



# RESILIENCE, COMMUNITY ACTION AND SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION

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People, Place,  
Practice, Power, Politics  
and Possibility in Transition



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## 2.2. Transition in Spain: A First Assessment of Dimensions, Challenges and Opportunities for Transition Town Initiatives

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### 2.2.1. Introduction

Transition Initiatives (TIs henceforth) are increasingly present in Europe and worldwide, arising in urban, peri-urban and rural contexts as community led initiatives which self-organize responses to the most relevant and challenging long term societal issues: climate change and oil dependency (among others). Spain has recently become part of the international Transition movement and seen the establishment of several different initiatives, probably as a response to the dramatic economic crisis and its social consequences.

This chapter is a descriptive synthesis of the results of the first national survey of Transition Initiatives in Spain, the research project 'Barriers and Opportunities for Building Resilience: A Critical Assessment of Transition Initiatives in Spain'.<sup>20</sup> It includes insights from the research project's closing workshop '*Barreras y oportunidades para las iniciativas sociales hacia la sostenibilidad – Creando puentes en tiempos de cambio*';<sup>21</sup> (Barriers and opportunities for social action towards sustainability: building bridges in changing times), held in Barcelona on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2014. It aims to provide as clear as possible a view on how Transition is happening in Spain: how different groups have been arising, organizing activities and interacting with people, institutions and among themselves.

From 2008, TIs emerged in several places, including Barcelona<sup>22</sup>, Zarzalejo<sup>23</sup> (Madrid), and Coín<sup>24</sup> (Málaga). Within a few years their numbers rose quickly and in 2011 a group of representatives decided to organize the first and successful Encuentro Anual de Transición (annual national meeting), which took place in Zarzalejo (Madrid) in April 2012.<sup>25</sup> There, they launched the Red de Transición España (REDTE),<sup>26</sup> a national hub with a website for connecting, coordinating and sharing knowledge among the many different initiatives, for establishing links between the self-organized Spanish initiatives and the international Transition network, and for offering resources and trainings to help initiatives emerge and go forward.

While this network was being created, the need for some preliminary assessment of the numbers, sizes, networks and activities of TIs became apparent. This led to development of the 'Barriers and Opportunities' research project already mentioned, as a bridge between science and practice based on collaboration among the Autonomous University of Barcelona, the Venice IUAV University and members of TIs, aiming to answer these questions. The initial assessment was launched during the second Encuentro Anual de Transición, held in Mijas<sup>27</sup> (Málaga), where volunteers began interviewing meeting participants and distributing questionnaires, and subsequently completed by Transition Spain. Over the following eight months the project investigated group dynamics. The results were presented in Barcelona during a workshop in which a deeper discussion on barriers and opportunities for these movements took place.

20 <http://www.transitionresearchnetwork.org/transition-in-spain.html>

21 <http://www.transicionsostenible.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Flyer-Taller-Barreras-y-oportunidades-de-las-iniciativas-sociales-para-la-Sostenibilidad.pdf>

22 <http://barcelonaentransicio.wordpress.com/>

23 <http://zarzalejoentransicion.blogspot.com.es/>

24 <http://www.coinentransicion.com/>

25 See <http://www.transicionsostenible.com/en-los-bordes-del-i-encuentro-iberico-de-transicion.htm> and the video of the first meeting at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29hEIW0zQU>

26 <http://www.reddetransicion.org>

27 Ver crónicas del 2º encuentro en <http://www.transicionsostenible.com/movimiento-de-transicion-musica-y-alegria-para-la-sostenibilidad.htm>





**Figure 2.2.1** – Poster for the first Spanish Transition Gathering in April 2012. Credit: LaRana Gráfica.

Similar community-led movements in degrowth, ecovillage and permaculture have over the same time been growing in Spain. Although this first assessment limited itself to dynamics of Transition Initiatives, it has also served as a preliminary investigation of strengths and weaknesses, identities, synergies and barriers of and among a broader range of groups, which together constitute Spain's broader transition movement.

### 2.2.2. How Many, Where and Who are They?

Various factors make it difficult to say precisely how many initiatives there are in Spain. Many arose from informal groups of a few friends, others from within larger pre-existing initiatives already established as a local association which started a Transition Initiative as a sub-project. Some have no internet presence and few or no connections with the national network, making it difficult to know about their existence; for some other groups it is difficult to know whether they remain active. Finally, many groups attending the national Transition meeting and organized around related goals of sustainability and social cohesion, for various reasons choose not to self-identify as Transition initiatives.

