

Going back to nature. Forest-based care as a pathway to shift in values and uses of forests

UNIPD: Aynur Mammadova, Angela Moriggi, Todora Rogelja, Laura Secco, Davide Pettenella
ETIFOR: Colm O'Driscoll, Ilaria Doimo

Agro-sylvo-pastoral Empathy in Rural
Fragile Areas
18-19 March 2022, Rovigo, Italy







DISPES - Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali
Aree fragili APS, Rovigo
FISPPA - Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sociologia, Pedagogia e Psicologia Applicata
TESAF - Dipartimento Territorio e Sistemi Agro-Forestali Università di Padova


1

Human-nature divide. Values of nature



Intrinsic value
Nature has a value independent of people



Instrumental value
Nature is valuable as it delivers diverse services and benefits for people



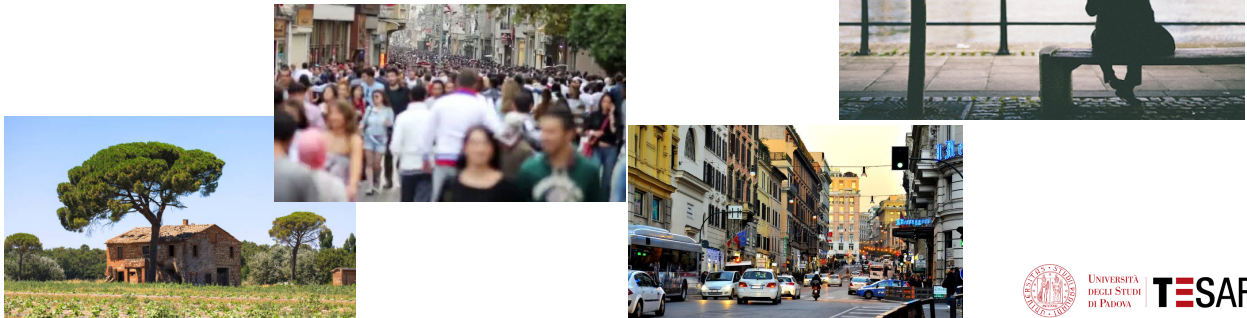
Source: Adapted from Chan et al., 2016

2

Disconnect from nature and societal challenges

- **Rural outmigration** (decrease in services and employment opportunities, loss of social ties, abandonment of landscapes)
- **Crowded urban areas** (lack of accommodation, noise and light pollution, low air quality, deteriorated social ties)
- **Unhealthy and sedentary lifestyles and higher use of technological devices**
- **Rise of non-communicable diseases (NCD)**, including depression and anxiety
- **High susceptibility to climate change impacts** (e.g. heat waves, floods, etc.)

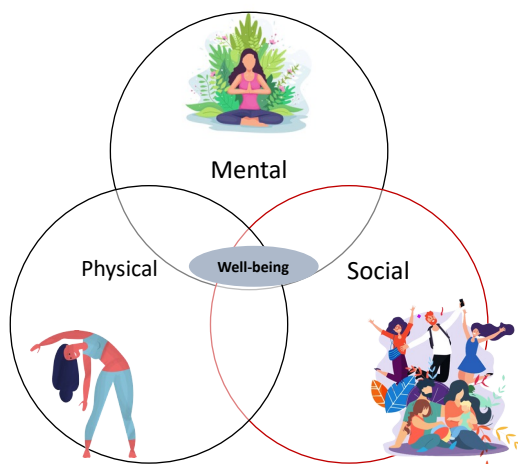


UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

3

The lessons of Covid-19. Recognizing connections and relationships



Source: WHO definition of the constituents of human well-being (left) and "One health" concept (right)



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

4

Going back to nature. Green Care



Biophilia Hypothesis
(Kahn, 1997)

Attention Restoration Theory
(Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989)

Stress Reduction Theory
(Ulrich *et al.*, 1991)

- Improve focus and ability to concentrate
- Have restorative and relaxation effects
- Help reduce negative thoughts and stress
- Improve self-awareness and reflection
- Facilitate healing and coping mechanisms for social pressure
- Stimulate cooperative behaviours and stronger social cohesion
- Bring pro-environment and pro-conservation behaviours

