

A group of people is seen from behind, walking through a forest. They are wearing various raincoats and hoods, suggesting a rainy or overcast day. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees. The ground is covered in moss and low-lying vegetation. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

The Green Bridges Project  
**FOREST YOGA &  
FORESTMIND PRACTICES**

12th September 2020

Sastamalan Opisto - Sastamala Community College - Finland

# Course description

## Location:

Pirunvuori ("Devil's Hill")  
in Ellivuori, Sastamala,  
Finland

## Description about the environment:

Pine tree forest with many rocks. Up on the hill less trees and a beautiful lake view to the Rautavesi lake.

## Instructors:

Outi Kautonen  
Anni Rainio

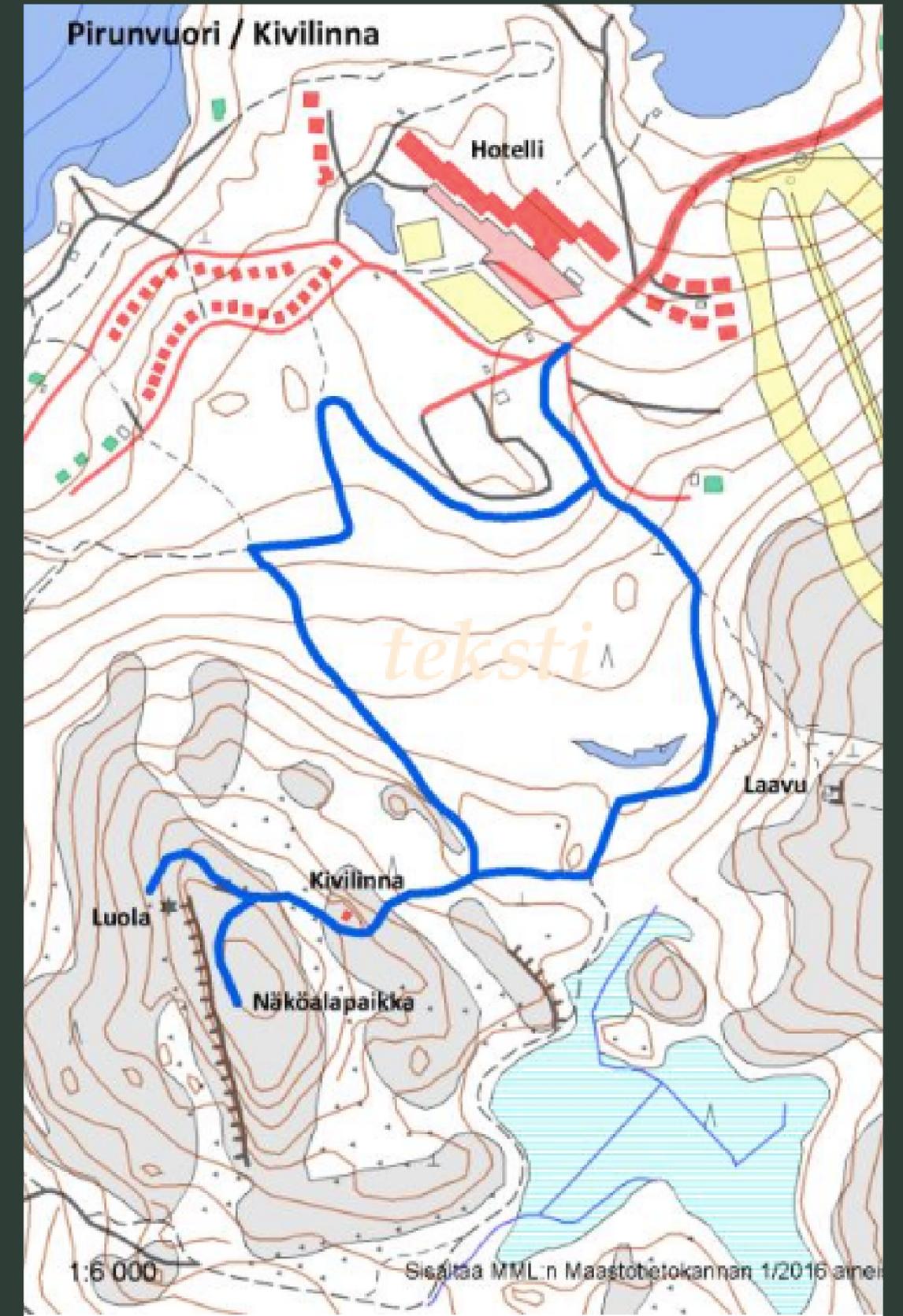
*"Calming forest, balancing yoga and the Forestmind practices are combined in one day trip in Ellivuori."*

