

**Forestry and Health: Forestami Academy,**  
**an initiative created by Forestami in partnership with the Prada Group**  
**to explore the relationship between nature and physical and mental health with international experts**

***The first meeting focused on "Well-being in our cities" with Matilda van den Bosch (Institute for Global Health in Barcelona) and Ilaria Doimo (ETIFOR)***

**Milan, 10 May 2024** – The first meeting of the second training year of the **Forestami Academy**, the initiative created by Forestami **in partnership with the Prada Group** to promote and disseminate the scientific bases, principles and values of urban forestry, took place this morning at the Salone D'Onore of the Milan Triennale.

The second edition – entitled "**Urban forestry: well-being and health**" – is structured in three sessions coordinated by **Maria Chiara Pastore**, lecturer at the **Politecnico of Milan** and **scientific director of Forestami**, and sees the participation of some of the most important national and international experts in the field of green spaces and forestry, to focus on the **correlation between nature and physical and mental health**.

Around **100 citizens** of different ages and backgrounds took part in the training day entitled "Well-being in our cities".

The speakers were **Matilda van den Bosch**, senior researcher at the Biocities Facility of the European Forest Institute and scientist at the Institute for Global Health in Barcelona (Spain), a pioneer in the field of nature and public health research and a leader in the field of interactions between urban green spaces and people; and **Ilaria Doimo**, researcher at ETIFOR, a spin-off of the University of Padua, which provides consultancy services to public and private organisations to help them improve the services and products of nature.

Matilda van den Bosch's presentation highlighted the **strong link between urban nature and healthy living in cities**, which are often dominated by deteriorating natural environments and violent manifestations of climate change. **Several studies show how urban natural spaces contribute to a better, healthier and longer quality of life and reduce the incidence of chronic diseases**. It is therefore important to identify and implement synergies between environmental and human health objectives.

*"The main risks to health and wellbeing today are related to the environment and the way we live and behave. That is why providing urban natural spaces that promote healthy behaviours is much more powerful than any medicine or hospital intervention on a larger population health level. We know that hundreds of thousands of lives could be saved each year if cities lived up to the WHO recommendations of access to urban green space"* said researcher and scientist **Matilda van den Bosch**.

Ilaria Doimo went on to discuss the characteristics of urban forests that can promote well-being and the **"principles of equity" that must underpin the relationship between the presence of green spaces and urban forests and improving the health of cities and their inhabitants**. How can green spaces promote community well-being? How can green spaces be used to improve the health of all? The working groups attempted to provide an initial response to these questions, with a focus on **green care interventions**, i.e. initiatives that involve different categories of people, from the most vulnerable communities to the general population, highlighting both the physical and psychological benefits that can result.

*"I believe there is now no doubt that green spaces in cities can promote our health and improve our quality of life, so the question is: how do we put this into practice? We need to increase multidisciplinary research and collaboration to better create and use green spaces that promote health. And we need to do this by involving all relevant communities to ensure that everyone can enjoy green and healthy cities"* says **Ilaria Doimo**, researcher at ETIFOR.

The two experts agree on the importance of knowing and studying the possibilities and scales of intervention to lay the foundations for the **cities of the future, which must be greener and healthier for everyone.**

The second meeting of the 2024 training course will take place on 21 June at the Triennale Milano, while the third meeting will be an outdoor lesson on "Forest Bathing" in October.

### **Prada Group**

Prada Group is socially engaged to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities and stimulate the cultural debate in all its forms of expression. The Group partners with recognized players and international entities to develop educational and training programs, value talent, support scientific research, foster women's empowerment, and promote local culture and artistic heritage. Prada Group operates in the luxury sector through the Prada, Miu Miu, Church's, Car Shoe, Marchesi 1824 and Luna Rossa brands.

### **Forestami**

Forestami is a project based on a research by Politecnico di Milano and promoted by the Metropolitan City of Milan, the Municipality of Milan, the Regional Council of Lombardy, Parco Nord Milano, Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, ERSAF (Regional Agency for Agricultural and Forestry), Fondazione di Comunità Milano Città, Sud Ovest, Sud Est e Adda Martesana Onlus, Fondazione Comunitaria Nord Milano, Fondazione Comunitaria del Ticino Olona, Università degli Studi di Milano and Università degli Studi Milano Bicocca. Forestami aims to improve the quality of life, clean the air and combat the effects of climate change. The collaboration of all the promoting entities has made it possible to create a strategic vision of the role of nature in the Milan metropolitan area and to initiate a process of counting, valorising and increasing all the green, permeable and wooded systems in order to promote urban reforestation policies and projects. Forestami counts all the trees planted in the Milan metropolitan area, even those that it does not plant itself, but that are planted by municipalities, ERSAF or others. Forestami guarantees 5 years of maintenance for the projects it carries out directly, while the maintenance of other plantations is the responsibility of those who have carried them out.

### **For more information, please contact:**

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## Speaker biographies

**Matilda van den Bosch** is a senior researcher at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (Spain) and at the European Forest Institute Biocities Facility in Rome (Italy). She is also an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Her goal is to contribute to evidence-based policies that recognise and support the interdependence of healthy ecosystems and healthy people in cities and beyond. She is also a doctor and a pioneer in research on the beneficial effects of nature on health and is the lead editor of the first textbook on the subject, published by Oxford University Press. Matilda van den Bosch has led numerous international research projects on nature-based solutions and the health impacts of urban forests and has been an advisor to several international organisations, including the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme.

**Ilaria Doimo** graduated with a Master's degree in Natural Resources Economics from the University of Roma Tre with a thesis conducted in Brazil (Pará and Amazonas). During her PhD at the TESAF Department of the University of Padua, she investigated the innovative topic of nature-based therapies and specifically the use of forests for human wellbeing and health. During her studies, she focused on social agriculture and urban regeneration through community agriculture projects, therapeutic horticulture and environmental education, collaborating with national associations. She worked as a researcher in the field of agroforestry policies for climate change at FAO and ICRAF Philippines. In ETIFOR, she deals with both research and practice of innovative methods to enhance the cultural ecosystem services of natural areas, focusing in particular on educational values, social cohesion, inclusiveness, health and well-being. She works mainly in the research and coordination part of European projects (Erasmus+, Horizon2020) on these issues, and in the facilitation of co-design of services and green areas with public and private actors. In recent years she has been author and co-author of scientific articles, technical reports for several European projects and national initiatives (RAFIItalia 2020, RAFVeneto2021) and books (Forest Therapy Vol.2). For 3 years he has been running a workshop at the Department of Cognitive Psychology of the University of Padua on Natural Environment and Psychological Wellbeing with Professor Pazzaglia. Since 2022 she is a member of the Expert Working Group on Green Forest Jobs of Forest Europe.