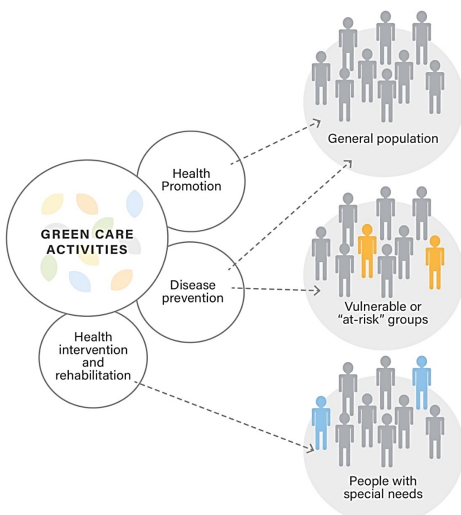


UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

5

Beyond health benefits. Moving from narrow to broad Green Care concept



Green Care

is an umbrella term for a range of activities that recognise the instinctive connection between nature and human well-being and use natural environments in a conscious, ethical and active way, to address different social needs, i.e. for health and wellbeing, social inclusion, education, and recreation.

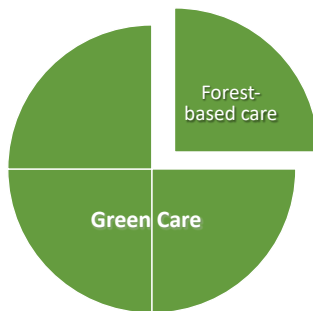


UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

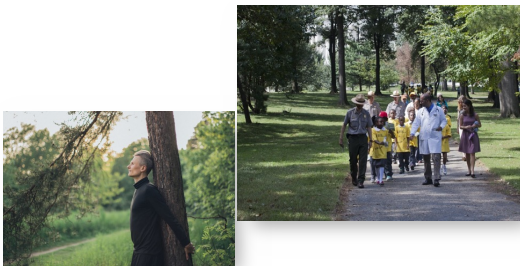
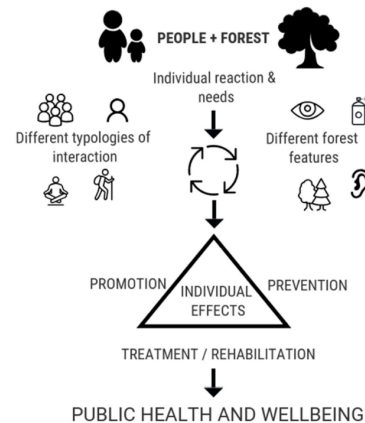
6

Forest-based care



Forest-based care refers to all organised interventions in **forest areas** that embed aspects of healthcare, rehabilitation, disease prevention, social inclusion, wellness and relaxation, education, spirit and inspiration, employment and livelihoods.

(Adapted from Doimo et al., 2020).



Source: Doimo et al., 2021



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

7

Diverse dimensions of activated empathy through Forest-based care and their benefits

Empathy towards yourself



"Nature does not judge"

Enhanced health and well-being
benefits of nature and forests,
better healing and coping with
pressure

Empathy towards others



*"We are all the same and yet
different"*

Improved social interactions and re-
creation of social bonds, sense of
community and belonging

Empathy towards non-human
beings, nature and the planet



"We all are connected"

Recognition of the rights of nature,
place-based identity, moving away
from extractive use of nature

