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**Agroecology Scientific Day 2024**

Workshop n°7, Session n°4

**Title:**

**Community involvement and citizen participation in a historical agroecological peri-urban area. Introduction of a case study using the Institutional Analysis and Development framework (IAD): the agricultural heritage system of *L'Horta de València*.**

**Abstract:**

The agricultural system of *L'Horta de Valencia* has a history of over 1,200 years, during which time it has evolved in response to the interaction between local communities and the natural environment. At the international level, the Dobris report highlighted the importance and uniqueness of this landscape by identifying only six similar locations throughout Europe. The earliest ditches and irrigation networks that shaped the hydraulic landscape of *L'Horta* and the *Albufera* lagoon were the result of the experience and ingenuity of the Islamic civilization.

*L'Horta* is an extraordinary example of the transmission of ancestral agroecological practices through historical governance mechanisms that have ensured the survival of an entire territory and its socio-cultural heritage. A number of initiatives aiming at promoting sustainable practices, including agroecology, exist and continue to be developed in the current times. Examples are the initiative "*Per L'Horta*", as well as the coordination of a wide variety of stakeholders for the recognition as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among many others.

This study analyzes the agricultural system of *L'Horta de Valencia* as an example of peri-urban agroecological and socio-ecological system, together with the environmental

benefits, sustainable, fresh and local food availability for the local population, as well as the social elements that are at the basis of its conservation.

Given the relevant role that the institutional arrangements or governance play in the management of the agricultural system, this contribution proposes the application of the conceptual and methodological tools of the Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) framework to identify key factors that support the community involvement and citizen participation for the success of urban agroecology initiatives. This paper examines the contributions from social actors, including urban food strategies by local councils of the Valencia Metropolitan area, foundations, farming community and other agents from the civil society. Furthermore, the agro-ecosystem of the Valencian *Horta* as part of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), deals with the dynamic conservation actions needed to support the agro-ecosystem. These actions necessarily require a multi-level coordination among local stakeholders, which is examined in this contribution.

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