

Building capacities for Green Care social innovators: accounts from action-research & training experiences

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«Agricoltura sociale e lavoro nelle aree rurali fragili»

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What is Green Care

Green Care: a definition

Green Care is an umbrella term describing a range of activities that address different social needs, using natural environments in a conscious and active way

(Moriggi et al 2023)

therapeutic
care
learning social horticulture
pedagogy nature animal
recreation farming assisted
therapy forest
wilderness



Main (scientific) lenses on Green Care

Green Care as a tool for:

Agricultural innovation
Income diversification &
multifunctionality of rural
areas/enterprises

Focus: farm sector, rural areas,
agricultural stakeholders

Sustainable forest management
and provision of ecosystem
services

Focus: forests, protected areas,
forest stakeholders



Green Care as a means to support:

Health & well-being
Social reintegration & inclusion

Focus: target groups
(mostly vulnerable people)

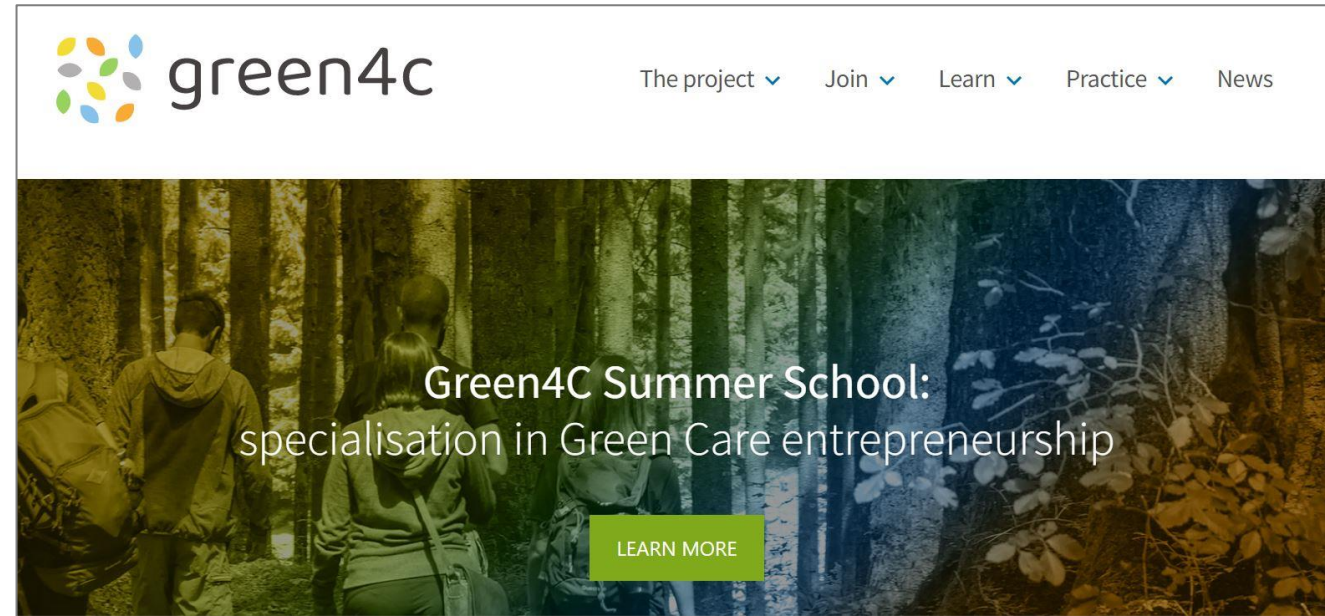
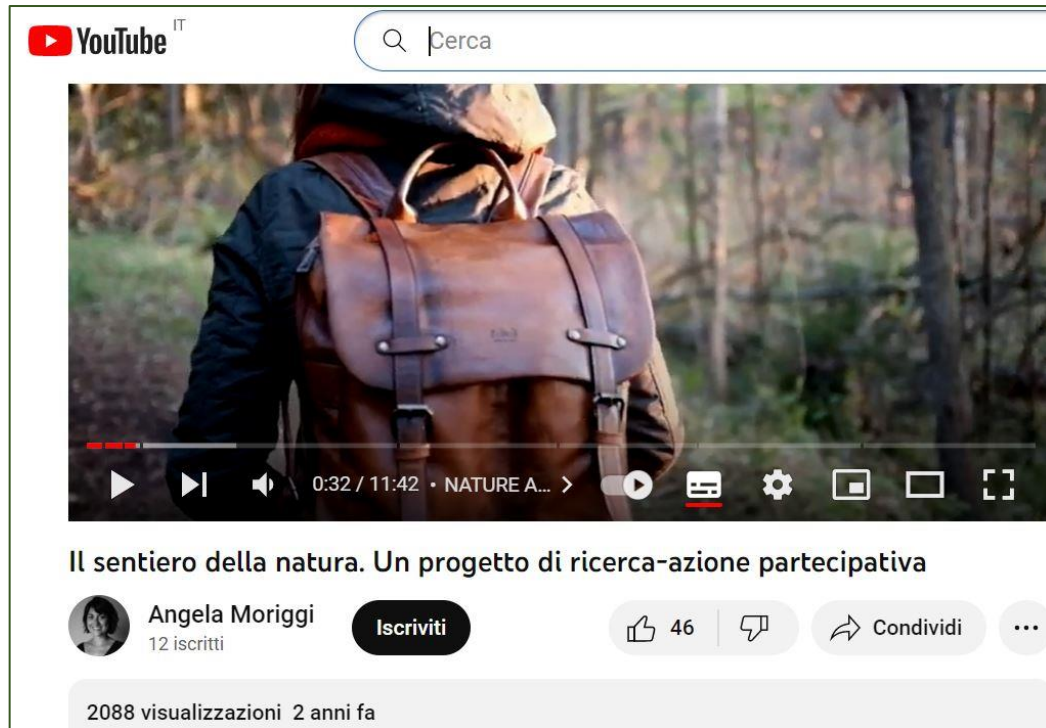


