

The III edition of Holapueblo gains allies to attract new settlers to 80 towns with fewer than 2000 inhabitants

- The Red Eléctrica Group, IKEA and AlmaNatura are launching a new edition of Holapueblo featuring new collaborators and services, including support for people who are looking to start a new life in the rural area working for companies in participating towns
- Financing campaigns and promotion in Correos Market for entrepreneurs and home rental insurance to encourage owners to put unoccupied properties on the market are among the new ideas unveiled at this third edition
- To date, Holapueblo has enabled 19 towns in 14 provinces to increase their population, mainly couples aged between 41 and 50, with children.
- “Initiatives like this are helping to stimulate our villages, portraying them as territories with opportunities”, says the general secretary for the Demographic Challenge at MITECO, Francisco Boya

Huelva, 17 March 2022

The platform for fighting depopulation, Holapueblo, has opened the inscription register for its third edition with the goal of attracting yet more new residents to towns with fewer than 2000 inhabitants across Spain. Besides mentoring and supporting entrepreneurs who decide to settle and develop their business ideas in villages - as it has until now - the platform will make it easier for unemployed people to be hired by small companies in the towns taking part, helping them by creating a personalised itinerary for inclusion in the labour market.

Arroyomolinos de León (Huelva), one of the towns that has gained residents through the platform, was the setting for the official presentation of this new edition of Holapueblo. The location chosen was Almanatura Lab, the country's first centre for rural innovation, where initiative and solutions to stop depopulation are created.

The general secretary for the Demographic Challenge of the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Francisco Boya, who attended the event, said that “Initiatives like this are helping to stimulate our villages, portraying them as territories with opportunities and establishing a model that we in the Spanish Government are also supporting” and announced that there will soon be a call for applications for subsidies for innovating territorial transformation projects for local bodies, non-profit organizations and business projects.

The president of the Huelva Provincial Government, María Eugenia Limón, was also present, and she said that "At the Commission for the Demographic Challenge, supported by the

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Huelva Provincial Government, we trust in collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure the services necessary to create new opportunities and employment and as the means to establish population in the territory and attract new residents and neighbours to our villages. We want to create a network of companies, people and administrations that can achieve common goals as the most effective strategy to fight depopulation”.

Holapueblo increases its support for depopulated towns and new settlers

Holapueblo was created through the alliance between the Red Eléctrica Group and the company AlmaNatura with the aim of stimulating rural areas, offering guidance and contacts between people interested in starting a life project and enterprise in the rural environment, and small rural communities in need of new residents.

In its third edition, Holapueblo has added IKEA as an ally and new supporters who can help to extend the reach of the initiative, which to date has enabled 19 towns in 14 provinces to increase their population, mostly with couples aged 41 to 50, who have children. Specifically, the programme has helped 70 entrepreneurs, of whom 27 have started a new life in the country with their families.

The alliance with IKEA will benefit the towns included in the programme, where there will be an open call for the revival of municipal spaces that can serve to energize the population. Two of the projects will be selected, and they will receive the design and planning for the interior of the property, as well as any furniture required.

At the same time, because the offer of available homes is an essential requirement and acts as an attraction for families interested in living in a village, the collaboration with Reales Seguros will allow the owners of unoccupied properties to take out an insurance policy to safeguard their income from rentals. Its purpose is to encourage more properties that can house new residents to come onto the market.

On the other hand, the entrepreneurial projects created under the aegis of Holapueblo can make use of Correos Market, the Post Office’s online market for promoting and selling products made, created or processed by Spanish companies.

The third edition will also see the launch of a call for matchfunding in which Triodos Bank will provide a fund worth €10,000 to support the creation and consolidation of businesses. The call will be managed by the Triodos Foundation, which will make its crowdfunding platform available for entrepreneurs to ensure that the selected projects can receive support from the public, which will then be duplicated by the fund set up for the call. This financial support will also be accompanied by specialist training in entrepreneurship led by both organizations.

Working in an alliance is vital to increase the positive social impact of Holapueblo

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“The Red Eléctrica Group is present in nearly 3,000 towns across the whole country and it aims to support them in the fair and inclusive sustainable development of these areas. That is why we create alliances, like Holapueblo, to mobilize the resources, knowledge, technology and capacity necessary to solve complex problems such as depopulation”, explained Antonio Calvo Roy, Sustainability manager for the Red Eléctrica Group.

“As part of our vision to create a better everyday life for most people, IKEA wants to get closer and closer to more people. That is why contributing to a project like Holapueblo, which fights against depopulation, means that IKEA is not only building on our strategy of accessibility for Spain, but also on sustainability, enabling us to have a positive effect on people and their communities”, explained Mónica Chao, Sustainability manager of IKEA in Spain.

“Although it would be ideal for all the new settlers to set up their business models in rural areas, the loss of population also means that these areas are short of working people. That is why we have added a pilot job insertion scheme to support the link between the jobs available in towns and people looking for work who have decided to make a living in the rural environment” says Juanjo Manzano, cofounder of AlmaNatura.

“We were given a warm welcome when we arrived as young people with children and ideas”

Virginia Mate (41, Valladolid) and Azucena González (40, Valladolid) arrived in Arroyomolinos de León with their two daughters in September 2021 after a shift in their personal lives. Holapueblo has enabled them to extend their current enterprise of social photography with a new line offering communication for businesses. The village has enabled them to slow down their pace of work and family life.

“Life here is better than we expected. We are meeting people who appreciate our contribution to the village as new *Arroyencas* and our plan to develop our business ideas. We feel welcomed by the neighbours, who want young people to bring their children and concerns here”, they say, and add: “Holapueblo is a byword for coherent ideas and a fantastic stimulus for people who need support, guidance and motivation to make their desire to start a business in a rural environment a reality”.

More stories of entrepreneurs who have settled in the countryside here:

<https://holapueblo.com/portada/los-8-nuevos-vecinos-de-la-sierra-de-huelva/>

Connectivity, schools and a medical centre

From now until 28 March 2022, the 3rd edition of the Holapueblo inscription period is open for councils who would like to attract new settlers, offering support for 80 towns that have seen their populations dwindle in recent years. To take part in Holapueblo, they must have fewer than 2,000 inhabitants and a minimum level of basic services. The conditions for taking part, and the application form, can be found here: bit.ly/inscripcionayuntamientos.

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About the [Red Eléctrica Group](#)

The Red Eléctrica Group is a global manager of essential and neutral infrastructures through which it guarantees the electricity supply and telecommunications. It operates in Spain and Latin America, and its activities are characterized by a continuous drive for innovation and a firm commitment towards fair and inclusive sustainable development wherever it works.

About [IKEA](#)

1943, Sweden. IKEA was founded 75 years ago to help you transform your home. It arrived in Spain 24 years ago. Since then, our mission has been to create a better everyday life for most people. We love home life and we want to help you make your home into a better place to live. That is why we are firm defenders of "democratic design": for everyone to have access to functional, quality designer products that are sustainable and affordable.

About [AlmaNatura](#)

AlmaNatura is an organization that is concerned about the issue of demography and the social, environmental and economic problems caused by rural depopulation. Since 1997, it has been designing projects to promote rural business, setting four bases for population: education, health, use of technology and improving employment. Since 2013, it has become the first social entity in Spain to receive the international certificate as a B Corporation, and since 2016, has been one of the top performing companies for the world according to the B Lab NGO, which has recognised its strong positive impact in the rural areas of Spain.

Press release

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