantity and quality of available data. We hope that this initiative will inspire practitioners to contribute to Praxis learning about capacity building in different cultures and contexts.²

Although the paper does not present a comprehensive study, this preliminary research focuses on the concept of capacity building as applied to the role of NGOs in Spain. There have been some general introductions to Spanish NGOs in English, but this is believed to be the first exploration of how capacity building itself is perceived. It is hoped that it will provoke discussion as to the relevance of capacity building within Spanish and Hispanic NGOs, and lead to a greater exchange of ideas and examples.

1.1 Background to the Research

The research was carried out in 2003–2004, with interviews in Spain and substantial literature reviews (see Appendix V). This period coincided with the occupation of Iraq and massive public debate and protest as to the nature of Spanish government intervention, both militarily and in international development. This included physical and media mobilisation against the war by activists (including and led by many Spanish NGOs) and arguably led to the change in government at the beginning of 2004. This inevitably involved debate about whether NGOs can accept aid for humanitarian purposes whilst their government is supporting occupation, and in fact many Spanish NGOs very publicly refused to participate.

Although this debate as to how far state interests can be shared with CSOs cannot be pursued here, it is important to recognise its impact, especially given that relationships between the Spanish government and the development NGOs were already tense. The next section gives some background for readers who are not familiar with the Spanish context. This summarises some of the critical features of international development assistance, and the role of NGOs within the broader setting of non-profit organisations in Spain.

² Other papers currently available in the contextual capacity building studies series include: Praxis Paper 1, 'Capacity Building from a French Perspective'.

2. The National Context

Although Spain was a colonial nation for many centuries, it lost much of its power at the beginning of the 19th century and had far fewer direct overseas interests by 1900 than, say, England or France. Where there were government interests they were often geared to the nearer states of the Arab world, or to maintaining cultural and trading ties with the Hispanic community. Following the Spanish Civil War the long period under dictatorship from 1939–1975 suppressed much civil activity in Spain until after Franco's death in 1974. There were limited opportunities for social expression of solidarity, either at home or abroad. There was poverty within Spain itself and until it was taken off the United Nations Development Programme List in 1975, Spain was a recipient of aid. The subsequent growth in associations outside of the religious sector has been very dramatic but has perhaps taken a slightly different path from most of the rest of Europe.

It was only really after the 1970s, through the realisation that the new political parties could take on many of the domestic social issues, and through the growing relationship with the European Economic Community (later European Union) especially after Spain's admission in 1986, that development activities abroad started to be considered in earnest. Therefore Spain's emergence as an actor in international development has been quite recent, and its policies and infrastructures are still in the process of consolidation. In this sense it may appear to have more recent experience in common with many of countries where it now works. Certainly in the course of this research, there were several responses that alluded to a natural affinity and mutual understanding, to shared histories, and perhaps a more easily transferable approach, especially in Latin America. Whether this is an accurate view, either historically or today, or one shared by all parties, is more difficult to gauge.

2.1 Government and International Development

2.1.1 State Government

Central government aid began informally in the 1940s but only gained momentum from the mid-1970s with, for example, the creation of the Development Aid Fund (FAD), the Secretariat for International Cooperation and Iberoamerica (SECIPI) in 1985, and from 1988, the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI). Between 1985 and 1991, Spanish aid increased sevenfold, from 169 to 1,262 million USD (Alonso 2003).

Aid has tended to be overtly linked to political and strategic interests, particularly maintaining Spain's international profile during the period of the dictatorship. Spain has also tried to ensure the continuance of its historic advantage through diplomatic and other ventures such as the former Institute of Hispanic Culture. There has been a strand of emergency and humanitarian aid over a long period but this has been, and still is, a fairly minor component. It has been noted, however, that more formal policies for both official aid and co-operation in development have developed slowly. They have also been subject to a high degree of

criticism from NGOs and others, especially in terms of the lack of consistent focus or evaluation, lack of participation, and over-emphasis on project funding.

Official aid is currently split between several ministries: the main ones being the Ministries of the Economy and Finance, and of Foreign Affairs. It still favours the traditional links with the regions of Latin America, followed by North and Sub Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. There have also been significant contributions more recently to programmes with Argentina, China, and Eastern Europe and in supporting the growing emphasis on the greater Mediterranean area.

In 1992 the Congress of Deputies called for an increase in the aid budget to meet 0.7% of GNP by 2000 (not yet achieved), and in 1994 huge public support was mobilised behind the Platform for the '0.7% Campaign' which sought to influence government policy in achieving this target. Although this ran into its own problems of focus and co-ordination it has persisted with varying degrees of success (Mejía 2001). It has been reactivated in the last couple of years and is still part of the general Spanish consciousness of responsibility towards international development. It has even managed to encourage a number of local authorities and private concerns to take up, and even exceed, the challenge.

Spanish NGOs and other similar organisations have been vociferous in other national debates such as the 'Cancel the Debt' and Jubilee 2000 campaigns. The refusal to accept government aid for humanitarian work in Iraq has been particularly relevant since Spain was not only a key participant in many peacekeeping activities from the late 1980s onwards, but also a partner in military and similar interventions in the Americas, Middle East and the Balkans.

2.1.2 Decentralised Co-operation

One growing feature of aid funding in certain parts of Europe, notably Belgium and Germany, is the focus on decentralised development cooperation, depending on the autonomy accorded to local authorities (Rhi-Sausi 1997). In Spain this represents over 10% of the Spanish total, and over 20% of bi-lateral aid (Aguirre and Rey 2001). This comes from a number of local authorities, from Autonomous Regions to commune level who may co-operate directly with partners overseas or via a series of Development Funds co-ordinated at both regional and national level. This has provided an alternative mechanism for funding of NGOs and more general partnerships with organisations in developing countries, not just in the local government arena, but more broadly in civil society.