Green Care as a pathway for:

Change and innovation, of socio-
economic practices, and values, ways of
working, & beliefs.

Focus: entrepreneurs, social innovators

Need for ad-hoc trainings & research actions: two cases



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



The ingredients of the action-research project

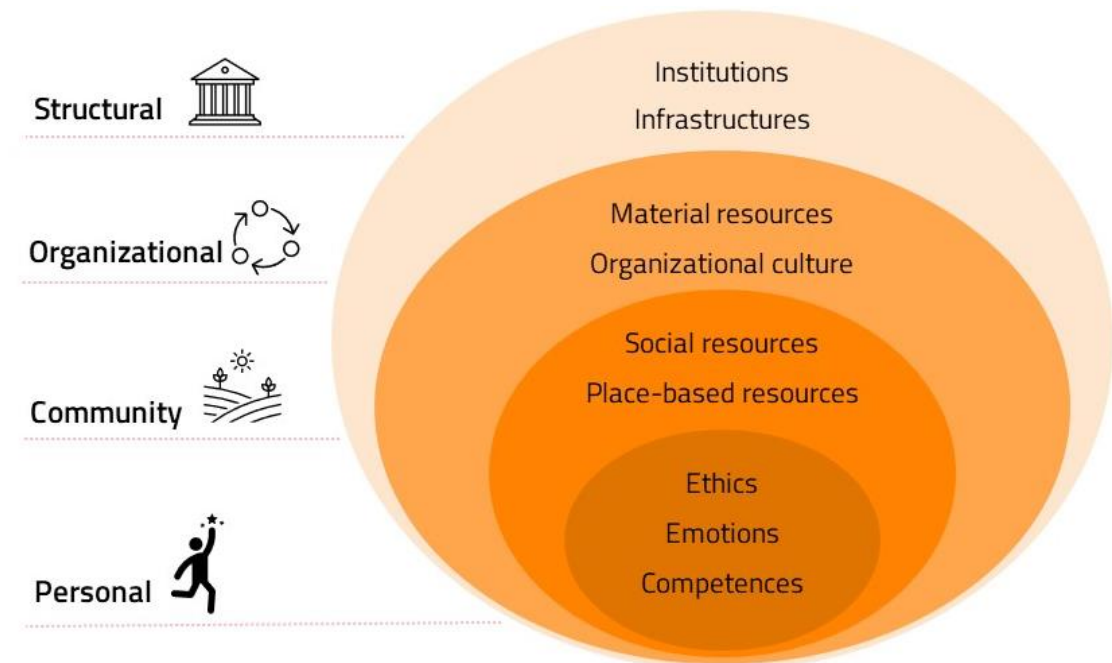
- **Focus:** “Green Care and place-based sustainability (transformations) in Finland”
- **When:** 2016 – 2019 (action-research); 2016 – 2021 (PhD), supervisor Dr. Katriina Soini
- **Who:** social innovators from a care farm, a social (biodynamic) farm, and a nature-tourism company
- **Aim:** guide entrepreneurs in a process of reflection and capacity-building, tapping into resourcefulness, values, and visioning
- **Approach:** qualitative, participatory, over 70 people involved (incl. external stakeholders)
- **Methods:** semi-structured interviews, visioning workshops, Photo-Voice with disabled people, video interviews, participant observation, (evaluation) surveys.



