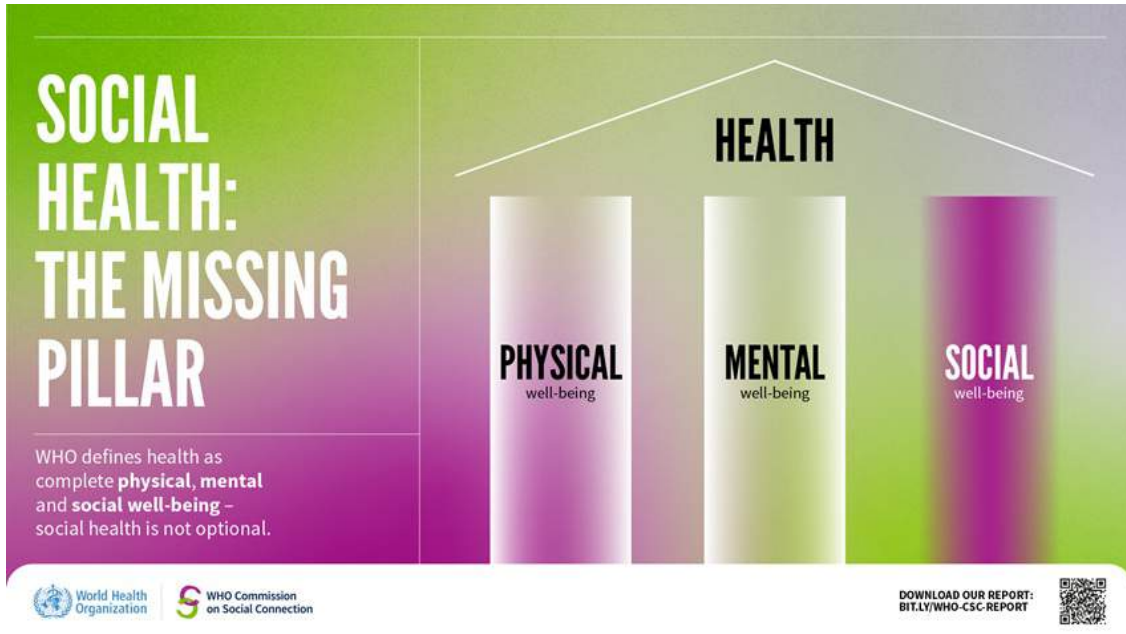


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RECETAS | Newsletter #6

JULY 2025



Loneliness Is a Global Health Issue

This week, we are pleased to release the latest edition of our RECETAS newsletter, just as the **World Health Organization (WHO)** Commission on Social Connection released its **groundbreaking global report: "From Loneliness to Social Connection"**. This report marks a critical milestone, officially recognizing social connection as a global public health priority—on par with physical activity, nutrition, and sleep.

The WHO's findings reveal that 1 in 6 people worldwide experience loneliness, with serious consequences for individual and community well-being. But the message is clear: this crisis is solvable. The report highlights a path forward, offering evidence-based, scalable **solutions that communities around the world can adopt**, from evidence to action.

At RECETAS, we are contributing to this global effort by developing and testing community-led, **nature-based social prescribing interventions**. Designed from the ground up, these group-based approaches aim to create consistent and meaningful social connections—especially for those experiencing loneliness—and integrate them into both healthcare and community settings.