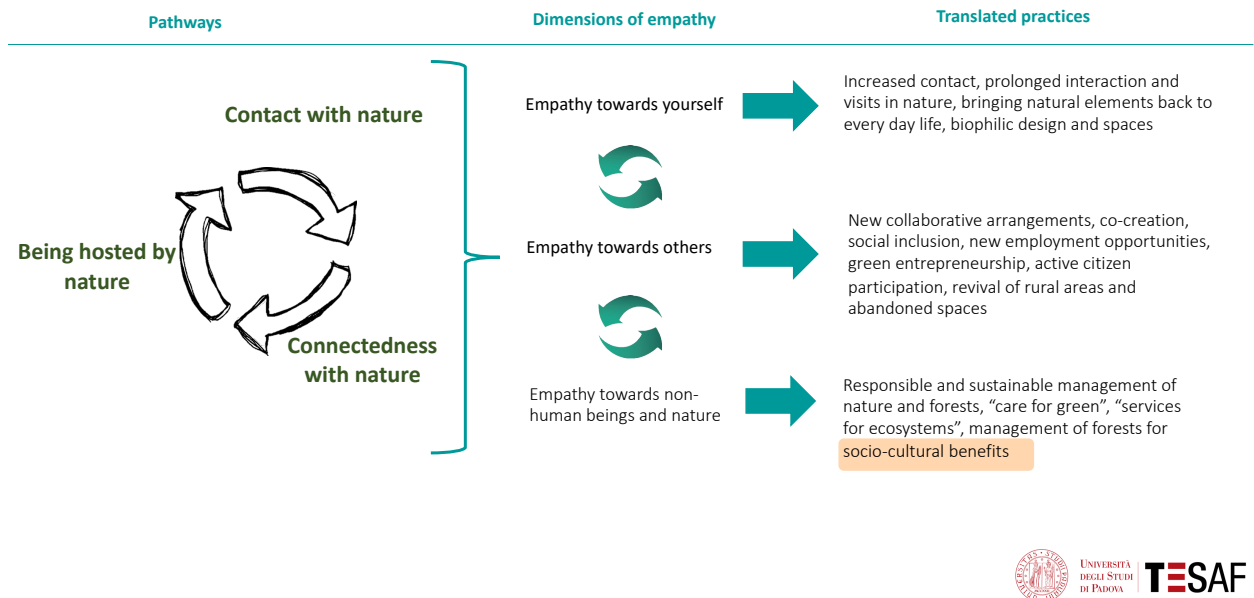


UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

8

Empathy translating into practice



9

Use of forests (nature) for Socio-cultural benefits

- **Cultural** services (art exhibitions, concerts in the forest, theatre performances ...)
- **Educational** and pedagogic services (kindergarten or outdoor nursery forest schools, nature trails, bird watching, training in the forest, ...)
- **Sport** services (hunting, hiking, Nordic walking, mountain biking, orienteering, airsoft, archery, use of adventure parks,...)
- **Spiritual** and religious services (places for meditation and worship, ecological burial, funeral forests)
- **Tourism and recreation** (walking, visits to special landscapes, sites and natural monuments, wild forest products picking, camping, use of tree hotels, ...)
- Services for **social inclusion** (activities for the elderly, those with disabilities, prisoners, refugees/displaced people, ...)
- Services for improving **wellness** and for **therapeutic treatments** (forest bathing-Shinrin-Yoku, forest therapy, pet therapy, ...)

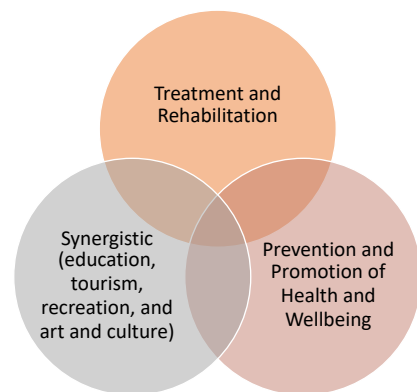


Figure 1. Typology of Forest-based care activities Source: Doimo et al., 2020

10

Forest-based care examples in Italy

232 Forest-based care initiatives across Italy in 2021 (Doimo et al., 2021)

TEFFIT A synergistic network between Forestry Doctors, Universities and Associations



**Associazione
Malin-Mill**
Turismo e Sviluppo nelle
Valli del Natissone e dintorni

Forest Therapy Station
in Valli del Natissone – Friuli
Venezia Giulia



Travel agency and tour
operator in Basilicata
Specialized in Forest therapy
and Forest-bathing



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

11

From practice to paradigm shift. Rethinking values of nature

Relational value

Derivative of relationships with and responsibilities towards nature

Individual

(identity, good life, stewardship)



Collective

(cultural identity, social
cohesion, social
responsibility, moral
responsibility towards non-
humans)

Source: Adapted from Chan et al., 2016



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

12

Transition to a different economic system ?

Ecosystem Services	Institutions, drivers	Prevailing instruments	Economic theory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provisioning Regulating Socio-Cultural benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market State Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prices under the free market economy compensations, incentives, (eco)taxes, ... technical assistance, people engagement, local authorities' animation, entrepreneurial support, ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> neoclassical economics environmental economics; neo-institutional economics social economics (socio-ecological economics)



Social economics is a branch of economics and a social science that focuses on the relationship between social behaviour and economics, covering such issues as social capital, gender, ethics, and philanthropic behaviour.