2.1.3 Support to NGOs

In 1983 the government made its first call for grant applications from NGOs, although the EU had made grants to Spanish NGOs for third world work as far back as 1976 (Baiges 2002). One important source on formal assistance to Spanish NGOs is the regular 'Reality of Aid' report, which now has a specific Spanish version produced via Intermón Oxfam (González 2003). This shows that support to NGOs from central Spanish government has increased substantially in absolute terms in the period 1997–2002 to some 99.2 million USD, but has actually decreased from 6% to 5% as a proportion of the total Spanish aid budget. This may have been partly compensated by the support of the Development Funds and marketing campaigns by NGOs themselves but has continued to be a cause of concern. Nonetheless, it should be noted that governmental support for NGOs, as distinct from that for other

domestic NGOs or non-profits, is still significantly higher: perhaps reaching around 50% of NGDOs' joint total income (Ruiz Olabuénaga et al. 1999).

By the early 1990s, with more competition in both activities and funding, there was an increasing emphasis on the professionalisation of NGOs and this was part of the agenda for the relationship between the Spanish government and non-governmental interests. The situation was complicated by the heightened profile of NGOs and development work within the public consciousness, and the alliance of some NGOs with specific political parties, which in turn gave rise to criticism and disillusion around NGOs themselves. Criteria for grant aid to NGOs were revised and there was evidence of support being weighted to those who followed the dominant party line. Only those who have been formally registered in the Register of NGDOs can fulfil legal requirements regarding their non-profit status, and only those who have carried out previous development projects can make applications. This has led to a situation where aid may seem to be geared to larger well-established organisations with a track record, shutting out smaller groups. Baiges gives an example of the prioritising of seven NGOs who were able to meet the criteria of having received a high level of grant in the previous seven years and or substantial private income, conditions which most organisations could not possibly achieve (2002: 85).

The AECI has been the primary vehicle for state support for NGOs but this was put under pressure during the late 1990s/early 2000s. Briefly, this involved political changes in the appointment of NGO delegates on the Council of Cooperation, which brought together state and other actors involved in development. The government altered the composition without notice, nominating four out of six representatives from the NGDO sector and all the advisers. This was viewed as deliberately provocative and confirmation that the government could not recognise or tolerate NGOs showing any public dissent against their policies (Vera 2003). This in turn led to a breakdown of relationships between the government and the CONGDE, the Coordinating Body for NGDOs (*Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo*) at the Spanish state level. The crisis at the end of the 1990s can be seen as a recognition that NGOs had not only become important actors but also emphasised that they came from different origins, with different interests, and that they were therefore still capable of being divided. Indeed some major NGOs negotiated directly with the government, without using CONGDE. Following the national elections and change of government in early 2004, substantial revisions were being proposed to the Council, perhaps the primary forum for the range of government departments, NGOs and other organisations to maintain dialogue. This included proposals for more formal elections from the 'social economy' sector and wider representation from CONGDE. In the autumn of 2004 the Finance Group of the latter was also trying to lobby the government to revise its funding policies to make them not only more transparent and accountable, but also better designed to meet the needs of beneficiaries and partners (Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo 2004).

Finally, mention must be made of direct fundraising from other sources, notably the public and private foundations. This has been a substantial element within NGDO budgets, and especially during emergencies such as Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua. There is also an increasing use of marketing techniques including appeals, online donations and business sponsorship.

2.2 Panorama of the Non-profit Sector in Spain

2.2.1 Origins and Emergence

There has been a long history of religious and other charitable organisations in Spain, especially in the former colonies. Typically one can think of examples of those dedicated to social welfare, health and education, setting up the first hospitals, orphanages, and schools as well as engagement in later movements such as Liberation Theology. Even today, many of the organisations have strong religious links, though the tendency has been towards lay organisations, which may include those allied to political factions of both right and left. With the return to democracy there were more possibilities for a diversity of social organisations outside of the church and now most NGOs are registered in law as 'public benefit associations', '*asociaciones de utilidad pública*' (Baiges 2002).

The first well-known international organisation was the Spanish Red Cross, started in 1864, while the first 'modern' NGDO is seen as emerging in the 1940s with the formation of Caritas España in 1942. But despite later additions such as the establishment of Intermón in 1956 by The Society of Jesus (*Compañía de Jesús*) (later assimilated into the Oxfam network), they were still in small numbers up until the 1980s. The great change with the rise of the modern NGDOs came at the end of the 1980s: partly stimulated by government policy and funding, but also by the increasing involvement with other multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid agencies such as through the OECD, the raised consciousness for the Fifth Centenary Celebrations of 1992 and the 'Discovery' of the Americas, and the arrival of external international NGOs wishing to start activities in Spain, for example, Ayuda en Acción in 1982.

2.2.2 Non-profits and NGOs in Contemporary Spain

Recent studies show that the non-profit sector in Spain now has over 250,000 organisations, representing perhaps 5% of the paid labour force and around 4% of GDP (Jiménez Lara 2000; Ruiz Olabuénaga 2000). This includes the 'super-league' of national organisations such as Caritas, ONCE (the blind and disabled association) and the Red Cross itself, as well as the thousands of small neighbourhood and similar groups. In addition, there has been a notable increase in private foundations, which may include those established by business or other enterprises like the Savings Banks, such as the Fundación BBV (Banco Bilbao-Vizcaya) and Fundación La Caixa. The greatest proportion are linked to social service and leisure activities, with support from high levels of fee and donation income, rather than by governmental funding. The domestic non-profits also rely greatly on philanthropic support, from foundations and individuals, while volunteer engagement is high, with perhaps one in ten of the adult population being involved at some level.