Explore the full WHO report and the executive summary

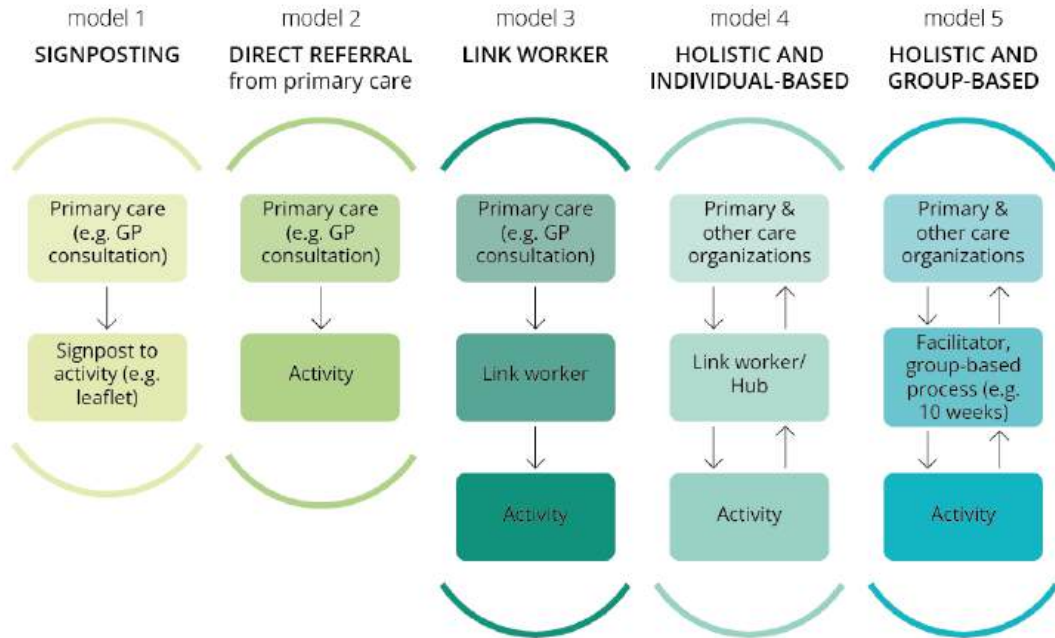
What is Nature-based Social Prescribing?

Social prescribing (SP) is a revolutionary approach that focuses on treating the whole person, not just their symptoms. Instead of relying solely on medical interventions, SP connects individuals with community-based services and activities—such as exercise programs, social groups, and creative or cultural activities—to enhance their health and well-being.

These activities address **the root causes of many health issues**, including social isolation, mental health challenges, and lifestyle-related conditions. At its core, social prescribing empowers individuals to take control of their health by connecting with their communities and the environment. [As author Julia Hotz mentions in MedPage Today](#), "*instead of focusing on 'what's the matter with you', social prescribing asks patients to consider 'what matters to you'*".

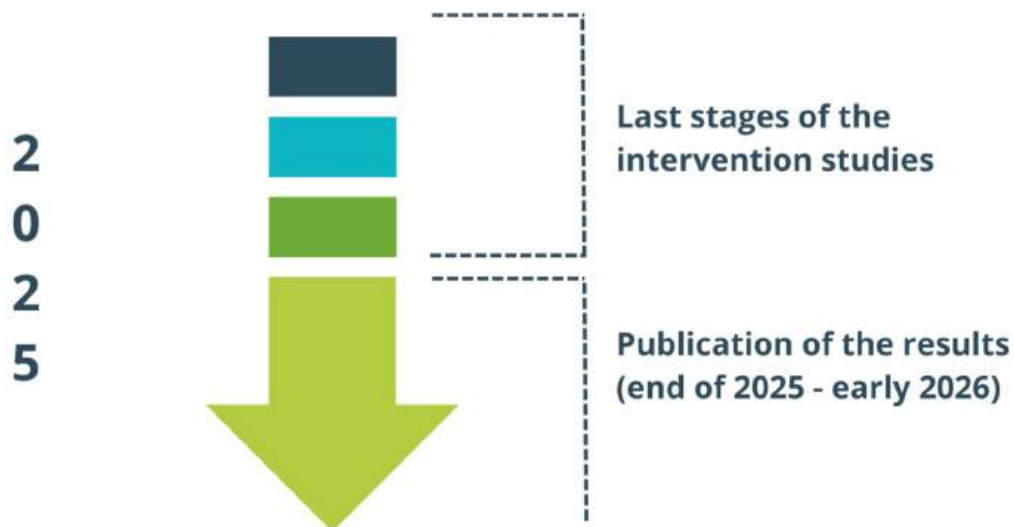
The **global social prescription movement** is gaining momentum, built on the belief that improving social and environmental circumstances plays a pivotal role in achieving lasting health improvements. Moreover, as the understanding of the connection between human health and the environment grows, nature has emerged as a powerful ally in social prescribing. Spending time in natural spaces—through activities like gardening, walking, coastal walks, or nature therapy—has been shown to reduce stress, improve mental health, alleviate loneliness, and boost well-being.