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

13

Reclaiming the role of women in forestry sector

Ecofeminism

Plundering of nature



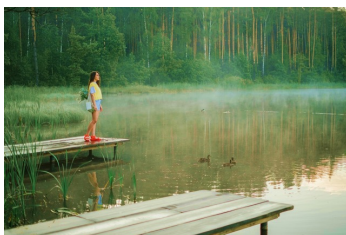
Oppression of women

Care ethics

"Feminine" emotions and feelings such as care, compassion, empathy are important part of morality, virtue and decision-making

A feminist approach to climate justice

Women are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts. They also have a critical role in combatting climate change. Women empowerment is important!



Forest-based care brings back feminist agency to the decision-making about and management of forests (nature), it empowers women through new and creative job opportunities and encourages the use of forests that is based on empathy, care and compassion.



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

14

Concluding thoughts

- We need nature for survival and for thriving as humanity, thus we need changes in value and use of nature.
- Green Care initiatives (incl. Forest-based care) represent a crucial foundation for a just and green transition in Europe
- They contribute to the responsible forest management, improve social capital and leads to local development
- Political and institutional support is needed for green care initiatives
- Education and awareness raising is needed for forest/land owners to be open for Forest-based care practices
- Collaboration with forestry and healthcare sector is necessary to fill the knowledge gaps
- Financial support and capacity building are needed for Green Care entrepreneurs



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

15

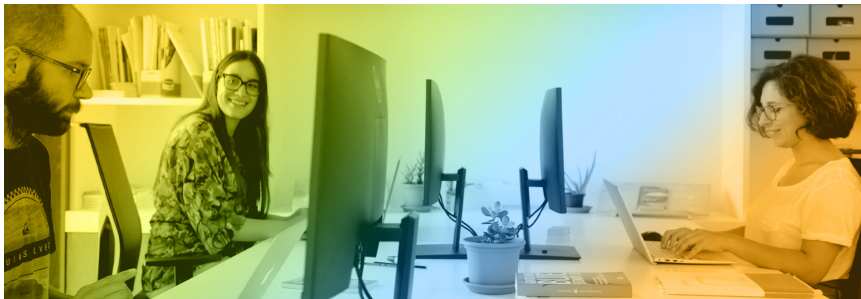
Green4C Summer School: specialization in Green Care entrepreneurship

Are you interested in [Green Care](#) and would like to start something of your own? Do you have a potential business or project idea that combines promoting health, well-being and nature, but are not sure how to develop it?
Here is your chance!

The **Green4C Summer School: specialization in Green Care entrepreneurship** is an exclusive and unique opportunity to gain knowledge and entrepreneurial skills in Green Care. Top European experts in Green Care will come together to build a high-quality school, share knowledge, and finally help students in the realisation of their business ideas.

20 June – 8 July 2022 in Padova, [Agripolis Campus](#) of the University of Padova.

Learn more on how to participate at the dedicated page <https://www.greenforcare.eu/summer-school/>