There are now many hundreds of NGDOs in Spain, with the highest concentrations based in Madrid and Barcelona. One author gives a figure of some five hundred at the turn of the Millennium (Sánchez Salgado 2001), which contrasts with a figure of only two hundred some ten years before (Focà 1993). However, there are substantial numbers located elsewhere, and not just in the more densely populated regions such as the Basque Country. In this sense the NGDO community in Spain is also decentralised, and in many cases more closely linked to local interests than might be the case in, say the UK. (For further details of NGOs please refer to the Directory compiled by CONGDE and regularly updated on their website at <http://www.congde.org/documentos/listado.doc>, as well as the website at www.pangea.org).

It has been suggested that only a quarter of NGOs come into the category of 'professional' NGOs, the majority being religious (and usually Catholic) bodies, with another substantial proportion being affiliated to political or union associations. There are a dozen or so large NGOs who take the lion's share of resources and membership: these include the Spanish Red Cross and Caritas, mentioned above, who also operate at the domestic level, plus Acción contra el Hambre, Ayuda en Acción, Intermón Oxfam, Manos Unidas, Médicos sin Fronteras, Médicos del Mundo, Médicos Mundi, Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (MPDL) and UNICEF. It has been noted that humanitarian NGOs have increased greatly, especially in response to the recent crises in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia, despite the lack of consistent support from state sources, and largely due to direct assistance from the EU through the ECHO programme (Aguirre and Rey 2001). Other arrivals have been the umbrella organisations and networks, and the increased number of institutes and other centres offering training or similar resources.

Some have called for greater clarity as to what type of NGOs exist and to what degree they span both the development and the humanitarian aspects, and follow different models to those in other countries (Baiges 2002). There is also great variation in the size, structure and activities of NGOs, with some such as Manos Unidas operating at levels that are comparable to major state activities. Various typologies for NGOs in Spain have been devised: for instance, Focà suggests four types of NGOs – confessional or religious, solidarity, service, and political-trade unionist (Focà 1993). Others build on other models such as the Johns Hopkins studies (Ruiz Olabuénaga 2000) or the generations of NGOs proposed by Korten (Serrano 2001). The relationship of organisations with other groups, given that many receive public funding or are directly linked with political parties, unions, etc has also been seen as a source of conflict, particularly by those who question their membership base, accountability and independence (Serrano 2001).

The growth of the NGO sector has been considerable in recent years. It has been estimated that some 30,000 people work for Spanish NGOs, of whom perhaps a fifth have some form of contract of employment, and around 1,000 students are registered annually on postgraduate international development courses (Baiges 2002). There is a strong solidarity element within Spanish NGOs and movements, both through political and campaigning links with particular countries (e.g. Chile, Cuba, Poland), variants of twinning arrangements (*'el hermanamiento'*) and through volunteer and similar placements as *'cooperantes'*. Another feature which is also characteristic of Spain is the increasing attention paid to the concept of *'co-desarrollo'*, or 'co-development'. This assumes the involvement of migrant and similar populations in forming associations that reflect the growing cultural diversity of Spain, and, most importantly, can develop links between these populations and their 'home' origins, reversing the process of transfer of skills.

2.2.3 NGO Networks³

Until the increase in NGOs in the 1980s there was little formal co-ordination across the non state actors in international development, although there were clearly specific networks such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and through the religious bodies. In 1986 some seven NGOs came together to launch CONGDE, the Coordinating Body for NGOs

³ See Appendix VIII: Map of Spain for location of key NGO networks.

(Alvarez Rivas 2003). This is an umbrella body at state level, based in Madrid, now with some one hundred member organisations. It has a number of working parties, campaigns and other activities that provide services to affiliates but also represents them in other arenas. CONGDE has been particularly active in trying to influence government policy. For example, in the general election in 2004 it prepared a resolution from its Annual General Meeting with proposals for the new government to honour the 0.7% principle, and revisions to its priorities for official aid (Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo 2004). CONGDE is in turn the Spanish member of CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation of Relief and Development based in Brussels.

It is complemented by a number of similar yet independent co-ordinating networks or '*Coordinadoras*' within the autonomous regions who may be members of CONGDE but can pursue their own agendas, for example in relation to the decentralised funding agencies. And there are a number of other networks at both state and local levels who may specialise in certain activities or provide alternative support: for instance, the *Plataforma de Organizaciones de Acción Social* (Social Action) and the *Coordinadora Estatal de Comercio Justo* (Fair Trade) or the *Plataforma para la Promoción del Voluntariado en España* (Volunteering). Increasingly, many of these are using the Internet to contact and service members, as well as individuals and other groups who may support them.⁴

⁴ There are several websites, such as Risolidaria or Canal Solidario, that provide information, resources and links: for example, around events, campaigns, volunteering and indeed management development (See Appendix IV: List of Organisations).

3. Current Approaches to Capacity Building in Spain

For many of those interviewed in Spain, capacity building as such was not a prominent item on the agendas of either governmental or non-governmental agencies, and this is reflected in the current writing. One comment made was that there might well be capacity building in Spain but not necessarily in NGOs! Strengthening NGOs was not an explicit aim, although strengthening civil society and institutional development did feature to varying degrees. For example, the latter figured in AECl general objectives, but was primarily implemented through country programmes. And although clearly a main function of CONGDE and the various regional NGO networks was supporting the development of Spanish NGOs, there did not seem to be any formal mechanism to discuss capacity building, either in committees or working groups. Yet there was recognition that capacity building, often expressed in English, was an important issue. How can this be explained?

