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# How do Andalusian NGOs Address Sexual and Female Reproductive Rights? Centrality, Approaches and Located Practices

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## KEYWORDS

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Development cooperation  
Third sector  
Analysis of public policies

## 1. OBJECTIVES

International cooperation tools have become decisive in order to carry out work on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in countries with a low Human Development Index. Analyzing how these tools are used is a first-order priority in the context that is explained (Yamin, 2019).

This work proposes, through a case study, to investigate the way in which NGOs conceptualize female Sexual and Reproductive Rights and how this fact is related to its organizational nature and its essence. Likewise, it is posed how the choice of development models in the approach to Sexual and Reproductive Rights determines their situated practices. For this reason, the objective is: to identify and describe the different categories related to reason of being, organizational nature, development model and situated practice, and to put them in relation to the predominant theoretical approaches to this type of rights.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The original study was approached as an empirical investigation of a quantitative-qualitative and participatory nature, using as informants' organizations that carry out their activity in the framework of Andalusian cooperation (through social agents, technicians, managers and privileged informants). In this plane, the investigation techniques that were developed were the following.

Application of a survey aimed at heads of organizations registered in the Registry of Agents of International Development Cooperation in Andalusia (RACDA) as of December 2018. The questionnaire was applied



to 347 organizations, from which a total of 207 records, which guarantees statistical representativeness with 50% heterogeneity, a margin of error of 5 and a confidence interval of 95%.

23 interviews were conducted to complete the information received. The semi-structured interview, which was carried out individually, was used to technicians and heads of Organizations attached to the Andalusian Development Coordinator. In relation to the use of these techniques, the recommendations of the "Standards for reporting qualitative research" (O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014) were considered. The data has been triangulated through the holding of two collaborative workshops in which 16 technicians from 12 organizations of the Coordinator, who had previously participated in the individual interviews, participated.

Data analysis was carried out applying a Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) on the content and contextual elements obtained.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Sexual and reproductive female rights in the organizational structure and model of the andalusian NGO**

asked the organizations with respect to what is the political position, that is, how the defense of this type of rights fits within their "Identity, vision and values", interesting aspects are observed. First, most of these entities do not explicitly consider them. Consequently, these are not considered programmatically in the strategic approaches. Those that do have them explicit, basically use the Rights Approaches and the Empowerment Approach as a reference. The prioritization in the field of health and gender promotion shows that political positions related to Sexual and Reproductive Rights end up materializing in applied interventions in the field of health and gender promotion, understood these scopes in a broad sense. Only in highly specialized organizations is there an alignment between the political positions in this matter and the operationalization that is applied to them through strategic planning and concrete interventions (Coordinator of Organizations for Development Spain, 2019).

#### **Sexual and reproductive female rights in the development models of andalusian NGDOS**

The substantive consideration of issues related to gender approaches or the consideration of the female gender and their rights as priority subjects will have little representation in the organizations studied.

A first analysis allows us to identify how three categories appear interconnected that operationalize the concept that the organizations studied use about Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

The first category, in which a higher level of coincidence among informants is identified, is to conceptualize this type of rights as "The right to exercise control over the body itself and over reproduction in a planned manner". Consequently, this category is fully aligned with the Focus on Health. This approach is predominant in organizations whose priority sector of action is health intervention, those that work in the field of development education, and in a significant number of organizations that have a multisectoral application.

The second emerging category that appears with more consistency is to build these rights as "The right to decide on one's life in terms of autonomy, personal development and self-realization." This vision is presented located between traditional postures and those positions more related to an Empowerment Approach. This is the category that appears as predominant among organizations specialized in the field of gender, although it is also significantly assumed by organizations that work in the field of development education or that carry out actions in multiple sectors of activity (González Guerrero y Pajares Sánchez, 2012).

The third category identified is much more minor in nature among organizations. It appears related to organizations that do not have a high level of specialization in terms of scope. Regarding the results obtained in other approaches, its formulation is imprecise, but it supposes an alternative elaboration to the Rights Approach in terms of Sexual and Reproductive Rights such as "The right to identity".



## Sexual and reproductive rights in the situated practice of andalusian NGDOS

Regarding the implementation of actions directly related to the subject of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, it is observed that a large number of organizations have implemented activities.

The dependence on public resources for the execution of these projects is limited, since only half of the executed projects were nourished by public funds for their realization. The scarce presence of public funds to finance this type of intervention is explained by the organizations themselves in terms of the fact that the projects presented did not coincide with the ideological orientations of the public managers of the moment and the fact that they did not identify personal financing entities sufficiently qualified technician with this type of rights.

In most cases, projects in this area are financed from own resources. A negative aspect derived from this situation would be that the implementation of projects in this area would be more conditioned by the availability or not of funds.

When analyzing the content of these actions, it can be seen that they are concentrated around two major areas of interest: actions in the field of education, awareness and empowerment of both specific groups and citizens in general; and intervention actions specifically designed for much more specific and differentiated target populations.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between Sexual and Reproductive Rights remains a pending issue, largely explained by the complexity of that relationship, and by the multiple elements that come into play.

The for sexual and reproductive rights for women has been growing from social initiatives committed to the agenda of women's movements and the feminism of the last two waves (Giddens, 2000; Buss, 1998). However, despite this growing trend and greater dedication to reflection and conceptualization in this area, it has not had a sufficient reflection in the field of development cooperation, not only in the situated practice of cooperation agents, but also how this area of interest configures the actors themselves.

This work has tried to answer that question for the specific case of NGDOs that operate from Andalusia. Among the main findings are that Sexual and Reproductive Rights are identified as second-level content and invisible within much broader areas of interest, such as the field of health or gender promotion.

A second issue to consider has to do with the high difficulty that organizations have to face the conceptualization of Sexual and Reproductive Rights. Organizations do not have clear models of what Sexual and Reproductive Rights are, suppose and how they should be addressed in the field of development cooperation.

However, in the face of this, the results show that Andalusian NGDOs are very active in implementing actions in what they understand to be a matter of Sexual and Reproductive Rights to such an extent that they are prone to commit their own resources in the execution of said actions.