*According to different researches even short time spent in the nature decreases the production of stress hormones, drops down the heart rate and the respiratory rate, being also beneficial for the blood pressure.*

*During this course we will find grounding from the earth and open all our senses to feel, see, taste and hear the nature through different practices that are helping us to connect with our mind and body."*



# Sastamala, Ellivuori, Finland





# Task for the day: Breathing in the nature

The course included six Forestmind -practices (<http://metsamieli.fi/Forestmind-fi/>), a yoga practice and a tea ceremony enjoyed together.

Instructors **Outi Kautonen** (drama instructor, Forestmind instructor) and **Anni Rainio** (drama instructor, yoga teacher) led the workshop together. Participants were eight women, between 25-65 years.

The course aimed to help the participants to deepen their relation to the surrounding nature and to find relaxation and peace from the forest. The route was chosen to go through the pine tree forest up to the hill of Pirunvuori. Ground cover was partly rocky and challenging. On the way we had few breaks to explore the Forestmind.

# Outi Kautonen was instructing the *Forestmind* practices:

- Observe one detail in the nature very closely. Smell, touch, see and also taste if safe and possible.
- Standing meditation to relax the body and mind.
- Observe everything around you through “binoculars” made of your hands and put them around your eyes.
- Merging into the landscape: visualize yourself as part of the landscape in front of you. Turn your viewpoint away from you as you were seeing yourself from outside, being one piece in the landscape around you. Not separate but including.
- The Tree of Gratitude. Choose a tree, and start decorating it's branches from down to up with all the experiences from today. Feel gratitude for things you got, learned, made you feel good and relaxed, any moments that you shared with the others.



# Exploring the Forestmind...



... through all senses.

# Anni Rainio instructed the forest yoga class.

- Find balance from a tree. Use the tree as support for your pose.
- Lean your back against the tree. Feel the wind as it moves the tree. Merge into the tree as you were one entity.
- Standing asanas (poses) to find connection to the earth. To connect to your inner warrior.
- Feel gratitude towards yourself.
- Shift your awareness to your heart and imagine a light shining from your heart.



**Finding support  
from a tree...**



**... And your inner Forest Warrior.**



# There is no such thing as bad weather

The weather was challenging, as it was a rainy and windy day. Nevertheless all participants were active, well prepared and didn't complain about the weather. After the yoga class we had a break with a tea ceremony with Darjeeling tea, and each one had brought their own snacks with them. Instructors were prepared with a first aid kit, few blankets and extra jacket for rain and cold, and extra thermos bottles of warm water.

# Tea ceremony and snacks





# Expectations before and feedback after

*"I hope to find my breath"*

*"I hope to get relaxed"*

*"I want to feel the forest"*

*"I want to have a break"*

*"I need my own time"*

**In total the course succeeded as expected, based on the feedback from the participants.**

*"I would attend again"*

*"More courses like this"*

*"I feel calmer and I can breathe better"*

*"I know I will sleep well today"*

*"Weather is only a mindset -we can get used to anything"*

*"I am not used to showing emotions or talking about them but today something touched me. Thank you".*

*"I should smell things in nature more often"*

*"Could this be done in the wintertime?"*

**We can all find gratitude inside of us.  
Value small things that make you  
happy, every day.**



# This course was part of the *Green Bridges* Project funded by the *Erasmus+ Programme* of the *European Union*

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE, FINLAND

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