3.1 Using the Term 'Capacity Building'

In day-to-day language capacity building can be simply translated as the more literal '*refuerzo de capacidades*' or '*desarrollo de capacidades*', strengthening or developing capacity, but most frequently it will be as '*fortalecimiento institucional*' or organisational strengthening. Other times it will be implicit in the use of 'co-operate' or 'co-operation', in words such as '*capacitación*' (training or enabling), or through verbs such as '*potenciar*' (empower or help to realise potential), or '*sensibilizar*' (training/consciousness-raising). It can also be allied to the awareness-raising and education approach adopted from Paulo Freire, known as '*concientización*', though not as a direct equivalent. Sometimes it is not translated and is left as 'capacity building', in English, which leaves it open to local interpretation and context.

For most of those interviewed, capacity building was seen in terms of institutional strengthening, particularly training to improve organisational management. Usually the discussion was around the needs of Spanish organisations themselves, rather than of organisations overseas, but this depended on the experience of particular individuals and varied widely. A larger sample might give a different picture. However, distinctions were made between types of capacity building: for example, internal and external; theoretical and practical, especially in relation to courses; and specific NGO and general civil society or public settings. Several interviewees referred to the growing interest and support for co-development and the link with migrant and refugee communities. There was also reference to the role of volunteers and providing volunteer infrastructure, whether for volunteers based in Spain or those serving overseas.

For many, the question as to whether Spanish NGOs are indeed interested or involved in strengthening other NGOs, or civil society more generally, continues to be problematic. This is seen as a concern and debate, not only within the sector but also in the media and the Spanish community. Although some NGOs have very public profiles, there have been severe criticisms of their changing role, priorities and management style, especially in terms of their solidarity with ordinary people and local beneficiaries. Spain has also not escaped its

share of NGO scandals. This, plus the dependence on political links, the increase in professionalised NGOs, the focus on business methods, all coupled with a sense of growing distance from local needs and social justice, has led to a number of challenges⁵. One contributor makes particular reference to diminishing '*capacidad de iniciativa*' or the ability to ensure that programmes respond directly to the interest of beneficiaries, not donors or their agents (Serrano 2001). Thus, some caution is needed in analysing how the theory of capacity building translates into practice.

3.2 Who is Involved in Capacity Building?

There are several different levels of engagement in capacity building which to some degree reflect the governmental heterogeneity mentioned above. Apart from those providing support or services from outside Spain, the primary actors within the international development arena may be characterised as:

1. Locally based large international NGOs with sufficient resources to provide both their own internal training and development, as well as support to Southern and other partners
2. State-level and regional co-ordinating bodies for NGOs, depending on resources
3. State-level and regional development co-operation foundations
4. Autonomous and other local authorities pursuing development policies and partnerships
5. National non-profits and foundations specialising in support to the third sector as a whole, and not necessarily just to NGOs
6. Specialist NGOs
7. NGOs-cum-Consultancies
8. University and other academic institutes
9. Private consultancies or enterprises
10. Alliances involving combinations of the above
11. Web-based support and training

Notably, these would be unlikely to include support directly from central government or its institutions. Mention was made of the difficulty of negotiating with state authorities and the fragmentation of policies across different ministries. This was in contrast to some very positive examples drawn from the other levels of government, especially where they were involved in the development co-operation foundations.

Also striking is the diversity of organisations involved. For example, the growth of 'Organisations Without Frontiers' is remarkable. These do not only include better-known international examples such as *Médicos Sin Fronteras* (Doctors Without Frontiers) but also other specialist bodies such as Artists Without Frontiers and even Clowns Without Frontiers. Many offer specialist technical support in areas such as veterinary science or dentistry. And there is one, *Economistas Sin Fronteras*, which might be translated as 'Managers Without Frontiers', since it offers a range of practical support to non-profit organisations and NGOs, both in Spain and developing countries.

⁵ See for example several chapters in Nieto Pereira 2001.

Although it is not possible to cover all of these kinds of intervention here, some examples are given below or may be explored with reference to the Appendices.

3.3 Co-ordination of Capacity Building

There was little evidence of strategies for capacity building or co-ordination across the Spanish NGDO sector although there were references to the need to improve information, networking and representation by NGOs. The situation did not seem to be confined to the NGDO sector. There seemed to be little in the way of overall strategies for the third sector, though this may be changing: for example, the Generalitat de Catalunya, the government for the autonomous region for Catalonia, has been commissioning research on non-profit activity and developing its own White Paper (Castiñeira 2003).

The question of networking and co-ordination is a difficult one. There are various levels of identity and affiliation which reflect historical, cultural and political roots. The decentralisation of government in Spain and the emergence or re-emergence of strong regional authorities means that state-level co-ordination is not seen as the only option. Indeed interviewees drew attention both to the distinction between 'state' and 'national' levels of operation, and to the autonomy and local identity expressed at autonomous or other authority levels. Nor are CONGDE or the larger NGDOs necessarily seen as the main focus for mobilisation. As well as the various 'platforms' for action, the regional development co-operation foundations also have significant pull. This may mean that some co-ordination happens at a local level without it being noticed elsewhere.

Nonetheless, several interviewees commented that they had never discussed capacity building as a discrete topic within any of the various fora, and did not know where there would be an opportunity to do so. Although the co-ordinating bodies had their own committees and working parties, these did not seem to have any direct correlation and were either focused on internal matters or on sectoral topics such as funding, gender, volunteering or education. In addition the apparent funding crisis and the growing separation of NGDOs between larger and smaller organisations was given as one reason why only certain NGOs would be able to participate, and this might influence such agendas.

