



**Project: Rural development for employment**

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**Partner: Associació Empresarial L'alqueria Projectes Educatius**

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## **Research best practices of rural development in Spain**

### **Intro**

In order to identify a collection of relevant best practices in rural development, ALPE has been applied the methodology of desk research in the first phase and interviews with the initiators of the best practices afterwards. In the initial phase we have analysed data through an internal desk research, identifying existing projects and initiatives in Spain.

In the next phase, an external desk research has been carried out by ALPE's team, by browsing specific information from rural development sector and extracting the information directly from the websites of the projects below, but also to search for government published data and relevant statistics. For all the data that wasn't available, we have contacted the initiators of the 2 projects selected – “Endèmica Natura” and “Descubre l’Horta” and sent them a set of questions to complete the profile of the case studies.

### **Case study 1: [Endèmica Natura](#)**

#### **Digital resources**

1. <https://endemicanatura.com>
2. <https://ecoturismo.comunitatvalenciana.com/recursos/endemica-natura>



#### **Aims and objectives**

- To present a good practice and a solution that could help the prevention of unemployment and depopulation
- To promote young entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship in rural areas
- To build an intergenerational bridge between the seniors who have the know-how related to traditional handicrafts and the younger generation.

## **Top highlights:**

Most important aspects of the case study, or take-aways that could be shared with other communities:

- The initiative helps to create awareness about the environmental and cultural heritage that is home to the different towns of this historic region (Valencian Community).
- Endèmica Natura helps the community by bringing new tourists.
- Additional incomes allow locals to obtain a higher standard of living.
- The small business contributes to the economic development of the village and it brought national and international attention on the region.
- Local traditions are carried on and the cultural and natural heritage is preserved.

## **Description and benefits of the intervention:**

### **Background**

Endèmica natura was born as a final thesis in 2017. Maria Roselló Senent, a youngster with valuable determination and with a lot of interest in nature, has studied Tourism Management at University of the Valencian Community. With her experience in the sector and her personal interests, collaborating jointly with public bodies (the city of Alcalalí and the Generalitat Valenciana), they count and locate the different environmental species in order to protect them and use them as a disclosure that allows reaching all people in terms of environmental education, promoting esteem towards the territory in which we live or visit.

The objective of this initiative is to raise even more the awareness on the natural potential of the area and to highlight the importance of ecotourism and the environmental interpretation.

She studies, asks and investigates the territory and its plants from then. Extending knowledge and learning to recover traditions is a need that, for her, aims to transmit the knowledge.

### **Actions**

The name Endèmica natura encompasses different activities that we will describe:

One of them and the most significant is "OrquiRoutes", a term coined by Maria herself, which refers to the guided routes for observing wild orchids. The project was born from here, which welcomes many more initiatives that aim to bring participants closer to the rural world.

The activity "wild plants". Thanks to ethnobotany we can discover a world where we interact with plants. From its origin to its gastronomic or medicinal uses, to know which are toxic, which are invasive, which are autochthonous ... and endless possibilities. Through a field trip, the objective of this activity is knowing what plants we will find in each season and,

apart from identifying them, they will learn the collection techniques: tools, time of day, location free of contaminants, etc.

Escape garden is an outdoor activity in a magical setting such as “Jardin de l’Albarta” in La Sella, Pedreguer. There are two possible activities that the participant can choose.

Tourist Dynamization. Through a study and analysis of environmental factors, and making agricultural and ethnological resources, she develops a plan to promote agritourism and deseasonalize demand.

Environmental education. It is an activity for schools. She organizes trips to discover the biodiversity present in the vicinity of the study center. This initiative encompasses different activities such as: didactic itineraries, visits or workshops in the l’Albarda garden, environmental interpretation of the desired area, cleaning days, voluntary work, etc.

Walking trails. The trails are usually used to connect towns and places of interest but also to promote and energize sustainable and environmentally friendly local tourism. Endèmica mixes culture with mountains and rural tourism to design these routes. In this way, it enforces any botanical, geological, toponymic and ethnographic aspect of the territory.

### **How does it work**

Every Sunday, Maria posts a new post on her website showing different things about nature and the activities she is doing or even planning. She also works closely with social media such as Facebook or Instagram.

She organises the routes or the activities “tailor-made”. This means that the participant can choose how long it will be, the activities included and so on.

### **Local, regional, national, and international impact**

Endemica natura, at local level, promotes the added value of little towns and their know-how. It helps to preserve the cultural and natural heritage. In addition, local people live better because of the arrival of new tourists.

Endemica natura has been massively shared in the local, regional and national media as one of the best practices for rural development.

### **Conclusions:**

In the present, the interest in this type of tourism is growing and people want to come back to the old traditions. She is working hard to maintain her values and objectives.