Social prescribing offers a **pathway to address a range of health issues** through different person-centred care models as illustrated in the figure below (Litt et al., 2023). In the RECETAS Project, we are testing a holistic and group-based model (e.g., Model 5), advancing nature-based social prescribing interventions that connect vulnerable and marginalized individuals to nature-based activities. We demonstrate how these group-based experiences can alleviate loneliness and enhance health-related quality of life, and has the potential to impact populations across the lifespan.



Source: Litt, J.S., Coll-Planas, L., Sachs, A., Masó Aguado, M., Howarth, M., (2023). Current Trends and Future Directions in Urban Social Prescribing, *Current Environmental Health Reports*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-023-00419-2>

Through our studies, RECETAS is exploring how nature-based activities can enrich the broader social prescription toolkit to fight loneliness, foster social connections, and promote healthier living. Our nature-driven interventions led with diverse populations, are helping to establish a pioneering model where nature plays a central role in social prescribing - contributing to a growing body of evidence that underscores nature’s vital role in improving health outcomes.



Progress update: final stage toward the RECETAS project outcomes
 Our pilot cities are currently carrying out the last stages of the intervention studies on the groups of participants. All trial sites are currently finishing

the 12 months follow-up phase, which should happen in October 2025!

In Barcelona, Prague, Helsinki, these studies take the form of three randomized controlled trials, focusing on diverse groups of adults from socio-economically deprived areas and older adults in assisted living facilities.

In Marseille, Melbourne, Cuenca, observational studies were carried out with older adults living in nursing facilities (Cuenca), refugees and asylum seekers from the LGBTQIA+ community (Melbourne), and adults from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas (Marseille).

The study participants are supported by facilitators trained in the "*Friends in Nature*" programme, modeled after the "*Circle of Friends*" approach, developed by the RECETAS Helsinki partners. The results of these trials are expected to be released in **2025** or **early 2026**, marking a major milestone for the RECETAS project.

News from the field: RECETAS teams

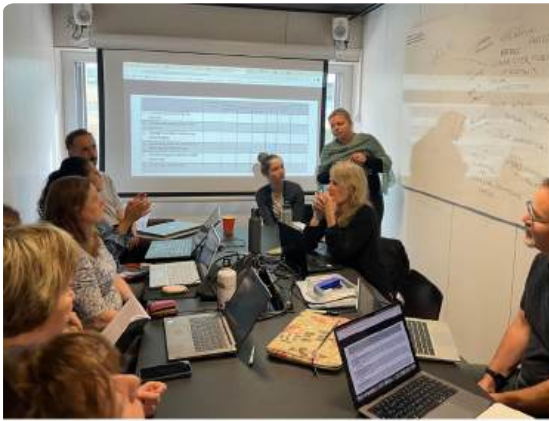


RECETAS Annual Meeting - Celebrating 4 years together!

From 5-6 June 2025, the RECETAS consortium gathered in Helsinki to mark four years of collaboration, research, and shared growth.

We kicked off with a "RECETAS Around the World" poster session, showcasing early findings from our six Friends in Nature studies: three randomized controlled trials and three pre-post studies, involving 1200 participants across diverse settings. Through plenary sessions and working groups, on topics like facilitator training experience, and giving voice to those experiencing loneliness, we examined qualitative and quantitative data, planned economic analyses, and focused on moving evidence into action. But this meeting was more than data, it was about connection. Inspiring conversations, time in nature, shared meals, left us reenergized, refocused and united for RECETAS's final year.