However, we are able to give an initial picture of how the Transition movement looks in Spain. As Figure 2.2.2 shows, 57 transition initiatives appeared between 2008 and 2014. The map omits a number of other community-led initiatives, similar to TIs, that have been identified.



**Figure 2.2.2** – Map of Transition Initiatives Arising in Spain from 2008 to 2014. Credit: Red de Transición España.

Table 2.2.1 provides a complete list of the Spanish TIs that appeared from 2008 to 2014, along with their locations and web page (when available). Table 2.2.2 lists other Spanish community-led initiatives similar to Transition initiatives.

**Table 2.2.1** – Spanish Transition Initiatives founded from 2008-2014, their locations and web addresses.

SPANISH TRANSITION INITIATIVES		
Name	Location	Web page
Alaior en Transició	Menorca	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Alaior-en-Transicio/392393444170884">www.facebook.com/pages/Alaior-en-Transicio/392393444170884</a>
Albacete en Transición	Albacete	<a href="http://www.albaceteentransicion.blogspot.com">www.albaceteentransicion.blogspot.com</a>
Alhama en Transición	Alhama de Murcia (Murcia)	<a href="http://alhamaentransicion.wordpress.com">alhamaentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Álora en Transición	Álora (Málaga)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/AloraEnTransicion/">www.facebook.com/AloraEnTransicion/</a>
Alozaina en Transición	Alozaina (Málaga)	
Alto Tiétar en Transición	Comarca del Alto Tiétar (Ávila)	<a href="http://n-1.cc/g/alto-tietar-en-transición">n-1.cc/g/alto-tietar-en-transición</a>
Argelaguer en Transició	Argelaguer (Gerona)	<a href="http://www.argelaguerentransicio.com">www.argelaguerentransicio.com</a>
Axarquía en Transición	Comarca de Axarquía-Vélez Málaga (Málaga)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/261011497363317">www.facebook.com/groups/261011497363317</a>
Barcelona en Transició	Barcelona	<a href="http://barcelonaentransicio.wordpress.com">barcelonaentransicio.wordpress.com</a>
Barrio Alcosa en Transición	Barrio de Alcosa (Sevilla)	