Findings & feedback from the action-research project (I)

- **Mismatch** in understanding and awareness between different **stakeholders** (e.g. entrepreneurs' intentions and practices VS their donors/buyers/external collaborators);
- Potential **benefits** for sustainable local (place-based) development on many levels (incl. community outreach and building, cultural re-appreciation, ecological conservation & regeneration etc.);
- Importance of **local (place-based) assets** and resources;
- **Ethics and emotions** as crucial drivers for GC entrepreneurship, yet seldom considered when analysing success factors or when designing coaching/training programs.

(Garcia Llorente et al 2016, Guirado et al 2017, Moriggi 2021, Di Iacovo et al 2016)



(Moriggi et al 2023)

© Moriggi et al 2023

Findings & feedback from the action-research project (II)

WHERE ACTION-RESEARCH CAN HELP

- Support & strengthen **communication, exchange, reflection** processes within the “enterprise”;
- Raise **awareness** & enhance **resourcefulness**;
- Identify and strengthen **values, visions**, strengths and weaknesses;
- Support **systemic thinking** & analysis;
- Provide useful information and **knowledge** (e.g. regarding external stakeholders’ views);
- Offer new **(ad-hoc) tools** and ways of working;
- Provide **visibility** and co-create communication outputs.

CHALLENGES FOR ACTION-RESEARCH

- Feeling of **powerlessness** in respect to issues like financial sustainability, etc.;
- Difficulty to act if no willingness for change due to **sensitive issues** (e.g. intra-generational struggles, power dynamics, etc.);
- Difficulty to reach the gap with **policy-makers** and other “leverage points”;
 - **Gap in time** between research and “real life” of entrepreneurs;
 - **Mismatch** between clarity of objectives VS emergent iterative process;
 - Array of **needed competences** not always “available”.