A heartfelt thank you to our Helsinki hosts for their hospitality. From walks in Finnish nature and singing with Finland's oldest choir at the Sibelius Monument, to peaceful moments in Saunasaari, and creative collaboration at Villa Aikala and Oodi Library, each day was memorable.



Joining University of Helsinki "Nature Pathways to Health and Social Connection"

Ahead of our annual meeting, we joined the inaugural "Nature Pathways to Health and Social Connection" event, hosted by the University of Helsinki. RECETAS partners presented on nature-based solutions approaches to tackling loneliness, including a spotlight on the Helsinki's RECETAS Friends in Nature (FiN) randomized controlled trial. The event was an important step in broadening the global conversation about nature and well-being.



News from the field: RECETAS teams



[Themed Week on Loneliness: Hannover, Germany](#)

July 2025

Dr. Laura Coll Planas, intervention WP leader of RECETAS, participated in the *"Tackling Loneliness among young people in Africa"* workshop. Dr. Coll-Planas gave a presentation entitled *"Is loneliness a public health or a social justice issue? The risks of medicalising loneliness."* She also participated in a panel discussion about the current status of interventions for addressing

loneliness and their applicability in Africa with Amani Masaule(BScN) and Jibril Abdulmalik, moderated by Maya Adam. #VolkswagenStiftung++

[BARCELONA - Global Summit of Science, Nature and Health - Diputació de Barcelona - Forest Therapy Hub](#)

April 2025

A free seminar open to all, co-organized by the [Diputació de Barcelona](#) and [Forest Therapy Hub](#), an international event featuring cutting-edge multidisciplinary research, practical expertise, and immersive nature-based practices with indoor and outdoor activities.

An inspiring opportunity to discover how the intersection of nature, science, and health can unite to foster a more connected, resilient, and healthier future.



[MELBOURNE - RECETAS at World Social Prescribing Day. 2025: Harnessing Nature for Well-Being](#)

March 2025

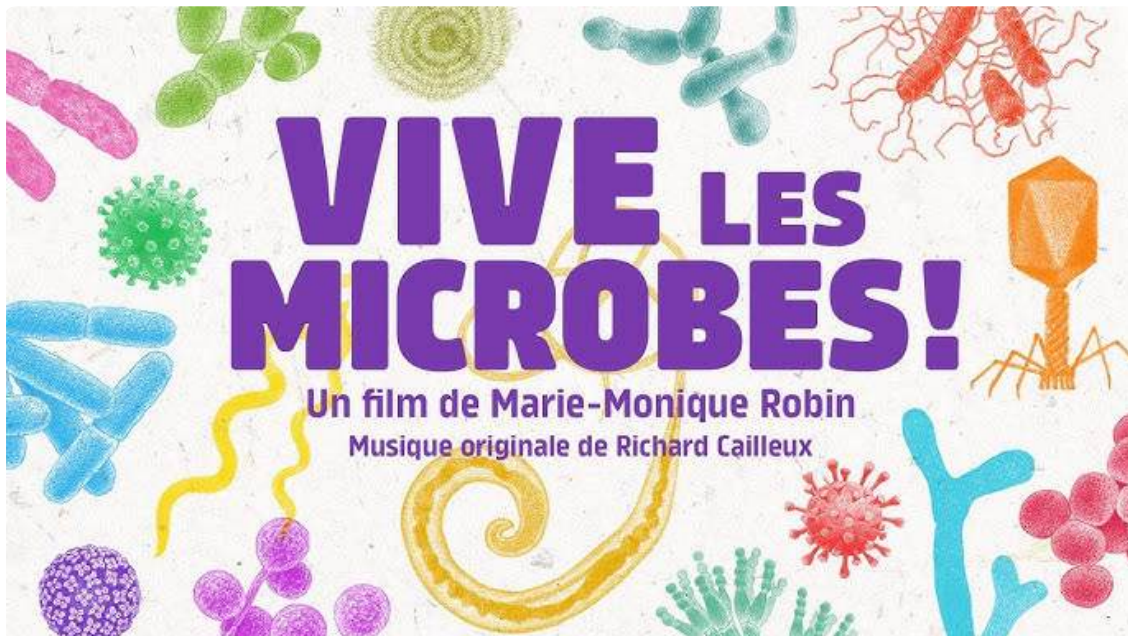
The World Social Prescribing Day 2025 Victorian Forum showcased RECETAS' work on nature-based social prescribing. Hosted by the [Victorian Department of Health](#) and ADM, in collaboration with the Victorian Social Prescribing Collaborative the event explored innovative ways to integrate social and community support into healthcare. RECETAS presented its model highlighting how nature-based interventions can boost mental health, strengthen social connections, and support vulnerable