SPANISH TRANSITION INITIATIVES		
Name	Location	Web page
Bilbao en Transición	Bilbao	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/BilbaoEnTransicion">www.facebook.com/BilbaoEnTransicion</a>
Butroi en Transición	Mungia (Vizcaya)	
Carcaboso en Transición	Carcaboso (Cáceres)	<a href="http://carcabosoentransicion.wordpress.com">carcabosoentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Cardedeu en Transició	Cardedeu, Barcelona	<a href="http://cardedeuentransicio.wordpress.com">cardedeuentransicio.wordpress.com</a>
Centro de Sostenibilidad de Aranjuez en Transición (CSA)	Aranjuez (Madrid)	<a href="http://csaranjuez.wordpress.com">csaranjuez.wordpress.com</a>
Cercedilla en Transición	Cercedilla (Madrid)	
Cigales en Transición	Cigales (Valladolid)	<a href="http://cigalesentransicion.wordpress.com">cigalesentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Coín en Transición	Coín (Málaga)	<a href="http://www.coinentransicion.com">www.coinentransicion.com</a>
El Casar en Transición	El Casar (Guadalajara)	<a href="http://www.elcasarentransicion.wordpress.com">www.elcasarentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Es Castell en Transició	Menorca	
Es Mercadal en Transició	Mercadal (Menorca)	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/esmercadal.entransicio">www.facebook.com/esmercadal.entransicio</a>
Es Migjorn en Transició	Migjorn (Menorca)	<a href="http://migjornentransicio.blogspot.com.es">migjornentransicio.blogspot.com.es</a>
Fuengirola-Mijas en Transición (FMT)	Fuengirola/Mijas (Málaga)	<a href="http://fuengirolamijastransicion.blogspot.com.es">fuengirolamijastransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
Gasteiz en Transición	Vitoria-Gasteiz (País Vasco)	<a href="http://gasteizentransicion.wordpress.com">gasteizentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Gran Canaria en transición	Gran Canaria	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/grancanaria.entransicion">www.facebook.com/grancanaria.entransicion</a>
Granada en Transición	Granada	<a href="http://www.granadaentransicion.wordpress.com">www.granadaentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Granollers en Transició	Granollers, Barcelona	<a href="http://granollersentransicio.wordpress.com">granollersentransicio.wordpress.com</a>
Ibiza Isla en Transición	Ibiza (Ibiza, Baleares)	<a href="http://www.ibiza-isla-transicion.com">www.ibiza-isla-transicion.com</a>
Instituto de Transición Rompe el Círculo	Móstoles (Madrid)	<a href="http://www.mostolesinpetroleo.blogspot.com">www.mostolesinpetroleo.blogspot.com</a>
Intransition Marbella	Marbella (Málaga)	<a href="http://www.intransitionmarbella.org">www.intransitionmarbella.org</a>
Jerez en Transición	Jerez de la Frontera, (Cádiz)	<a href="http://jerezentransicion.blogspot.com.es">jerezentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
La Palma en Transición	La Palma (Santa Cruz de Tenerife)	<a href="http://sites.google.com/site/lapalmatransicion">sites.google.com/site/lapalmatransicion</a>
La Puebla de los Infantes en Transición	La Puebla de los Infantes (Sevilla)	<a href="http://lapuebladelosinfantesentransicion.wordpress.com">lapuebladelosinfantesentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Lanzarote en transición	Lanzarote (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria)	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/lanzaroteentransicion">www.facebook.com/lanzaroteentransicion</a>
Logroño en transición	Logroño (La Rioja)	<a href="http://logroñoentransicion.wordpress.com">logroñoentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Málaga en Transición	Málaga	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/Málaga-en-Transición/323452214342579">www.facebook.com/pages/Málaga-en-Transición/323452214342579</a>
Mancor Desperta	Mancor (Mallorca)	<a href="http://sites.google.com/site/aramancordesperta">sites.google.com/site/aramancordesperta</a>
Maó en Transició	Maó (Menorca)	<a href="http://maoentransicio.org">maoentransicio.org</a>
Red Menorca en transición	Menorca	<a href="http://menorcaentransicio.org">menorcaentransicio.org</a>
OSEL Transition Town	Novelda (Alicante)	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/pages/OSEL-Transition-town/182434118464996">www.facebook.com/pages/OSEL-Transition-town/182434118464996</a>
Pla Energètic Participatiu (PEP)	Barrios de Sant Martí, La Verneda y la Pau - Barcelona	<a href="http://ploenergioparticipatiu.cat">ploenergioparticipatiu.cat</a>
Portillo en Transición	Portillo y Aldea de S. Miguel (Valladolid)	<a href="http://portilloentransicion.wordpress.com">portilloentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Quijorna en Transición	Quijorna (Madrid)	<a href="http://quijornaentransicion.blogspot.com.es">quijornaentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
San Martí - La Verneda en Transició	Barrio de Sant Martí - La Verneda (Barcelona)	<a href="http://santmartilavernedaentransicio.wordpress.com">santmartilavernedaentransicio.wordpress.com</a>
Santa Coloma en Transició	Santa Coloma de Queralt (Tarragona)	<a href="http://www.santacolomaentransicio.blogspot.com.es">www.santacolomaentransicio.blogspot.com.es</a>
SEPA en Transición	Grupo de investigación. U. de Santiago de Compostela	

SPANISH TRANSITION INITIATIVES		
Name	Location	Web page
Sureste Ibérico en Transición	Córdoba-Almería-Murcia	<a href="http://matrizcelular.blogspot.com.es">matrizcelular.blogspot.com.es</a>
Tarifa en Transición	Tarifa	<a href="http://transiciontarifa.foroactivo.com">transiciontarifa.foroactivo.com</a>
Torremolinos en Transición	Torremolinos (Málaga)	<a href="http://torremolinosentransicion.blogspot.com.es">torremolinosentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
Tous en Transició	Sant Martí de Tous (Barcelona)	<a href="http://tousentransicio.blogspot.com.es">tousentransicio.blogspot.com.es</a>
Transició VNG	Vilanova i la Geltrú (Barcelona)	<a href="http://www.transiciovng.blogspot.com.es">www.transiciovng.blogspot.com.es</a>
USC en Transición	Santiago de Compostela (La Coruña)	<a href="http://www.usc.es/entransicion">www.usc.es/entransicion</a>
Valdepiélagos en Transición	Valdepiélagos (Madrid)	<a href="http://valdepielogostransicion.noblogs.org">valdepielogostransicion.noblogs.org</a>
Valladolid en Transición	Valladolid	<a href="http://valladolidentransicion.wordpress.com">valladolidentransicion.wordpress.com</a>
Vallés en Transició	El Vallés (Barcelona)	<a href="http://vallesentransicio.blogspot.com.es">vallesentransicio.blogspot.com.es</a>
Zarzalejo en Transición	Zarzalejo (Madrid)	<a href="http://zarzalejoentransicion.blogspot.com.es">zarzalejoentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
Zuera en Transición	Zaragoza	<a href="http://zueraentransicion.blogspot.com.es">zueraentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>
Zurbarán en Transición	Bilbao (Vizcaya)	<a href="http://zurbaranentransicion.blogspot.com.es">zurbaranentransicion.blogspot.com.es</a>