It was stated that even in the academic and professional circles, there were also few opportunities to exchange and develop ideas, with no regular network or study group on more general issues. When asked to whom they might look for expertise, this was clearly a limited circle and frequently sources were given from countries outside of Spain. There were some potential outlets, however, even if these might be more specialised: for example, ACADE, a professional association which brought together those with a concern for improving the quality of development co-operation.

3.4 Capacity Building in Practice

3.4.1 Training

Training was seen as perhaps the principal area of capacity building but again, various distinctions were made. It was noted that training was often seen to be the result of individual initiative, rather than part of an organisation's development of human resources. Some larger NGOs such as Intermón Oxfam had the resources to offer training in-house, either with their own staff as trainers or drawing on professionals from within academia or outside Spain. However, they were unlikely to have their own dedicated training teams. Reference was made to the fact that, as Spain had relatively young NGOs but was not perceived as needing aid, they could not easily access support for relevant training from outside. There was no specific state training development agency for the sector though there might be opportunities for individuals via the various unemployment and business support schemes, such as the National Institute for Employment.

The co-ordinating bodies did offer some courses either of general interest to NGOs, or to specific groups such as volunteers. However, their own resources were also limited and dependent on obtaining funding support or adequate fee income. There was no one umbrella organisation to which people could turn, though it was clear that CONGDE, for example, collated information on training from a variety of sources which it then placed on its Internet site.

There were a growing number of academic and similar institutes offering formal and other training opportunities, but again geared more to individuals. Another distinction was made between the formal academic courses, typically at postgraduate level, and those of a practical nature. Even the former could often be divided into those structured towards socio-political analysis of international development and co-operation, and those involving more technical and management aspects of NGOs. Some would have a strong bias to building the individual capacities of the student, others to applying concepts and practices within institutional settings. Particular features noted were the growth of distance and e-learning options, and the incorporation of staff with both academic and NGO experience.

There was not always a clear separation between training for NGOs and NGDOs. Indeed some of the contexts, such as legal matters, were common to both audiences. This meant that an organisation such as the *Fundación Luis Vives* could work across the sector, on a range of topics and at different levels. There were few references to training being offered to partner organisations in the South but *CIDEAL*, for example, did mention training specifically being offered within Latin America.

3.4.2 Evaluation, Monitoring and Quality Management

In a critique of Spanish NGDOs' strengths and weaknesses, García Izquierdo draws attention to lack of evaluation both of internal practices and relationships with Southern partners (García Izquierdo 2000). This is seen as a failure to share experiences and resources, and accept that partner organisations and beneficiaries should be involved in fundraising and management. Reflecting this, several respondents mentioned the activity as one which was needed; not just for internal use but also to satisfy increasing demands of donors and the general public. There was also an element of reflection that, if NGDOs were to criticise the

government for failures in this area, then they also had to put their own houses in order. Some referred to the lack of relevant training and materials around evaluation and monitoring, specifically those in Spanish.

However, several interviewees also drew explicit attention to the growth of interest in quality control and the development of professional attitudes. CONGDE has published its own code of conduct which outlines expectations and processes, and serves as a condition of full membership, though it is recognised that some members will need time to implement relevant procedures. The areas covered by the code are: identity, activities, relationships, guiding principles such as transparency, and the use of appropriate media (Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Undated-b).

Some are even working towards TQM (Total Quality Management), not only in terms of the use of international standards but also the rapid development of training and other support for non-profits and NGOs in particular. Leaders in this field were recognised as the *Fundación Luis Vives* and the *Fundación Lealtad*, and the related organisation and website called 'Quality NGOs' or '*ONGs Con Calidad*', together with organisations such as *Economistas Sin Fronteras*. Early work has involved a pilot project developing materials with some seven NGOs and there are now many other organisations working towards certification. Some of these materials are also emerging on the Internet as aids for self-assessment.

It might also be appropriate to add that at least one organisation referred to the need for codes of conduct to guide NGOs in making decisions about which funds or resources they would take from which types of donor. This was partly to contest the perception that many NGOs or '*ongeros*', people associated with NGOs, were becoming quasi civil servants, or adopting legal structures mainly for the purposes of achieving financial benefits (Díez Rodríguez 2001).

3.4.3 Solidarity and Localisation

For those organisations directly involved with overseas NGOs or other civil society groups, different considerations and dynamics came into play. Frequently the word 'solidarity' was used, with less emphasis on partnership. Reference was also made to other types of relationship such as '*hermanamiento*' which suggested different degrees of friendship or fellowship. Although direct sponsorship of individuals, '*apadrinamiento*', as between Spanish individuals and disadvantaged children or families, had been the subject of popular marketing this was now seen to be on its way out. Indeed many of the NGOs were very conscious of how relationships with developing countries were portrayed, and subscribed to a specific Code of Conduct that guided use of photographs and other images (Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Undated-a).

For *Ayuda en Acción*, one of the larger NGOs, levels of capacity building were also being highlighted by recent discussions about how the Spanish organisation might link with other ActionAid agencies in Europe and elsewhere as part of a global network, but also retain its distinctiveness and independence. They had had a strong country focus, with the concept of capacity building integrated across all programmes, rather than being seen as a discrete area. Within this was a prime consideration for strengthening the capacities of local organisations, both in regard to technical aspects and more general institutional development. It was seen as something fluid and ongoing, with an emphasis on learning and

transfer of skills, but able to take place in a variety of settings, formal and informal. This, it was hoped, would result in true localisation: a transfer of responsibilities and devolution of control to the South. Indeed, recently the organisation has produced a framework called 'ACERCA' for a process of institutional planning, monitoring and evaluation which addresses organisational learning or '*aprendizaje*'. This aims to build on existing skills and encourage a range of activities and exchanges in Spain and in countries of operation.