communities, reflecting a broader shift toward holistic, preventative care.

[BARCELONA - Conscious Cities Design Festival "Spaces that Move \(Us\): Fostering Physical, Emotional, & Social Engagement in Public Spaces"](#)

March 2025

As part of the [Conscious Cities Design Festival](#), ISGlobal hosted a "Conscious Barcelona event" with six inspiring speakers discussing how urban spaces can enhance well-being, highlighting the role of green infrastructure and the growing impact of social prescribing in city planning. RECETAS Coordinator Prof. Jill Litt took the spotlight to introduce the Friends in Nature intervention model, showcasing how the project is helping reimagine health systems to align with community-led strategies—connecting citizens through nature to combat loneliness.



[MARSEILLE - Movie/Debate Night Around the Documentary "Long live germs" with Journalist Marie-Monique Robin](#)

February 2025

The partnership between RECETAS and the organisation [Biodiversanté](#)—which offers practical solutions for integrating biodiversity into the CSR strategies of healthcare institutions—provided the opportunity to host a special film and discussion evening. The event featured the documentary and [book "Vive les microbes!"](#) by investigative journalist Marie-Monique Robin, offering an exploration of the deep connections between biodiversity and human health.

Watch the [full documentary "Vive les microbes" on Arte.tv](#)

[BARCELONA - Presentations in Front of Health and Social Departments of Catalonia](#)

January 2025

RECETAS team in Barcelona presented the encouraging results of the [CRONISOL project](#), in front of key authorities from Catalonia's health and social departments.

Adapted from the Friends in nature intervention developed within the RECETAS project, CRONISOL was specifically piloted to reduce loneliness among individuals living with chronic pain and chronic mental disorders.



[Hippocrate's Gardens Trophies: Our Team in Marseille Wins a Regional Award!](#)

December 2024

The Marseille University Hospitals (AP-HM) team won the [Hippocrate's Gardens Trophy \(FR\)](#), South of France category, for their role in the RECETAS project, recognising their innovative use of nature-based social prescriptions to tackle loneliness and social isolation.

Organised by the [Biodiversanté](#) organisation, the Trophies celebrate care facilities improving patient well-being and biodiversity through nature-led initiatives. RECETAS stands out for evaluating the healing power of nature and fostering community well-being through urban green spaces.

