



Social initiative award

The Asociación Amigos de Sarnago (Soria) recognises Holapueblo with the Esteva Award for its fight against rural depopulation

- The platform, driven by Redeia, AlmaNatura and IKEA, has received this award, which recognises projects that help generate opportunities and keep rural areas alive.
- The 6th edition of Holapueblo has achieved a record number of registrations from small Spanish towns looking for people willing to set up businesses in the area.

Sarnago (Soria), 19 August 2026

The anti-depopulation platform Holapueblo, promoted by Redeia, AlmaNatura and IKEA, has been awarded the 2026 Esteva Award. Granted by the Asociación Amigos de Sarnago (Soria), the award recognises individuals, organisations and projects that help generate opportunities and keep rural areas alive.

Representatives of Holapueblo collected the award on Tuesday at a ceremony held in the town of Sarnago, in the Tierras Altas district of Soria. Coinciding with the town's 2026 Cultural Week, the association hosted a conference on the future of the region's villages. During the event, the award was presented: a Roman plough stilt (esteva), crafted by Sarnago artist **Juan Ridruejo**, serving as a symbol of those who help carve a new furrow for the future of the rural world.

Juan Ávila, Head of Social Innovation at Redeia, stated: 'Receiving this award is an acknowledgement that we share with all the municipalities, entrepreneurs and organisations that make Holapueblo possible. This accolade highlights collaboration as a driving force for generating opportunities to tackle the challenge of depopulation, and it encourages us to continue fostering partnerships that help build a more promising future for rural areas.'

Elena García, Project Coordinator at AlmaNatura, noted: 'For the Holapueblo team, this recognition holds enormous value because it comes from the rural community itself. To have a community like Sarnago recognise our work is highly rewarding and, at the same time, encourages us to keep working with the same enthusiasm to support those who choose to build a life in rural areas.'

Laura Escalante, Sustainability Project Leader at IKEA, emphasised that 'this recognition belongs to all the individuals, municipalities and organisations that make Holapueblo possible. It is a reflection of the shared commitment to driving a project which proves that the future of rural areas is built by joining forces, generating opportunities, connecting people and helping to keep our villages alive.'

For over four decades, the Asociación Amigos de Sarnago has been championing the recovery of the tangible and intangible heritage of this village, which was once uninhabited and, thanks to collective commitment, has become an example of rural revitalisation. In this vein, the Esteva Award recognises, for the third consecutive year, individuals, organisations and initiatives that help strengthen rural areas, tackle the depopulation challenge and create new opportunities for villages.

The Holapueblo platform connects municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants at risk of depopulation with individuals and families wishing to set up businesses in a rural setting. In its sixth edition, Holapueblo has successfully attracted 107 towns across Spain, a record number of town registrations since the project began in 2019, including 16 in the province of Soria: **Aldealices, Carrascosa de la Sierra, Castilfrío de la Sierra, Cerbón, Estepa de San Juan, Fuentes de Magaña, Las Aldhuelas, Magaña, Oncala, San Pedro Manrique, Santa Cruz de Yanguas, Valdeprado, Valtajeros, Villar del Río, Vizmanos and Yanguas.**

Holapueblo is currently in the final stretch of its 6th edition, supporting 30 entrepreneurs and families who have decided to take the step of relocating to a rural area. Over the coming months, it will continue to facilitate meetings with participating municipalities, with the aim of making new life projects a reality and contributing to the arrival of new inhabitants in our villages.

Redeia

Redeia is a global operator of essential infrastructure present in Spain and Latin America, guaranteeing electricity supply and connectivity while driving a just ecological transition based on sustainability criteria.

IKEA

Founded in 1943 in Sweden, IKEA has been helping transform homes for 80 years. It has been present for 30 years in Spain, with the mission to create a better everyday life for most people. Passionate about home life, IKEA aims to make your home a better place, advocating for 'democratic design': functional, well-designed, sustainable, high-quality products at affordable prices for everyone.

AlmaNatura

AlmaNatura is an organisation focused on demographic challenges and the social, environmental, and economic issues posed by rural depopulation. Since 1997, it has developed rural revitalisation projects aimed at stabilising population levels through four pillars: education, health, technology, and improvements to employment. In 2013, AlmaNatura became the first Spanish social enterprise certified internationally as a B Corporation. Furthermore, it has been recognised since 2016 by the NGO B Lab as one of the Best for the World companies due to its significant positive impact on rural Spain.

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