Similarly, *Intermón Oxfam* also regarded capacity building as something carried out across the organisation, whether by individuals or through geographically focused programmes. It was not seen as a separate interest but likewise geared to strengthening local organisations through a combination of activities and systems, and to helping improve governance in the wider society. It was also clear that it did not have priority as a topic for debate and was not seen in the same light as partnership.

Slight reference was also made to other twinning arrangements, for instance, between geographical and social communities such as churches. It was noticeable that several towns twinned with communities of the same name, especially in Latin America. These links might provide financial or physical resources to local organisations in the South, or through deeper and longer-term support, including sending of volunteers.

Volunteering was clearly a major concern in its own right and figured considerably in major websites: for example, www.hacesfalta.com maintains weekly listings of opportunities for paid and volunteer employment with NGOs, in Spain and overseas. These range from very specific calls for professional expertise, including technical and management support, to more general placements for students and a growing exchange of 'virtual' help through the Internet, such as preparation and dissemination of documentation. This emphasis has been reinforced by recent legislation on terms and conditions for volunteers, as well as those with the role of '*cooperantes*', i.e. working abroad for development organisations.

3.4.4 Decentralisation and Co-Development

Although linked to the above, it is necessary to separate out two particular aspects of capacity building which are important in the Spanish context. First, as mentioned earlier, decentralisation development co-operation is now well established and in 2003 represented some 11.4% of total official aid. This operates not just within Spain through devolved government but also via policies and activities in international development itself. For example, Catalonia has its own Co-operation and Development Act which functions separately from the state-level equivalents (Generalitat de Catalunya 2003). The most notable aspects for this discussion are the '*fondos de cooperación y solidaridad*' or funding schemes that operate principally via the development co-operation foundations. There are now nine funds operating, with others in the planning stage, and a national confederation which provides professional support, training and research services⁶.

Essentially the foundations bring together municipal or other local authorities, and sometimes other agencies, to consolidate their financial contributions and develop joint planning and initiatives for international development, working closely with other local NGO actors. This allows even quite small communes to be involved and at all levels participants

⁶ See Appendix VII: Map of Spain for the location of the funds, and Table 1.

are encouraged to contribute 0.7% in line with the campaign. The largest authorities will have direct operations of their own, especially working with colleague authorities overseas: for example, via exchange of experts and training schemes. Some foundations even have their own offices abroad, with Central America being particularly mentioned.

There is a great variety across the schemes but data is collected and disseminated by the confederation, and there is an emphasis on improving knowledge-sharing and practice, whilst preserving each operation's independence: for example, via conferences, training and a range of publications (Confederación de Fondos de Cooperación y Solidaridad 2001). These might focus on topics such as planning, monitoring and evaluation and impact analysis, and be geared to both internal as well as external use. In this context capacity building is seen as being of four main types: working via local authority co-operation, local and community development, co-development, and also supporting progress towards full human and peoples' rights.

The area of co-development was mentioned as having become a particularly live issue over the last ten years or so, with the increase in refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in Spain, especially through its southern borders. Within the limitations of this review, it was not possible to find very much direct information on the topic, although there are organisations operating such as Maghrebins sense Fronteres (People of the Maghreb Without Borders) and the European network, Red Euromediterranea de Cooperación al Desarrollo (REMCODE). It is clear that NGOs in Spain and countries of origin are trying to influence government policies on migration and reception, and that co-development is starting to feature in these. For instance, there have been recent calls by Cáritas and CEAR, the Spanish Commission for Aid to Refugees (Risolidaria 2004). A few examples were given of opportunities for co-financed projects and agencies working with Ecuadorian, Moroccan and Senegalese immigrants on projects relating to their countries of origin, while some training seemed to be geared to helping the establishment of new organisations run by migrants themselves.

4. Conclusions

It is clear that there is both diversity and significant difference in the type of NGOs in Spain, as compared to many other countries: ranging from very strong agencies involved in global networks to very specific regional and local operations. Although the structure of support organisations to NGOs is more extensive than in some other countries, such as the UK, it does not have uniform support, and to some extent may be more fragile and fragmented. Capacity building as such was not a key issue within these networks, and seemed to have little prospect for being so the implication being that impetus, if relevant, would need to come either from inside NGOs themselves, or be stimulated through some other initiative or movement. However, care needs to be taken since some of the debate may principally be addressed in different arenas or using different terms: for example, through co-development or the alternative frameworks offered by the development co-operation foundations.

Although some of the larger NGOs may have the resources to address both internal and external capacity building, this still leaves a growing number of smaller organisations who are not able to access expertise or support. In fact many of the initiatives which relate to organisational development are being led by organisations in the wider non-profit and educational sectors. And traditional forms of delivery like training and seminars are now being complemented through use of information technology and communications, with resources and self-assessment online. There are also signs that some networks are expanding into the international arena and opening up to a wider Hispanic audience. It may be that in future Spanish organisations may not only look outwards to provide but also to receive: notably from Latin American sources and perhaps even to other agencies developing in the Mediterranean and North Africa with whom they have linguistic or cultural links.