Press and media

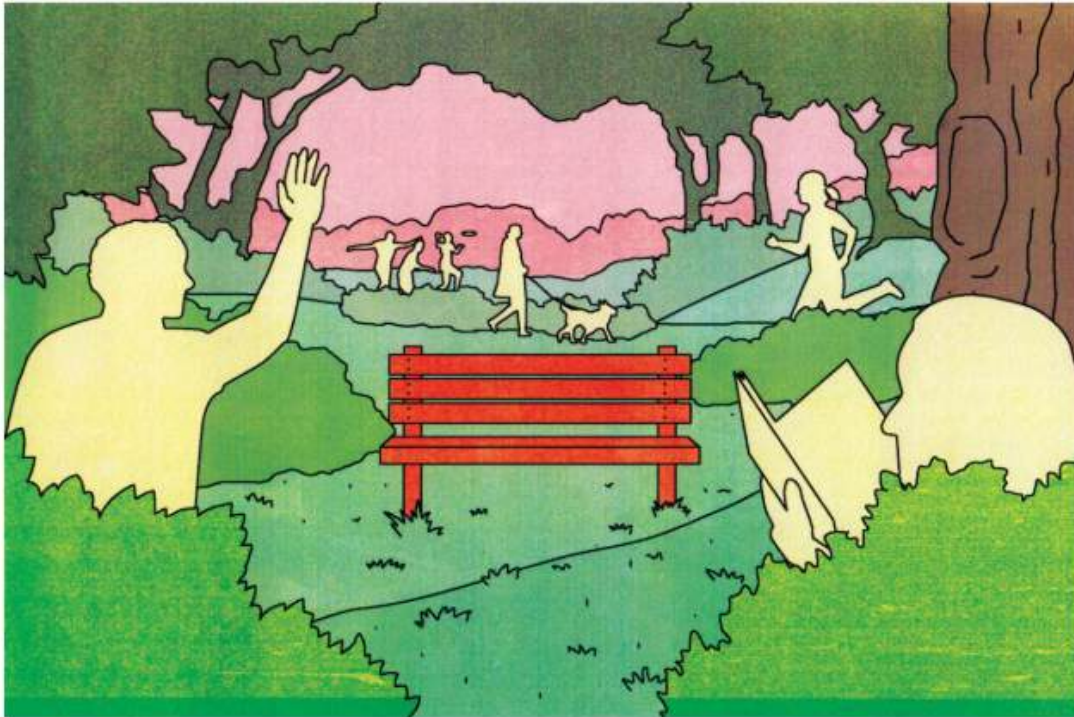
Well+Being Mind Food Fitness Body Life

Do you live in a ‘lonelygenic environment’? in nature may help.

Researchers say nature and green space can bring people together and reduce negative feelings about

June 17, 2025

🕒 7 min 📄 Summary 📌 📑 12



(George Wylesol for The Washington Post)



By [Meeri Kim](#)

Washington Post - [Do you Live in a Lonelygenic Environment? Being in Nature Might Help](#), by Meeri Kim, 17 June 2025

“Contact with nature creates a space for restoration, recovery, and connection,” Litt said. “It allows people to open up, feel a sense of connection with others, and experience the rhythms and cycles of life.”



Podcast episode - [Exploring Nature Therapy & Loneliness](#), The Humans Connecting channel

In this episode of Humans: Connecting, global loneliness expert Phil McAuliffe speaks with Dr. Nerkez Opacin from Melbourne's RECETAS project (RMIT University) about how nature-based interventions—like forest therapy—can help combat loneliness and build meaningful connections. They explore how time in nature supports emotional well-being, belonging, and healing, especially for marginalised communities. A thoughtful conversation on how even the simplest natural encounters can restore and reconnect us. [Visit the Humans: Connecting Channel.](#)

B B C



(credit: Getty images)

There is an ever-growing list of the benefits of natural prescriptions – now researchers say nature could offer a cure for loneliness too.

Kye Aziz didn't consider himself a big nature lover. As an asylum-seeker originally from Indonesia, now based in Melbourne, he'd spent stints of time in the outback and high country. But it wasn't until a socially-prescribed picnic and gardening excursion that he began to see nature in a new way.

"You feel like you're transported somewhere else," says Aziz. "Living in Australia and in Western culture can be very lonely and individualistic – but when we're sitting outside and having a laugh and feeling that togetherness, it just feels like home."

BBC Earth - [Bat-watching, beach explorations and "sniff" walks: How nature can provide a tonic for loneliness](#), by Julia Hotz, 27 December 2024.

"Nature can provide a profound sense of connection - not just to the natural world, but to ourselves and others."