It is interesting to notice that the formation of Transition initiatives accelerated over the time period covered by the research. Few of those documented (11 percent) were created before 2010, 47 percent arose in 2011 and the remaining 42 percent in 2012. However, only 18 main groups responded to our request for interviews about their dynamics, projects and so on. We assume those who did not respond are either in very early stages of internal organization and therefore unable to answer questions about their structure or activities, or not active. The further elaborations on groups' structures, areas of work, barriers and opportunities are therefore based on interviews with these 18 responding groups, which we assume are the more active initiatives.

**Table 2.2.2 – Spanish Community-led Initiatives Similar to Transition, their Locations and Web Addresses.**

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES SIMILAR TO TRANSITION INITIATIVES IN SPAIN			
Movement or initiative	Examples	Location	Web page
De-growth	Desazkundea	País Vasco	<a href="http://web.desazkundea.org">web.desazkundea.org</a>
	Decrece Madrid	Madrid	<a href="http://sindominio.net/wp/decrecimiento/madrid">sindominio.net/wp/decrecimiento/madrid</a>
	Red de Decrecimiento de Sevilla	Sevilla	<a href="http://www.sevilladecrece.net">www.sevilladecrece.net</a>
	Other examples include: Cataluña, Navarra, Aragón, La Rioja, Asturias, Canarias		<a href="http://www.decrecimiento.info">www.decrecimiento.info</a>
Integral Cooperatives	Cooperativa Integral Catalana (CIC)	Cataluña	<a href="http://cooperativa.cat/es">cooperativa.cat/es</a> . Specific projects include <a href="http://calafoou.org">calafoou.org</a> and <a href="http://www.aureasocial.org/es">www.aureasocial.org/es</a>
	Cooperativas Integrales Oeste Norte (CION)	North East of Iberian Peninsula	<a href="http://www.cooperativasintegraleson.net">www.cooperativasintegraleson.net</a>
	Cooperativa Integral Aragonesa (CIAR)	Aragón	<a href="http://ciar.cc">ciar.cc</a>
	Other examples include: País Vasco, Ibiza, Albacete, Granada, Valencia, La Rioja, Madrid, Zamora		<a href="http://integrajkooperativoj.net">integrajkooperativoj.net</a>