 green4c

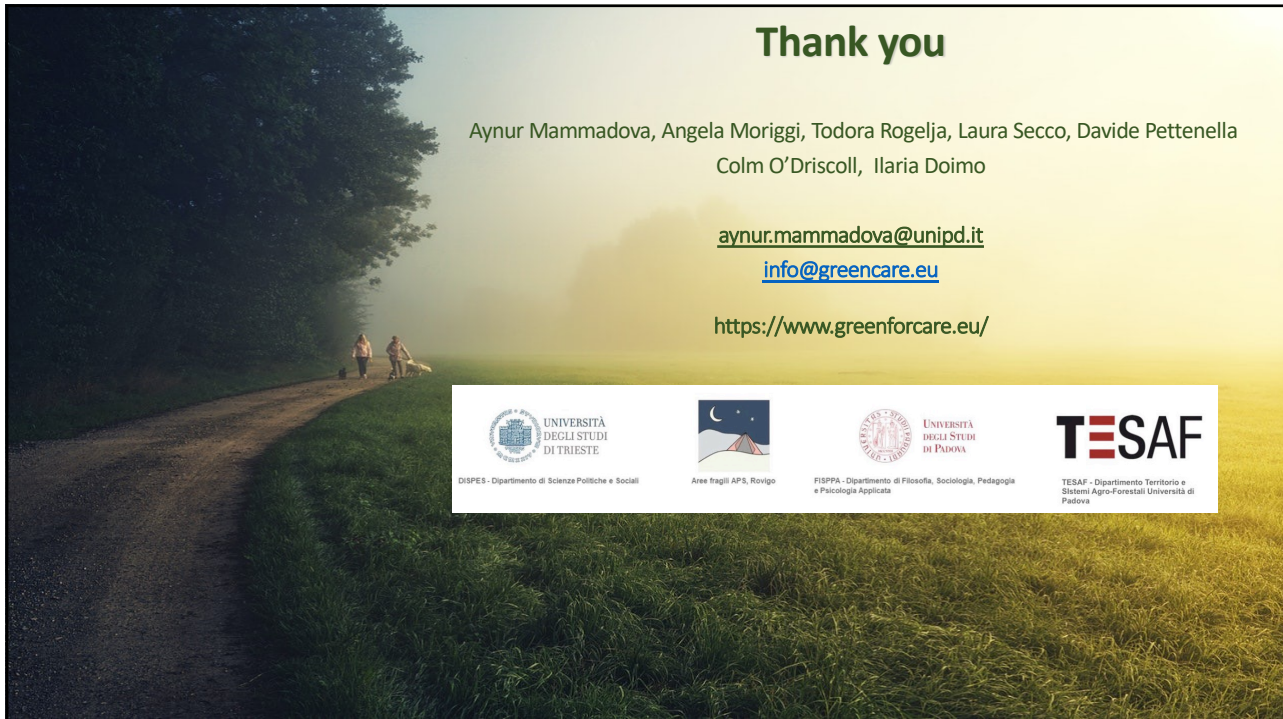
 ETIFOR
valuing nature



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

TESAF

16



17

Bibliography

Arias-Arévalo, P., Gómez-Baggethun, E., Martín-López, B., & Pérez-Rincón, M. (2018). Widening the evaluative space for ecosystem services: a taxonomy of plural values and valuation methods. *Environmental Values*, 27(1), 29-53.

Chan KM, Balvanera P, Benessaiah K, Chapman M, Díaz S, Gómez-Baggethun E, Gould R, Hannahs N, Jax K, Klain S, Luck GW. Opinion: Why protect nature? Rethinking values and the environment. *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences*. 2016 Feb 9;113(6):1462-5.

Combetti, C., Thornton, T. F., de Echeverria, V. W., & Patterson, T. (2015). Ecosystem services or services to ecosystems? Valuing cultivation and reciprocal relationships between humans and ecosystems. *Global Environmental Change*, 34, 247-262.

Doimo, I., Masiero, M. and Gatto, P. (2020). Forest and well-being: Bridging medical and forest research for effective forest-based initiatives. *Forests*, 11(8), 791. <https://doi.org/10.3390/f11080791>

Doimo, I., Masiero, M. and Gatto, P. (2021). Disentangling the Diversity of Forest Care Initiatives: A Novel Research Framework Applied to the Italian Context. *Sustainability*, 13, 492. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020492>

Kahn Jr, P. H. (1997). Developmental psychology and the biophilia hypothesis: Children's affiliation with nature. *Developmental review*, 17(1), 1-61.

Kaplan, R. and Kaplan, S. (1989). *The experience of nature: A psychological perspective*. Cambridge University Press.

Ulrich, R. S., Simons, R. F., Losito, B. D., Fiorito, E., Miles, M. A. and Zelson, M. (1991). Stress recovery during exposure to natural and urban environments. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 11(3), 20–230.

TEFFIT A synergistic network between Forestry Doctors, Universities and Associations <https://www.teffit.it/>

Forest Therapy Station in Valli del Natisone – Friuli Venezia Giulia <https://www.spiaggiadiffusa.it/stazione-di-terapia-forestale-valli-del-natisone/>

Ivy Tour Travel agency and tour operator in Basilicata Specialized in Forest therapy and Forest-bathing <https://www.ivytour.it/chi-siamo/>

18