Le Monde

SCIENCES - SANTÉ

La nature, ce poumon vert qui dope notre santé

Alors que plus de 55 % des humains vivent en ville, renouer les liens distendus avec la verdure est un puissant levier d'amélioration de notre santé : baisse de la mortalité, des marqueurs d'inflammation et de l'adiposité des enfants, vertus antistress... Tour d'horizon des études qui pourraient inspirer d'ambitieuses politiques de verdissement urbain.

Par Florence Rosier

Publié le 06 janvier 2025 à 18h02, modifié le 07 janvier 2025 à 12h41 · Lecture 11 min.



Célébration de la fête des cerisiers en fleurs (Hanami) au parc de Sceaux, en région parisienne, le 11 avril 2023. ERIC BRONCARD / HANS LUCAS

Au cœur de l'hiver, les espaces verts, spectres devenus gris, figurent un paradis perdu. Tout au long de l'année, en réalité, le manque de verdure affecte nombre de citoyens.

Le Monde - [La nature, ce poumon vert qui dope notre santé](#), by Florence Rosier, on January 6, 2025 - Nature, the green lung that boosts our health.

"With more than 55% of the world's population now living in cities, reconnecting with nature has become a powerful tool for improving our health - lowering mortality rates, reducing inflammation markers and childhood obesity, and offering strong anti-stress benefits."

**Salut mental**

Per què la natura funciona millor que qualsevol pastilla per millorar el benestar emocional

Als beneficis coneguts per a la salut dels espais verds a les ciutats, els científics hi afegeixen que ajuden a combatre la soledat

[Leer en castellano](#)[Read in English](#)

Projecte RECETAS. RECETAS PRG - CELLO FHS UK B NOVOTNA

Cristina Sáez 22/02/2025



Diari ARA - [Per què la natura funciona millor que qualsevol pastilla per millorar el benestar emocional](#), by Cristina Sáez on 22 February 2025.

Why nature works better than any pill to improve emotional well-being. In addition to the known health benefits of green spaces in cities, scientists add that they help combat loneliness.

Collaborations

[Critical Forest Studies Collaboratory Portfolio](#)

Melbourne-based RECETAS interventions are featured on The Critical Forest Studies Collaboratory – Digital Planting, showcasing how nature-based practices like forest therapy and community gardening nurture connection, resilience, and belonging among LGBTIQA+ asylum seekers and refugees. A digital platform to seed new connections across environmental humanities, education, and social science—bridging research and practice. [Browse the portfolio](#).

Podcast: Loneliness and Nature – In the Search of Loneliness

Launched on Social Prescribing Day, a rich conversation on how natural environments can foster connection, social health, and well-being—backed by interventions now being tested across Catalonia. Insights and experiences from the RECETAS Project and CRONISOL HiSS Hub d’Innovació Social i Sanitària. The episode brings together experts from the Fundació Diagrama, Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVic-UCC), and the m3o Research Group.

[Available on YouTube](#) (with automatic translation to all languages).

Focus on Global Engagement



[Meeting of the Urban Health Cluster](#)

May 2025

A collaborative initiative uniting six key projects - [Emotional Cities](#), [ENLIGHTENme](#), [HEART](#), [RECETAS](#), [URBANOME](#), and [WELLBASED](#) - to improve urban health. The UHC aims to align efforts and foster synergies

across these projects, addressing critical environmental, climate, and socio-economic determinants to create healthier, more equitable urban environments.



[WORLD CONFERENCE - On Forests and Parks for Public Health](#)

May 2025

Taking part in the 4th World Conference on forests, parks and public health organized in Luxembourg, RECETAS project coordinator Jill Litt spoke about how nature can heal, nourish, and connect. A global dialogue advancing the nature-health connection, and highlighting the importance of bridging the gap between evidence and action in both research and policy.