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY-LED INITIATIVES SIMILAR TO TRANSITION INITIATIVES IN SPAIN			
Movement or initiative	Examples	Location	Web page
Ecovillages	Lakabe	Navarra	<a href="http://rie.ecovillage.org">rie.ecovillage.org</a>
	Matavenero	Castilla y León	
	Los Portales	Sevilla	<a href="http://www.losportales.net">www.losportales.net</a>
	Sunseed	Almería	<a href="http://www.sunseed.org.uk/es">www.sunseed.org.uk/es</a>
	Molino de Guadalmesí	Tarifa	<a href="http://www.molinodeguadalmesi.com">www.molinodeguadalmesi.com</a>
	Valdepiélagos	Madrid	<a href="http://www.ecoaldeavaldepielagos.org">www.ecoaldeavaldepielagos.org</a>
	Many other examples		<a href="http://rie.ecovillage.org">rie.ecovillage.org</a>
Permaculture	Permacultura Monsant	Tarragona	<a href="http://www.permacultura-monsant.org">www.permacultura-monsant.org</a>
	Red de Permacultura del Sureste (REPESEI)	Sureste Ibérico	<a href="http://www.permaculturasureste.org">www.permaculturasureste.org</a>
	Permacultura Mediterránea	Mallorca	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/PermaMed/">www.facebook.com/PermaMed/</a>
	Proyecto Pachamama	La Palma	<a href="http://proyectopachamama.blogspot.com.es">proyectopachamama.blogspot.com.es</a>
	Permacultura Barcelona	Barcelona	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/PermaculturaBarcelona">www.facebook.com/PermaculturaBarcelona</a>
	Permacultura Cantabria	Cantabria	<a href="http://www.permaculturacantabria.com">www.permaculturacantabria.com</a>
	Iraun Permakultura	Gasteiz (País Vasco)	<a href="http://iraunpermakultura.wordpress.com">iraunpermakultura.wordpress.com</a>
Other initiatives	Many other examples		
	Slow Movement	Barcelona, elsewhere	<a href="http://movimientoslow.com">movimientoslow.com</a>
	Economía del Bien Común	Madrid, Barcelona, elsewhere	<a href="http://economia-del-bien-comun.org/es">economia-del-bien-comun.org/es</a>
	Red Sostenible y Creativa	Valencia	<a href="http://www.sostenibleycreativo.org">www.sostenibleycreativo.org</a>
	Poc a Poc	Mallorca	<a href="http://www.pocapoc.org">www.pocapoc.org</a>
	Vespera de Nada	Galicia	<a href="http://www.vesperadenada.org">www.vesperadenada.org</a>
	Urban garden networks	Madrid	<a href="http://redhuertosurbanosmadrid.wordpress.com">redhuertosurbanosmadrid.wordpress.com</a>
		Barcelona	<a href="http://huertosurbanosbarcelona.wordpress.com">huertosurbanosbarcelona.wordpress.com</a>
	Interchange networks: time Banks and local currencies	Whole Country	<a href="http://mapa.vivirsinempleo.org/mapa">mapa.vivirsinempleo.org/mapa</a>
	Consumer groups	Madrid	<a href="http://gruposdeconsumo.blogspot.com.es">gruposdeconsumo.blogspot.com.es</a>
		Cataluña	<a href="http://repera.wordpress.com">repera.wordpress.com</a>
Social Centres		Whole Country	Can Masdeu, Barcelona. <a href="http://www.canmasdeu.net/es">www.canmasdeu.net/es</a>
			La Tabacalera, Madrid. <a href="http://latabacalera.net">latabacalera.net</a>

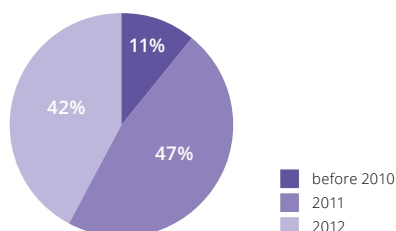


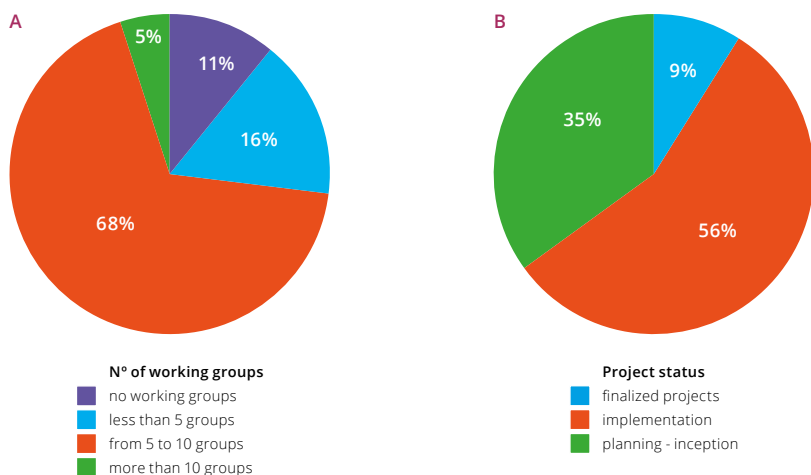
Figure 2.2.3 – Annual Rate of Creation of New TIs in Spain.



### 2.2.3. On What and How do Spanish TIs Work? Assessing Difficulties and Opportunities

As shown in the figure below, we asked TIs about the numbers of working groups within each of them, which topics they cover, how many projects/activities they are carrying out, and the status of each project. Figure 2.2.4A (the left-hand diagram in Figure 2.2.4) gives an initial overview of the groups' activities. More than half of the 18 initiatives interviewed have between five and ten active working groups. A single initiative (comprising the five percent slice) has more than ten active working groups. Of the remaining TIs, three (16 percent) have fewer than five working groups and two (11 percent) have no defined working groups at all.