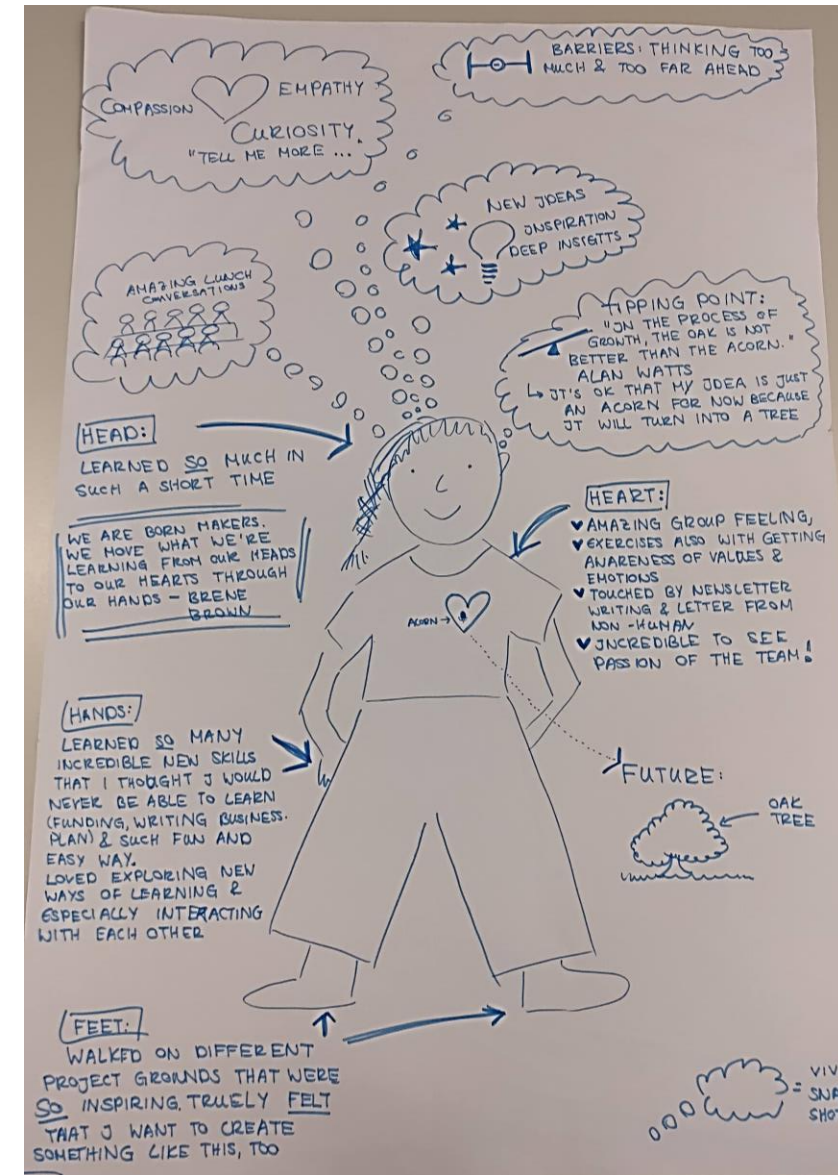
The ingredients of the green4c Summer School

- **Focus:** “Specialization in Green Care entrepreneurship”
- **When:** June-July 2022 (4 weeks, 1 online, 3 in Agripolis campus) (6 ECTS)
- **Who:** 20 (prospective) GC entrepreneurs from all over the world, working on any GC aspect
- **Aim:** provide theoretical and hands-on knowledge to move from a business idea to a concrete plan (incl. communication skills, business & financial plan development, etc.)
- **Approach:** transformative learning, structured facilitation.
- **Methods:** interactive seminars, coaching sessions, expert roundtables, on-field visits, storytelling, mentorship program, pitching exercises, somatic and creative techniques, etc.



Findings & feedback: most valued aspects

- High **quality content** and expertise
- **Field trips** (though timing constraints)
- **Competent facilitation**, tying content and process together & creating a dynamic program
- **Holistic (and transformative) learning** approach & skills development
- High quality **organization & logistics**, supportive & caring staff
- **Community feeling** with co-participants



Feedback & reflections: challenges



- **Mentors program** organization & matching
- **Experiential learning** vs in-class seminars
- Balance between **theory vs action**
- **Generalized vs specific** inputs
- Individual and **resting** time
- **Time** constraints
- From (foggy) idea is a long way to action

«Thank you for all the effort you have put into this extraordinary course! It was such an honour to be part of it. I feel like it made me grow in ways that I hadn't expected and like it planted a beautiful seed inside of me that I am very excited to see grow! Thanks a lot for this gift!»

Conclusions

To produce «actionable knowledge», useful for GC entrepreneurs....

RESEARCH NEEDS:

- vast array of **(trans-disciplinary) competences**, and time for **diverse outputs** (i.e. not just papers);
- **needs-driven research questions/objectives**, to enable relevant processes and produce useful tools and outputs;
- stronger **interaction with policy-makers**, regulators, and high-level decision-makers;
- long-term results but also **fast-track impacts** and outputs, with concrete implications.

TRAININGS NEED:

- **holistic approaches**, combining intellectual with emotional, hands-on, experiential knowledge;
- **needs-driven programs**, catering to diverse contextual, material, and institutional conditions;
 - stronger **interactions between programs**, to strengthen exchange & replication of good practices;
- **community- and network building**, for long-lasting learning & exchange.

