



## Transition is thriving in southern Spain

### In a nutshell

*Almócita en Transición* is a community-driven project addressing rural depopulation and climate change where residents, local associations and administrations collaborate closely. Key actions included establishing an energy community, creating communal vegetable gardens, implementing a composting system, and repopulating Mediterranean forests. Although they also had plans to start working on a nursery for local species, other challenges made the project reassess its priority focus.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Preserve traditional, drought-resistant species adapted to local conditions.
- Promote community collaboration and involvement.
- Test ecosystem restoration techniques to enhance water retention.

#### ACTIONS

- Offer a garden centre and nursery for local plant varieties, linked to a seed bank.
- Promote workshops, talks and meetings.
- Involve local expertise and cooperatives actively.



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## RESULTS (IMPACT)

*Almócita en Transición* began as a community-led effort to address rural depopulation and climate change by linking ecosystem restoration with sustainable agriculture and water management. While the initial focus was on establishing a nursery and preserving traditional drought-resistant species, the project took an important turn: water emerged as the central and most urgent issue. Thanks to C4C, conversations around water - once a sensitive and taboo topic in the region - are now taking place openly, shaping a new shared understanding of the region's hydrological challenges.

This shift has already produced meaningful outcomes. Residents are now more aware of the value of traditional irrigation systems and the role of organised irrigators' communities (associations of landowners in an area who manage public water jointly). Concrete steps have been taken, including the submission of landscape restoration funding applications, scheduling community work sessions, and initiating the process of legalising irrigation associations. A study visit to a successful demonstrator project further inspired confidence and provided a roadmap for change.

While challenges remain — such as limited funding, initial scepticism, and the need for careful facilitation - the project has laid the groundwork for tangible transformation. The long-term vision includes cleaner, more abundant water, restored acequias (community-operated ditches or canals), and a revitalised local ecosystem that supports both people and biodiversity.

Through its inclusive, evolving approach, *Almócita en Transición* has not only advanced environmental goals but strengthened community resilience, showing that rural regeneration is possible through a collaborative approach.



## GOOD PRACTICES | POLICY LESSONS

*Almócita en Transición* is a compelling example of how rural communities can lead climate and social resilience through grounded, collective action.

Thanks to support from C4C, the project team opened up new conversations around water, long seen as a contentious issue but rarely addressed collectively. Guided by thematic expertise and inspired by a visit to a similar demonstrator site, the community began exploring nature-based water management solutions and the role of strong, legalised irrigators' associations in defending landscape rights and local water governance. These actions have sparked renewed collaboration with academic institutions and neighbouring villages, improved community cohesion, and ensured that women's voices and local knowledge are valued. A key takeaway has been the importance of recognising and even compensating ecosystem services, such as municipalities paying irrigators' communities for flood prevention and water quality maintenance.

Policy recommendations include increased technical support, flexible timelines, and accessible funding for grassroots projects. Creating safer, more horizontal spaces for dialogue, like those promoted by C4C, has proven essential to unlocking community potential.