As a prelude to a more qualitative assessment, Figure 2.2.4B gives a quantitative overview of the status of these activities (whether projects have been completed, are under implementation, or are still in a planning phase). It is noteworthy that more than half of the activities reported have already ended, and 35 percent are being actively implemented; only 9 percent are new activities still at the inception phase. This means the reported data on activities do not refer to aspirations – ideas or future projects – but reflect how the activities and projects of the majority of participating TIs have actually developed.



**Figure 2.2.4 – Numbers of Working Groups and Status of Projects in Responding TIs.**

The 18 TIs reported a total of more than 40 projects that they are developing (or have developed). The most popular topics are education and food production, with the greatest number (40 percent) of projects based on education: dissemination of transition and sustainability principles, and behavioural and personal change. According to groups' reports of the outcomes of their activities, these are also the most successful projects. Food is the second most

common project topic: 30 percent of reported projects focused on local/organic food production. Food projects seem to be among the most straightforward way for a group to take action beyond its first educational projects, and are also reported as generally successful. A different picture is reported for projects with a more practical orientation in areas other than food, such as creating an energy plan, pushing for a local currency, or energy production. We didn't measure the success or failure rates of projects/activities as such, or seek to identify indicators of success or failure. We were interested in understanding which kinds of projects or actions were the most difficult or easy to undertake, in order to understand the barriers and opportunities that Spanish TIs encounter.

### Examples of projects

Among many different types of projects developed by TIs, those based on education and local food were clearly reported to be the most numerous and feasible, while those on energy transition, local money, co-housing or use of public spaces seem to be more challenging to take on. This section moves on to describe various examples identified during the research. They have been organised in four themes: Food, Education and Awareness-raising, Energy, and Economy.

#### Food

Most initiatives have a project related with food. The most numerous such projects are collective urban gardens, like *Butroi en Transición*, *Universidad de Santiago en Transición* and *La Puebla de los Infantes en Transición*. Also very common are consumer groups that connect local producers with a self-organised group of consumers, examples of which are operated by *Cardedeu en Transició* and *Granollers en Transició*. Other projects include community supported agriculture projects (CSA), like *Zarzalejo en Transición*, communal henhouses, like in *Granada en Transición*, or local markets, like in *Coín en Transición* or *Santa Coloma en Transición*.



**Figure 2.2.5** – CSA from *Zarzalejo en Transición*. Credit: *Zarzalejo en Transición*.

### ***Education and Awareness-Raising***

Almost all initiatives start with small awareness-raising projects in their communities: workshops, talks or meetings to explain the main issues we are facing as a society and the methodology of the Transition movement. A few examples are the Berenars de Transició of *Cardedeu en Transició*, or the videoforums done by *Albacete en Transición*. They also include educational projects in schools like in *INtransition Marbella*, or courses in universities like *Universidad de Santiago de Compostela (USC)*.



**Figure 2.2.6** – Berenars de Transició of *Cardedeu en Transició*. Credit: *Cardedeu en Transició*.

### ***Energy***

Less numerous are projects related directly with energy. We have projects for insulating homes, like *Zarzalejo en Transición*'s home insulation program, supported by the local council. Projects to install solar energy on roofs of community buildings include *Pla de Energia Participatiu* in the Sant Martí i la Verneda neighborhood in Barcelona. There are also related projects on local transport, such as promotion of carsharing by *Lanzarote en Transición*.

### ***Economy***

Several projects address local economies and exchange systems. We find local currencies like El Zquito from *Jerez en Transición* or la Turuta from *Vilanova i la Geltrú en Transició*. There are also time banks like that of *Cardedeu en Transició* and barter markets like the MIM of *Menorca en Transició*.



**Figure 2.2.7** – Solar Energy Project in Community Roofs from Pla de Energia Participatiu (PEP) in the Sant Martí i la Verneda Neighborhood in Barcelona. Credit: PEP.



**Figure 2.2.8** – Interchange Market of Menorca (MIM). Credit: Menorca en Transició.

#### 2.2.4. Barriers and Opportunities for Transition Initiatives

Considering challenges, we asked TIs about the main difficulties and barriers they experience executing their projects. From the results, three main themes emerged: lack of financial support and funding sources, difficulties of getting more people involved in the projects and so guaranteeing continuation of the proposed actions, and finally a general lack of communication among group members and among different initiatives. The following paragraphs address each of these in turn.