Table 1: Profile of Funds for Co-operation and Solidarity

	Foundation Date	Member Organisations	Local Authorities	Operating Funds 2003 €
Name of Fund				
Fons Català de Cooperació al Desenvolupament Catalan Fund for Development Co-operation	1986	271	258	4,200,000
Euskal Fundoa – Asociación de Entidades Locales Vascas Cooperantes Basque Fund – Association of Local Basque Co-operating Bodies	1988-1996	78	78	1,338,000
Fons Valencià per la Solidaritat Valencian Fund for Solidarity	1992	88	88	1,140,000
Fons Mallorquí de Solidaritat Majorcan Fund for Solidarity and Co-operation	1993	57	55	2,410,000
Fons Menorquí de Cooperació Menorcan Fund for Co-operation	1993	34	10	1,194,000
Fondo Galego de Cooperación e Solidariedade Galician Fund for Co-operation and Solidarity	1997	64	63	467,000
Fons Pitiús de Cooperació Pitiús Co-operation Fund (Ibiza & Formentera)	1999	16	5	874,000
Fondo Andaluz de Municipios para la Solidaridad Internacional Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity	2000	39	39	371,000
Fondo Extremeño Local de Cooperación al Desarrollo Extremadura Local Fund for Development Co-operation	2002	52	52	Not stated
Total		699	648	11,994,000

Note: Adapted from Confederación de Fondos de Cooperación y Solidaridad (2004). For further information on the Confederation and the nine funds, see also the website at www.confederacionfondos.org (In Spanish, Basque, Catalan, Galician plus French and English).

Appendix I: Methodology and Methods

The research involved a range of background reading and internet searches, complemented by fieldwork over one week, with three days in Madrid, and two in Barcelona. Visits were made to cover a range of organisations, not just better known international NGOs. They included the Spanish Government's development and co-operation agency, AECI; two international NGOs who have capacity building on their agendas, Ayuda en Acción and Intermón-Oxfam; one Spanish foundation, Fundación Luis Vives, which is developing a national quality assurance scheme for NGOs, as well as other internet based initiatives to improve NGO management. To provide strategic overviews visits were also made to the national co-ordinating body for development NGOs in Madrid, CONGDE, as well as its regional counterparts for Madrid and Barcelona. In addition contacts were made with one university department with specific postgraduate courses on NGO Management, IUCD; two NGO-Consultancy organisations with long track records in NGO support, development and research, especially in Latin America, AIETI and CIDEAL, together with a similar body, CIDOB which has extended its research, publications and training to become an accredited institute and cultural centre. Given the importance of the decentralisation agenda, contact was also made with the national coordinating body for regional development funding, Confederación de Fondos de Cooperación y Solidaridad, and its regional equivalent for Catalunya.

The schedule was composed of semi-structured interviews aimed to provide information on the understanding of capacity building as a term, how this was applied both within their organisation and more generally in Spain, and specifically within the NGO sector. It also endeavoured to find examples of practice, relevant human and material resources, and highlight current areas of debate. However, despite this background, it was not easy to find agreed sources of expertise, or even materials. Many of the initial literature searches referred to authors and materials in English, and this has been corroborated by further reading subsequent to the interviews. Even if there is an emerging interest in non-profit management in Spain, there seems little in Spanish that is specifically geared to the issue of capacity building in relation to NGOs.

Appendix II: List of Abbreviations

AECI	Spanish International Cooperation Agency
CEAR	Spanish Commission for Aid to Refugees
CONGDE	Coordinadora de Organizaciones no Gubernamentales de Cooperación para el Desarrollo
FAD	Development Aid Fund
GNI	gross national income
GNP	gross national product
MPDL	Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad
NGDO	non-government development organisation
NGO	non-government organisation
REMCODE	Red Euromediterranea de Cooperación al Desarrollo
SECIPI	Secretariat for International Cooperation and Iberoamerica
TQM	Total Quality Management
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	US Dollars

Appendix III: Notes on Translation

A few words on the use of terms in Spanish and English may be helpful, especially for readers who do not speak Spanish. The Spanish used here relates primarily to the language of Spain itself and to the terms used by writers and activists working from that context. These may differ from those used in other countries, as in Latin America, where both the vocabulary and the cultural, historical, social and political points of reference are different. All translations are by the author, unless stated otherwise.

The direct translation of the term 'NGO' in Spanish is '*ONG*' or '*organización no gubernamental*'. In the context of Spain it is used for organisations operating both in Spain and abroad, though the latter can also be termed '*ONGD*', equivalent to 'NGDOs' or 'Non-governmental Development Organisations' or even '*ONG de ayuda humanitaria*' or Humanitarian Aid NGOs. It is sometimes necessary to distinguish which types of organisation are being referred to, as NGOs of both kinds have emerged mainly in the same time-frame of the last thirty years. Not all agencies will discriminate between the two, and services may well be open to many kinds of organisation, regardless of whether their main area of benefit is in Spain, abroad, or both. Civil society, third sector, social economy or non-profit organisations are all common examples. The term 'NGO' is mainly used here for simplicity, and refers to NGOs operating overseas unless clarified for other purposes.

Although the question of language and translation cannot be addressed fully here it needs to be acknowledged as an issue⁷. The precise way in which capacity building is or is not understood, and the dangers of assuming that a literal translation is sufficient, are important for practitioners at all levels.

⁷ The topic of language in capacity building will be explored by the Praxis programme in a separate paper (Hursey, forthcoming).

Appendix IV: List of Organisations⁸

Government

AECI

Avda. Reyes Católicos, 4, 28040-Madrid
Tel: 0034 91 583 81 00 (General)
Tel: 0034 91.583 8598/99 (Information Centre)
Fax: 0034 91.5838564
Email: centro.informacion@aeci.es
Website: www.aeci.es

Development Co-operation Foundations

Confederación de Fondos de Cooperación y Solidaridad and El Fons Català de Cooperació al Desenvolupament.