To know more..



Natural resources and bioeconomy research series 102/2022

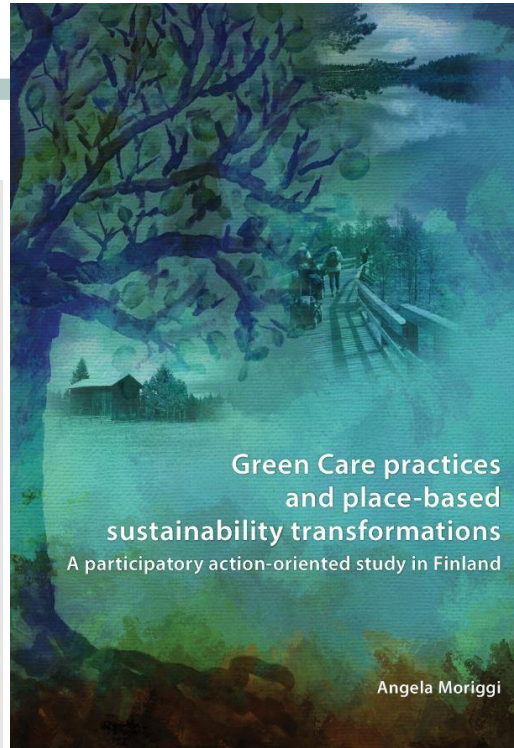
Caring for people and nature

A Summary Report on Green Care
and place-based sustainability in Finland

Angela Moriggi, Katriina Soini, Elina Vehmasto,
Dirk Roep, Laura Secco and Maria Uosukainen



<https://jukuri.luke.fi/handle/10024/553137>

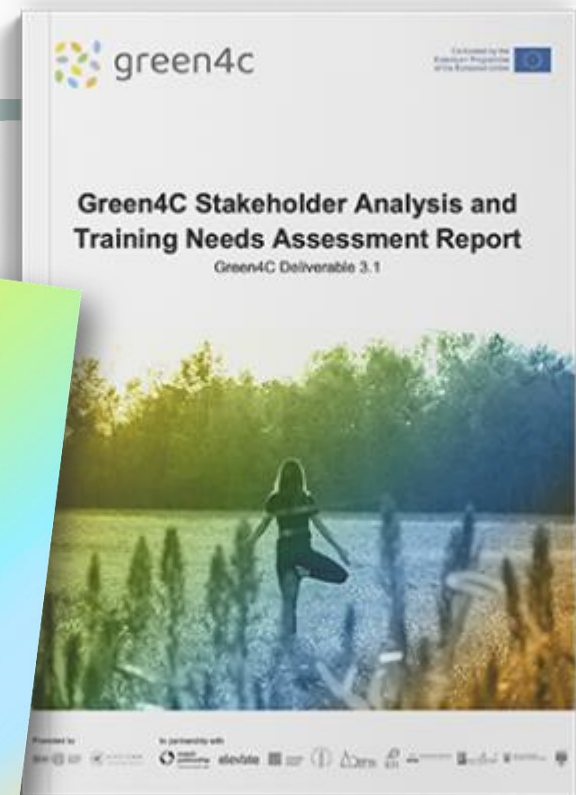


<https://edepot.wur.nl/544553>



<https://www.greenforcare.eu/reports/>

<https://www.greenforcare.eu/news/the-green-care-manifesto/>



Current & upcoming projects & events



Co-Creative Visioning Processes for Transformative Social Innovation in Rural Areas

Sept. 2022 – Sept. 2024

TESAF (UniPD) +

Fondazione Angelini Centro Studi sugli Montagna
GAL Prealpi Dolomiti
etc.

RESONATE

Building individual and community resilience through nature-based therapies

Horizon Europe – funded project (6.5 mil; 4 years)

University of Wien + TESAF (UniPD) + ETIFOR, & many
others

Festival “Cansiglio InVita”

Foreste e scienza, benessere, arte, cultura e spiritualità

15-18 Giugno 2023 (1° edition)

TESAF + DPG (UniPD) + Veneto Agricoltura, Società
Selvatica, & many others

Grazie per l'attenzione!

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