With the exception, as mentioned in the previous section, of largely self-resourced projects on education and food production, a major perceived challenge for all participating TIs is the lack of financial support and funding sources. As chart A in Figure 2.2.9 shows, the majority of projects (82 percent) relied solely on TIs' own resources, while a few (12 percent) obtained some public funding, and an even smaller number (six percent) received private financial support.

*While financial and other external support is often a key factor for success, at the core of the Transition movement is the capacity for self-organization as a new, more sustainable and resilient pathway for community development.*

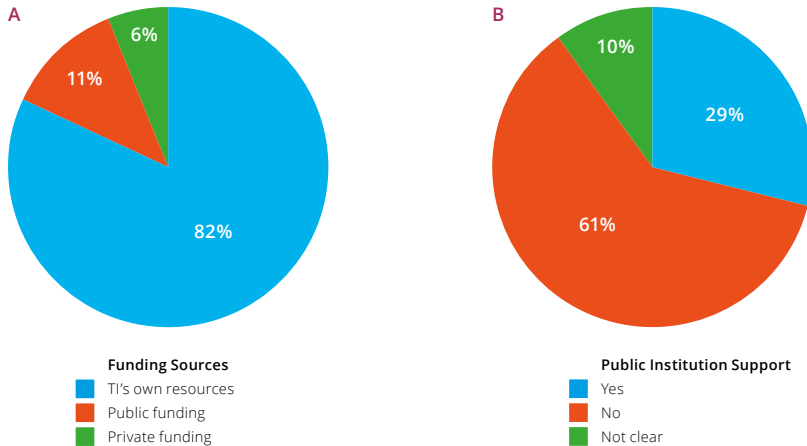
However, financial support is not – or should not be – the main reason for success or failure of a Transition project: many other, non-financial forms of support are essential for Transition activity. Chart B in Figure 2.2.9 hence shows what proportion of Transition projects have received local government support other than funding. This includes

access to space, advertising and promotion, awarding licenses for activities, and others. The most obvious cases of support are those of Mijas, in which the municipality has made public spaces available at no cost for urban agriculture projects managed by the transition initiative Mijas en Transición, and Marbella, in which the municipality donated use of the city council hall as the venue for a Regional Transition meeting in October 2012. Aside from these clear examples of fruitful collaboration, just one third of the projects developed by TIs studied in the survey had received some kind of non-financial support from public institutions. The majority (61 percent) have never received any support. A further ten percent of reported examples are projects in preparatory or planning phases in which public institutions have been contacted but it is not clear whether their support will ultimately be forthcoming.

While financial and other external support is often a key factor for success, at the core of the Transition movement is the capacity for self-organization as a new, more sustainable and resilient pathway for community development. Related movements like degrowth, for example, agree with the latter point and indeed reject reliance on external and financial support, seeing the source of revolutionary power for a transition in the process of self-organization itself,



and the breaking with previous dependencies and institutional rules this entails. In this light, concerns with external support to Tis projects would be less relevant than they appeared during the interviews. Accordingly, we tried to focus more on the internal dynamics of Transition groups and associated coordination issues, corresponding to the other two main emerging themes on challenges: involving people and communication.



**Figure 2.2.9** – Transition Projects Receiving Financial and In-kind Support.

The interviews with all 18 TIs showed an almost complete consensus about the challenge of ensuring group members' involvement in activities and sustaining this in the medium and longer term. Lack of participation and difficulties of internal coordination in groups were raised in almost all interviews. Factors affecting both participation in activities of existing members and the recruitment and integration of new members include: lack of individual motivation for longer term involvement, lack of financial support to guarantee continuity of members' involvement in specific tasks, lack of specialist knowledge of how to manage groups and networks, and a scarcity of strategic planning for development of the TI (activities, groups, networks). A general characteristic of the Spanish context that became apparent, and related to such difficulties, resides in an attitude unfamiliar with either planning or closely following long term plans, instead being extremely adaptable to changing conditions and roles. In such an environment, in general, the social impacts of TIs is great, with high attendance at organized events, but moving on from this to motivate people to active involvement in activities was reported to be very challenging. However, when stating those observations, we need to take into account the very recent and emergent nature of the Transition movement as a Spanish phenomenon, and the experience and time necessary to create a dynamic appropriate to the context in order for things to take off.