Portaferriassa, 13 bis, entl. 1a, 08002 Barcelona
Tel: 0034 93 412 26 02
Fax: 0034 93 301 90 88
Email: cfondos@confederacionfondos.org
Website: www.confederacionfondos.org

NGDO Co-ordinating Bodies

CONGDE

Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo España

Calle de la Reina,. 17, 3 piso, 28004 Madrid
Tel: 0034 915 210 955
Fax: 0034 915 213 843
Email: coordinadora@congde.org
Website: www.congde.org

Federació Catalana d' ONG per al Desenvolupament

Aribau, 106 pral. 1a, 08036 Barcelona
Tel: 0034 934 517 070
Fax: 0034 934 516 729
Email: fcongdp@pangea.org
Website: www.pangea.org/fcongdp

FONGDCAM

Federación de ONGD de La Comunidad de Madrid

Calle Embajadores 26, Local 4, 28012 Madrid
Tel: 0034 915 28 80 33/530 56 30

⁸ Organisations listed are primarily those where interviews were held. For full information on other development organisations please consult the Directory of NGOs produced by CONGDE, or visit the relevant websites given below.

Fax: 0034 915 39 9137
Email: fongdcam@fongdcam.org (General)
Website: www.fongdcam.org

Principal NGOs

Ayuda en Acción

Infantas 38, 28004 Madrid
Tel: 0034 91 522 6060
Fax: 0034 91 532 8402
Email: informacion@ayuda--enaccion.org
Website: www.ayudaenaccion.org

INTERMÓN OXFAM

C/ Roger de Lluria 15-17 , 08010 Barcelona
Tel: 0034 902 330 331
Fax: 0034 93 482 07 64
Email: info@IntermonOxfam.org
Website: www.IntermonOxfam.org

Foundations

Fundación Luis Vives

Plaza de Oriente, 7 bajo izda, 29013 Madrid
Tel: 0034 915 400 878
Fax: 0034 915 419 052
Email: luisvives@fundacionluisvives.org
Website: www.fundacionluisvives.org

Fundación Economistas Sin Fronteras

Avenida de Américas 33-7B, 28002 Madrid
Tel: 0034 915 102 396
Fax: 0034 915 102 397
Email: ecosfron@ecosfron.org
Website: www.ecosfron.org

NGDOs-cum-Consultancies

AETI

Asociación de Investigación y Especialización sobre Temas Iberoamericanos

Claudio Coello 101, bajo Izq, Madrid 290006
Tel: 0034 915 770 640/43/44
Fax: 0034 915 763 070
Email: info@aieti.es
Website: www.aieti.es

CIDEAL

Blasco de Garay 94, 28003 Madrid
Tel: 0034 915 538 488
Fax: 0034 915 554 6402
Email: cideal@cideal.org
Website: www.cideal.org

CIDOB

Elisabets 12, 09001 Barcelona
Tel: 0034 933 026 495
Fax: 0034 933 022 118
Email: cidob@cidob.org
Website: www.cidob.org

University Institutes

IUDC-UCM

Instituto Universitario de Desarrollo y Cooperación
Universidad Complutense de Madrid
C. Donoso Cortés, 65 - 6º dcha, 28015 - Madrid
Tel: 0034 91 394 64 09/18
Fax: 0034 91 394 64 14
Email: iudcucm@pdi.ucm.es
Website: www.ucm.es

Web-Based Resources

Associations/Foundations and Social Participation

www.asociaciones.org
www.fundaciones.org

Management and Quality Standards

www.fundacionlealtad.org
www.ongconcalidad.org

NGO & Third Sector Information and Networks

www.canalsolidario.com
www.pangea.org
www.risolidaria.org
www.solucionesong.org

Social Economy

www.cepes.es

Volunteering Resources

www.hacesfalta.org

Appendix V: Bibliographic Resources

Since there are few items on Spanish development, let alone Spanish NGOs, publicly available in the United Kingdom, the majority of sources consulted were obtained from Spain, either directly from organisations or individuals themselves, or through the Internet. Some use was also made of the libraries at the AECI in Madrid and CIDOB in Barcelona. The bibliography which follows includes both those items mentioned in the text, and documents which are thought useful to other readers and researchers. Most of the items are in Spanish and English but a few documents are in Catalan. It is noteworthy that many of the key coordinating agencies make their documents and websites accessible in all the major languages of Spain, and several are now including some English translations.

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Appendix VI: Map of Spain

Including Location of Key Networks at State and Autonomous Community Level



KEY

- Galicia** Autonomous Communities and boundaries in bold type
- ⊛ Key cities and provincial boundaries indicated in light type
- ⊛ State-level Coordination for NGOs, *la Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo España*
- ★ Coordinating Networks for NGOs at Autonomous Community Level
- ⊠ State-level Coordination for Cooperation and Solidarity Funds, *la Confederación de Fondos de Cooperación y Solidaridad*
- ◆ Cooperation and Solidarity Fund Networks at Autonomous Community Level

Praxis Paper No. 5

Capacity Building: Perspectives from the NGO Sector in Spain

By Charlotte Hursey

This is the second Praxis Paper in the contextual capacity building studies series which aims to complement existing literature by depicting how the notion of capacity building is understood and applied in practice to strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) in different cultures and contexts.

This preliminary research focuses on the concept of capacity building as applied to the role of NGOs in Spain. There have been some general introductions to Spanish NGOs in English, but this is believed to be the first exploration of how capacity building itself is perceived. It is hoped that it will provoke discussion as to the relevance of capacity building within Spanish and Hispanic NGOs, and lead to a greater exchange of ideas and examples.

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