

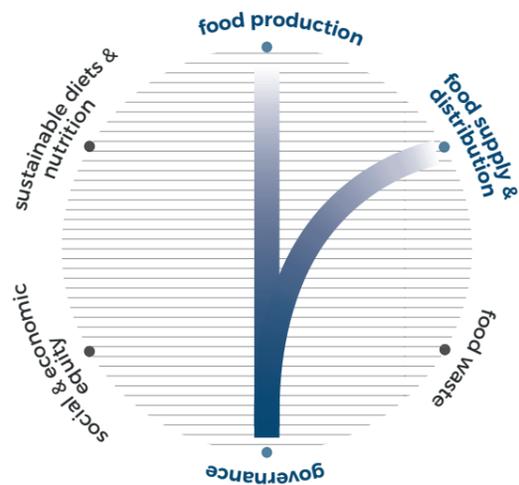


VALENCIA SPAIN

VALENCIA: AN OBSERVATORY TO DEFEND THE GREEN BELT

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category GOVERNANCE

Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



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Context

València's green belt (L'Horta de València), besides representing an exceptional peri-urban agricultural landscape and being part of the city's cultural and historical heritage, is above all an important natural and economic resource to produce food that supplies the city. Like many other peri-urban agricultural areas, it is seriously threatened by degradation of space and difficulty for agricultural activity, competition with non-traditional undertakings, lack of generational agricultural turnover, urban growth and/or infrastructures that fragment the territory. For these reasons València joined the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and is implementing actions and strategies to guarantee food accessibility all over the region.

Overview of the food practice

The Association "Per l'Horta", a non-profit association that defends the territory of l'Horta and its values, identified the need to have updated and comparable data about the evolution of this space and to involve the greatest number of people in favour of its defense and appreciation. For this reason, the association promoted the creation of the City Observatory of València's green belt, whose aim is to provide civil society with tools and strategies for obtaining data in a collaborative way, to analyze and share the data, and to participate actively in the design of work-plans, campaigns and initiatives linked to the territory. Observed information is systematized and organized in a web-based platform that allows networking, visualization and data processing, as well as dissemination and discussion of the work of the Observatory. The Municipality of València supports the initiative by subsidizing its implementation and by trying to harmonize the platform with existing institutional dynamics of observation and data analysis on the municipal agricultural territory. The Observatory project offers an innovative approach at different levels: a participatory methodology, valuable information on the territory and facilitating access to information.

- **Methodological approach:** the project is based on the collaborative collection of data on the agricultural territory where the participation of different people and social entities is fundamental. The objective is to actively involve them in the process of monitoring their own territory thus creating stronger community networks that contribute to increasing their resilience, following the commitments of the New Urban Agenda. Becoming more engaged with and appreciative of one's own territory is the basis for exercising an active defense of the area, which helps to avoid urban disasters of the past while promoting responsible food consumption, proximity and peri-urban agrarian systems.
- **Territorial approach:** the Observatory allows people to have data on the state of the territory and its evolution, providing the necessary information to propose joint territorial protocols or strate-

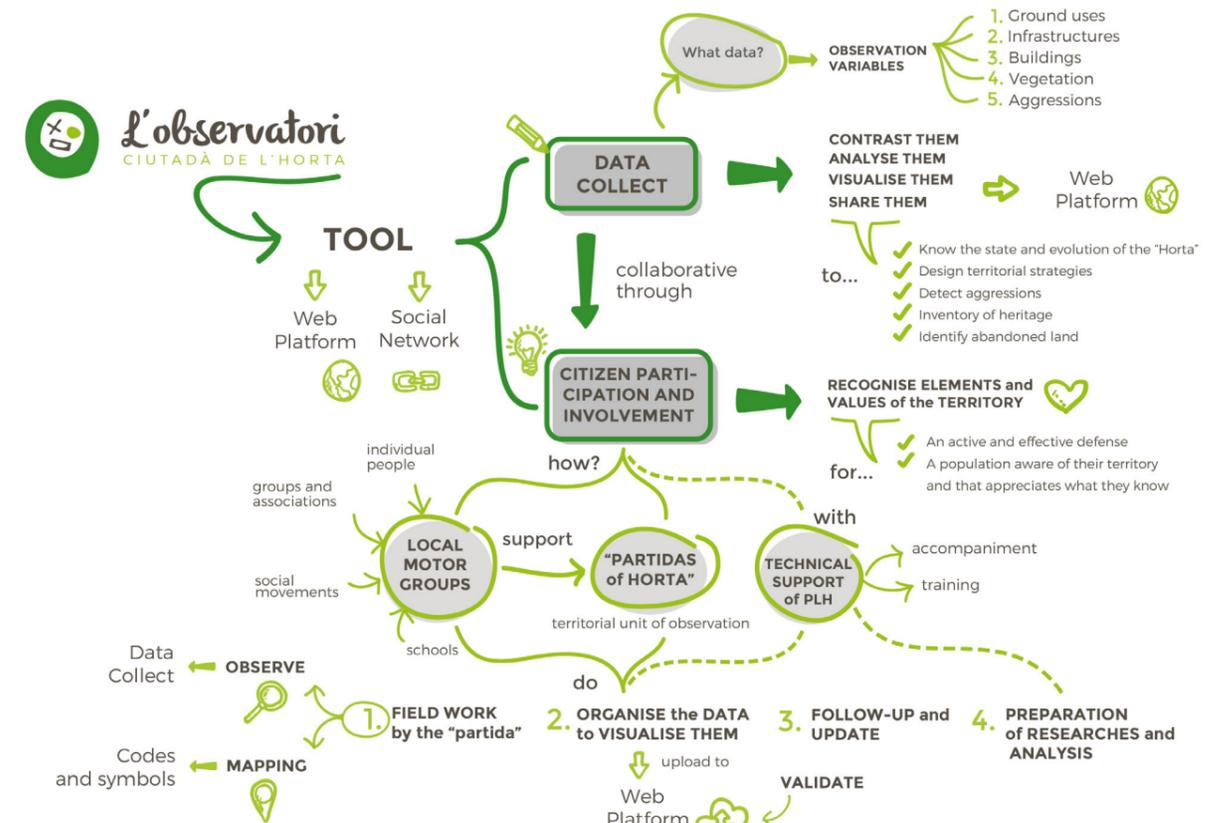
- gies on detected threats and opportunities. This approach also promotes active participation in decision-making processes, thus contributing to the empowerment of people.
- **Access to information:** this project presents a free and accessible digital tool that shares updated information and data on the state of the different participating territories through a map viewer. Therefore, it plays an important role in the implementation of international communication technologies (ICT), transparency and accessibility to information.

Results and lessons learned

Since January 2017, approximately 100 people and 11 civil society groups were involved in the policy-making process. This valuable involvement has been facilitating by the Observatory project. Most of these groups are neighborhood organizations of peripheral areas of the city, which face problems of urban degradation and social and territorial fragmentation. They adopted the Observatory project as a facilitator tool to make their demands visible and to get specific data on their neighborhoods. The task force between the different groups and the Observatory's technical support generated a solid network for the defense of La Huerta. The committee collaborated with schools and adapted the methodology of the project for its pedagogical use.



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Source: City of Valencia

- www.observatori.perlhorta.info
- <http://sensemans.info/es/programa-2-4-4>