

Open session proposal:

“Nature based integration”

Immigration and the successful integration of migrants into the European societies have become hot topics due to, not the least, the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees to Europe. The number of asylum seekers to EU member states increased significantly. These developments have promoted revisiting and developing approaches for the successful integration of migrants all over Europe (European Commission 2016). The integration policy priorities in EU countries have largely emphasized education, employment and health. “Nature-based solutions” are a relatively new approach to address simultaneously environmental, economic and social problems across Europe (European Commission 2015). In the Nordic Countries NGO’s and third sector’ actors have used nature and outdoor recreation as a point of departure for integrating new citizens and the experiences and lessons learnt from these cases are promising (Pitkänen et al., 2017). The experiences gathered remain however, fragmented and the potential of nature-based solutions has not until now been capitalized at the public sector policies and immigration work.

In this session, we invite researchers and practitioners to discuss the role of nature to the refugees and immigrants e.g. from the perspective of recreational use and perception of nature, and place attachment. The main purpose of this session is to discuss and identify how and to which extent nature can play a role for successful integration.

Session organizers:

ORIGIN work group

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- Kati Pitkänen, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute
- Anna Maria Palsdottir, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp
- Ann Dolling, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Alnarp

At the session we would like to present our review article on nature based integration along with evaluation of the Nordic examples. Further, we have 4-5 researchers and practitioners in mind who could contribute to this session.