[EU Public Hearing on Loneliness - Brussels](#)

November 2025

"Policy interventions and good practices: What works to address loneliness?" At a European Parliament hearing on "Policy interventions and good practices" RECETAS Coordinator Jill Litt presented project insights, and highlighting the innovative Friends in Nature approach. The event followed the EMPL Committee's initiative on loneliness, including the first EU's large-scale survey of 26,000 people, revealing:

- over 50 million Europeans feel lonely
- 13% feel lonely most of the time
- over one-third experience loneliness occasionally
- young adults, people facing life disruptions (e.g., job loss), and people lacking close relationships are most at risk
- COVID-19 worsened loneliness, especially among younger generations

SAVE the DATE: World Mental Health Day Celebrations October 2025

Alleviating Loneliness and Promoting Wellbeing

Creating new ecosystems for nature and health systems connections

- **September 29-October 2, 2025: Cuenca, Ecuador**
- **October 7, 2025: Barcelona, Spain**
- **October 9: Marseille, France** (*provisional date*)
- **October 10, 2025: Bristol, England; Melbourne, Australia; Prague, CZ, and more**

Join us for a global series of events, as we explore together how nature can be part of the solution to loneliness and mental health challenges in our cities. Let's reimagine urban life—together. [Stay tuned for the full agenda and venue details!](#)

SAVE THE DATE

29.09-2.10.25: Cuenca
07.10.25: Barcelona
09.10.25: Marseille
10.10.25: Bristol, Melbourne, Prague

ALLEVIATING LONELINESS AND PROMOTING HEALTH
Creating new ecosystems for nature and health systems connections

In honour of **World Mental Health Day**, RECETAS cities across the globe are joining forces to explore how nature can be part of the solution alleviate loneliness and mental health challenges.


As part of this initiative, we invite you to an engaging event where we will have the chance to foster dialogues and reconnect with stakeholders working in the intersection of nature and health.

Together, we will reflect on how to turn research into real-world impact - through policy, practice, and local action.

Stay tuned - full agenda and venue details coming soon!

Sponsored by:





Scientific publications

2025

Kolster, A., Aalto, UL, Partonen, T, Kautiainen, H, Rautiainen, LJ, Jansson, AH, Litt, JS, Masó-Aguado, M, Pitkälä, KH. (2025) [Happy by nature: Nature connection as a source of psychological wellbeing in assisted living facilities](#). Journal of American Medical Directors Association (JAMDA) (In Press).

Puntscher, S, Stojkov, I, Arvandi, M, Kühne, F, Conrads-Frank, A, Papon, V, Schmid, D, Jahn, B, Suzumura, E, Kimberlee, R, Jones, M, Pitkälä, KH, Jansson, A, Litt, JS, Siebert, U, Rochau, U, (2025), Systematic Literature Review of Economic Studies on Nature-Based Social Prescribing for Health Improvement, BMC Primary Care (In Press).

Baum, F, Costongs, C, Godfrey, A, Ivankovic-Knezevic, K, Jourdan, D, Litt, JS (2025). [Tackling Health Inequalities in Times of Crisis](#), Journal of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies 30 (3), pp 23-27.

Rochau, U, Papon, V, Stojkov, I, Kühne, F, Arvandi, M, Conrads-Frank, A, Schmid, D, Jahn, B, Santamaria Navarro, J, Suzumura, E, Kimberlee, R, Pitkälä, KH, Coll-Planas, L, Litt, JS, Siebert, U, Puntscher, S (2025), [Systematic Literature Review of Decision-Analytic Modeling Studies on Nature-Based Social Prescribing and Loneliness, Health & Social Care in the Community](#), 6115206, pp 1-13.

Kolster, A., Rautiainen, L. J., Aalto, U. L., Jansson, A., Partonen, T., Sachs, A. L., Litt, J. S., Masó-Aguado, M., & Pitkälä, K. H. (2025). [The importance of nature and wishes for nature-based experiences among older adults in assisted living facilities](#). Geriatric Nursing, 63, 300–306.



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