



## FOREST-BASED CARE

### case study

# NATUREMINDED

Founded in 2016 (Merelbeke, Belgium), NatureMinded is a research and consultancy cooperation that aims to make persons and companies mindful about nature's positive effects on health and psychology – at home, in public space, and at work. We provide applied research and training on nature's beneficial effects, tailored to specific situations and needs.

*"In the field of forest-based care, I am part of the community of guides with whom we share knowhow and create a pool of resources. We pool these resources together to benefit us all. I share my knowhow with early-stage forest bathing guides, to support their starting off. I don't charge for this because it benefits the field. There is a lot of information out there, it is just a matter of knowing where to look."*

*Katriina Kilpi*

## MODEL IN A NUTSHELL

- **Website**  
[natureminded.be](http://natureminded.be)
- **Social channels**  
[facebook.com/naturemindedbelgium](https://facebook.com/naturemindedbelgium)  
[instagram.com/forestmindedkatriina](https://instagram.com/forestmindedkatriina)
- **Country**  
Belgium
- **Contact us through Alliance**  
[www.greenforcare.eu/joining4c/natureminded](http://www.greenforcare.eu/joining4c/natureminded)
- **Main sector**  
Private
- **Specific sector**  
Third sector (NGO),  
Academic,  
Health Insurance
- **Stage of development**  
Prototype
- **Our work in SDGs**



## FROM FEW TO MANY

With a background in environmental and social sciences, I, Katriina, was interested in behavioural change to promote pro-environmental behaviour. I got to know environmental psychologist Dr Yannick Joye, and together we decided to do practice-oriented research. Although, the topic was already well-known in Scandinavian countries, the UK and the Netherlands, the field was wide open in Belgium when we started. At the same time, I was trained in Finland as a **Forest Mind guide** and in a module on Children's Nature education called **Skogsmulle**. Through another organization, **BOS+** we both got involved in the 30-30 campaign – an impact study on the positive impacts of being in nature on a daily basis for 30 min a day over 30 days. And from activities to projects and back, I grew into NatureMinded's networks and organization. The organization is really just me, **Katriina**, an entrepreneur that brings in other people for other skill sets, **Yannik** is more of an advisor now. **NatureMinded** is my freelancer name, with which I work together with other entrepreneurs (<https://natureminded.be/likeminded-2/>) based on their skill sets, under the joint project name of NatureMinded.

NatureMinded's networks and partners are connected to its markets and come from the connections I've made through events, projects and other activities. They would mainly include health insurance, general public from the province of Flanders, various academic partners, some governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector or individuals through partnerships on certain projects. As mentioned, one NGO, BOS+, has been particularly more impactful and supportive throughout NatureMinded's development to the point where I also sub-contract to some of their other staff, and work for them also. Another important network that has had an impact on development of NatureMinded's network and partnership development is **Forest Therapy Days** (<https://www.foresttherapydays.com/>). Forest Therapy Days is a network that brings together international forest therapy practitioners, scientists and anyone who wishes to apply the healing effects of nature in their work, to share knowledge, learn from each other and experience different forest therapy practices. Together with my Finnish colleague Heidi Korhonen, we organise the International Forest Therapy Days (IFTDays) on annual basis. Currently, I am also working closely with Henrik Jönsson, a mathematician and a fellow student at SLU. That said, overall, I don't really strategize in connecting the sectors, we are more or less open to what comes.

Although I don't limit NatureMinded to any specific group of clients and beneficiaries of our activities, I try to find clients and partners who I can work with if there is a demand for certain work. Beneficiaries of NatureMinded's services include the **general public, immigrants**, one example of a project happens to be in the Institute of Mental Disorders, not for patients but for **medical staff**. It is also open to public.

## FROM IDEA TO ACTION

The idea grew out of a combination of my own background and a more general growing interest in the world of **wandelcoaching** (nature-based coaching). I was invited to work together with Hilde Backus (NL) and started giving environmental psychology seminars under the name NatureMinded, supported by Yannick Joye and my studies at Swedish University of Agriculture (SLU) where I had started studying in a program titled "**Outdoor environments for health and wellbeing**". Later on I followed more specific trainings for start-ups. In 2016 the website was launched and the organization and networks evolved and grew.

Main activities of my initiative include **practice-oriented research, consultancy, training and realization of nature-based interventions** in the field of Nature based care, with a special focus on forests.

The business model is based on clients ranging from individuals, to governmental and non-governmental organizations, private businesses that pay for consultancy services and advice on the forest-health nexus. Some of the services, knowledge exchange and mentoring are also offered for free. Proportionately, the income generation from these different activities of business and clients are; **research 30%** (private), **training 30%** (private), **production of service 10%** (public), **event organization 20%** and **guiding 10%**.

As the initiative is new there is very limited quantifiable impact now. NatureMinded received an award from the local green party in Merelbeke town for the work we have been doing to make a green impact. 2019-2020 brought much bigger projects and the situation with global pandemic is creating more demand for my work.

## FROM OLD TO NEW

NatureMinded lays the ground for other similar initiatives to emerge in Belgium, by already creating space and need and also raising awareness about those practices. It is **socially innovative**, because it also gives a chance for other interested entrepreneurs to try out branching their fields by collaborating in NatureMinded, without taking the risk of moving entirely into this relatively new field. It is also innovative because I am able to function like a business – versatile knowhow – and still **keep the business small and flexible**.

NatureMinded's connection on Green Care comes from the focuses on the topics of need for near-by-nature and accessible nature; nature connectedness, mental health (prevention); finding meaning in life; quality of life. It also addresses the needs for more evidence in nature's health benefits through research and lectures.

And also the activities are usually organized in public lands/forests. Activities often involve getting off the usual path into the forest, which is why there is a need to choose the forests carefully and consult the forest managers.

## FROM NOW TO THEN

The next steps could be summarised as aiming to keep the continuity going with a few regular programs to produce a **continuous revenue stream**. This would allow involving at least one person to work for NatureMinded full time, with me working half time. So, there is a need for enthusiastic people willing to work with me, who are also good at strategizing. Branching out to new areas with existing activities and coming up with new ideas to innovate with are also important conditions for implementation of my future vision.

The main costs involve payment for subcontracting activities with the network and social security costs of being an entrepreneur in Belgium. Key resources involve social capital and strong network, human capital and natural capital.