## Case study 2: [Descubre l'horta](#)



**descubre l'horta**  
descobreix l'horta  
discover l'horta

### Digital resources

1. <https://descubrelhorta.com>
2. <https://www.visitvalencia.com/planifica-tu-viaje-a-valencia/guias-turisticas-valencia/descubre-l-horta>

### Aims and objectives

- To approach the consumers to the nature and ecology
- To present a good practice and a solution that connect the local farmers and help them reach the final consumers
- To encourage local/rural entrepreneurship and small farmers
- To show the importance of collaboration
- To encourage the consumers, build a healthy relationship with clean food product
- To develop the cooperative sector in Valencia
- To make known and highlight the culture and gastronomy of the “Valencian horta”

### Top highlights

Descubre l'horta has the following main purposes:

- To provide a healthy alternative to consumers;
- To contribute to the well-being of rural communities;
- To make known the culture and gastronomy of the “Valencian horta”;
- To contribute to the economic development of rural Spain;
- To support small farmers to promote their products;

### Description and benefits of the project

#### Background

“Discover L’Horta” is a space in the heart of the Valencian orchard, in a district of Valencia called “Borbotó”, just 5 km from Valencia, where you can organize any type of outdoor event, surrounded by a magnificent ecological garden and great tranquillity. The farm is watered by the ditches and you can enjoy observing it walking through the place, and see the trees, the greenhouse, the farm ...

They have an ethnological museum, where the visitor can see farm implements and tools that have always been used in the Valencian orchard. Participants will also find the “paellero”, where they can cook “paella” with firewood.

This is a cultural and gastronomic tourism service, involved in the organic garden of Valencia. Their objective is to show their customs and traditions and to teach the way they cook paella.

## **Actions**

They have created the Valencian Paella Workshops aimed at schools, companies and groups, who are interested in learning about the traditional ways of life in the Valencian Community. They organize a pleasant day in a fun and educational way in the heart of the “horta”.

With the Outdoor Training of the paella competitions for schools, the participants can actively participate cooking Valencian wood-fired paella, showing them the importance of collaboration and approaching them to the nature. With the Outdoor Training of the paella competitions for companies, we offer the work groups an opportunity to highlight the importance of the equipment for the preparation of a wood-fired paella.

During the walk through our organic garden, we show the different seasonal crops.

In the winter season, we grow our own “Calçots” and celebrate “Calçotas” with them for groups. From the field to the table.

## **How does it work**

- For the schools

Upon arrival at the Discover L’Horta facilities, the participants take a look of the Mediterranean garden and a walk through the ecological garden, a guide explains their history, the typical crops, and the tools used, the traditional irrigation system for ditches, etc. In this visit to the organic garden, participants are able to collect, depending on the season, some ingredients from the salads that they taste later.

To make this paella workshop more fun, it is organized as a competition between teams. They deliver a distinctive apron to each team and the necessary utensils. With the supervision of the cooker, who helps them in whatever they need, the participants will prepare all the ingredients and cook the “paella” with firewood in the “paellero”. During the preparation of the “paella”, they have included an appetizer (cocoa, olives, fried potatoes) accompanied by soft drinks and mineral water. Once the “Paella” is cooked, a jury (made up of the tutors who accompany them) decide the winning team of the competition, through a "blind tasting". The winning team receives a special detail. In addition, the lunch is located next to the organic garden, with some starters and the salads, previously prepared by themselves, with the organic products of the garden. And for dessert, seasonal fruit or ice cream.

- For companies

Discover L'Horta proposes, to companies or work groups, the organization of paella competition as dynamic element among employees. The objective is to highlight the importance that each individual contributes in the work team. Preparation of the Valencian "paella" with firewood as a binder of different ingredients. Once "paella" is cooked, a blind tasting will be carried out by a selected jury, where the best "paella" will be assessed for flavour, presentation ...

The winners will be presented with a diploma and an orchard hat.

Next, they will eat them next to the organic garden, with some starters and salads, made with organic products from our garden.

### **Local, regional, national, and international impact**

At local and regional level, Descubre l'horta connects rural farmers with the customer. They teach how tasty it is to eat food that come "from the farm to the table" and how important and beautiful it is to preserve that.

Food hubs such as Descubre l'horta exhibit innovative business models that are financially viable and are capable of making a difference not only in the communities that they service, but also at national level if the model is correctly multiplied.

### **Conclusions**

Organic products register in Spain and internationally a tremendous growth and recognition. People are more careful with their sources of food and they prefer to be adopters of the concept "from farm to table". Descubre l'horta successfully connects the rural farmers, traditions and culture directly with the consumers.