### 2.2.5. Working Across Scales: Navigating from Personal Resilience to Societal Transformation

Moving on from challenges to opportunities, we first consider the situation regarding communication and networking strategies in Spain, which naturally leads to a consideration of how an embryonic movement develops the capacity to work effectively across scales. Previous sections have mentioned how communication within and among groups, TIs, and different movements seems to lack intensity and consistency. As an indication, no TIs interviewed mentioned cross-group collaborations or cross-movement projects. It is also notable that while all the TIs self-identify as 'Transition Initiatives' because they like and agree with the principles and practices of the Transition movement, 80 percent of them were not registered with or in touch with Transition Network,<sup>28</sup> the international coordinating and support organisation for the Transition movement. These initiatives prioritize internal issues over building links with international networks, and do not actually see the international network as an important source of resources (mainly because materials are mostly in English and not adapted to the local context). However, all of the TIs participating in the project recognized the need to build a Spanish network in order to foster collaboration and communication nationally; sharing resources, experiences and plans.

On this basis, the national Transition hub (*Red de Transición España, REDTE*) and website were launched in early 2014 to act on the consensus among initiatives about the value of coordination at national level. Members of the national hub also believe that creation of a national network is an essential preliminary step to creating the necessary links with international initiatives and networks, sharing the specific Spanish cultural experience with other movements and initiatives. While few Spanish TIs are currently registered with the international Transition Network, they all believe in the power of Transition as a movement and the value of openness to involvement of any other interested member or group. The willingness to strengthen the national network in a country with high internal cultural diversity and regional political autonomy seems a very positive signal. It indicates that during its current phase of 'exploitation' (in the terms of resilience theory; rapid initial growth in non-technical language), the Spanish Transition movement has the motivation and ambition to build on its momentum and upscale from various local experiments towards much wider-reaching social change.

This clarifies some subtle aspects of the relationships among group resilience, empowerment of individual members, and a group's capacity to promote wider Transition, and how this unfolds over time. At a group's inception, resilience represents the capacity to learn and experience how to build and improve personal, and consequently collective, capacities: firstly, to become more aware of our own dependencies (functions of our lifestyles and habits), and secondly, as a consequence of this, to become a little more self-sufficient through direct engagement with production of primary goods such as food or energy. In this way, the group becomes a context that supports the growth of personal resilience – in terms of the capacity to embrace change in lifestyle, priorities and habits – among its members. This is something

28 <http://www.transitionnetwork.org>

we detected in every group we interviewed, and shows the importance of the proliferation of new groups even if at this stage their concrete external achievements appear minor or non-existent. Experiencing resilience in this way is something that has little to do with conscious planning: it is about engaging people at a much more emotional level.

Moving from experiencing resilience at this very local and even personal level to seeking to effect change at higher levels (larger spatial scales and/or longer time scales) is a key step towards broader societal transitions, and a major challenge in the life of any Transition initiative. Acceptance of the need for change at commu-

nity or societal scale, and commitment to effecting such change, is a very different process requiring far greater emphasis on planning, cooperation and engagement. The first stage is consistent with the notion of resilience as adapting to change in order to maintain continuity of existing system function, as the personal changes involved don't necessarily rely on prior changes at higher levels. The second implies far-reaching structural and functional transformation to entirely new configurations, most likely involving radical shifts in general outlook and mindsets.

*(...) the group becomes a context that supports the growth of personal resilience – in terms of the capacity to embrace change in lifestyle, priorities and habits – among its members.*

As our brief assessment shows, this step from human scale resilience to systemic societal transformation is the key issue both for individual Transition initiatives in Spain, and for the Spanish network as a whole. To make it happen requires engagement, networking, coordinated planning and collective strategic action: the main issues raised when Spanish TIs reflect on the challenges they face. Simultaneously, enormous potential for such upscaling exists in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008. The dramatic and unavoidable reshaping of lifestyles and changes in quality of life that have persisted in Spain ever since may increase receptivity among the wider public to the efforts of Spanish TIs to foster the scale of engagement and action necessary for wider transition.

This assessment was a first tentative attempt to gather data on the scale, challenges and opportunities in Spain for transition towards more resilient and sustainable communities. Further investigation will be necessary to identify the cultural, political and strategic factors that can enable the shift from mainly local action to wider societal transition. This will need to involve close dialogue with changes in practice, both for theory to inform practice and for hands-on experience to feed back into the reassessment of theory of understanding and manage societal transitions towards sustainability and resilience.



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Resilience has become a familiar buzz word in mainstream politics, most commonly as an excuse for 'business as usual'. Both resilience science and practical experience of community-led action for social change action suggest an alternative view, in which resilience implies deep and far-reaching transformation of society.

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