

Friends in Nature (FiN)

A flexible method designed to alleviate loneliness. FiN is adaptable to diverse communities, environments, and contexts. It fosters connection, empowerment, and well-being through nature- and group-based approaches.

FiN is rooted in **Nature-Based Social Prescribing (NBSP)**, a non-medical, community-driven approach that connects individuals to nature-based experiences to enhance mental, physical, and social well-being.

The FiN approach combines:

Social prescribing

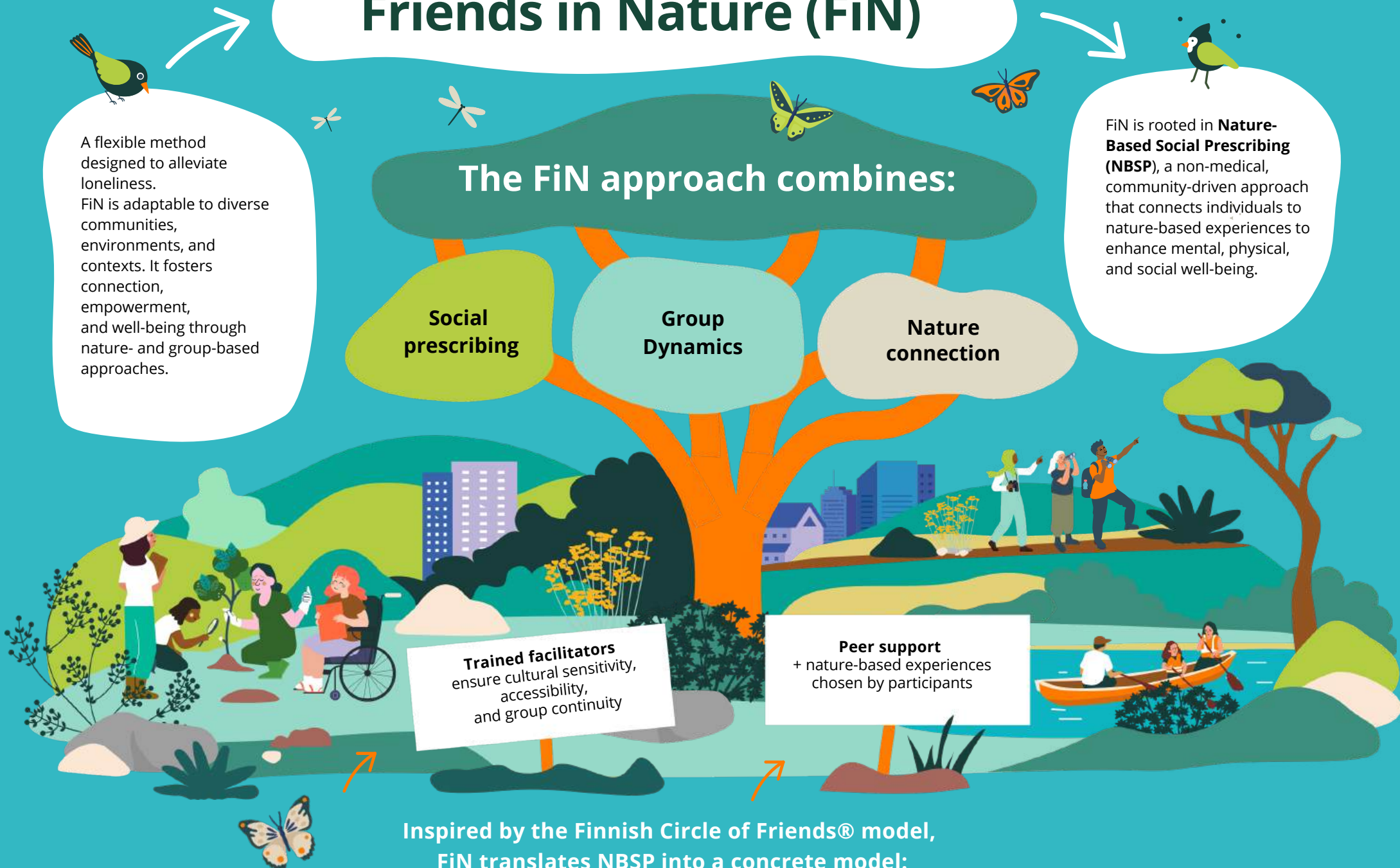
Group Dynamics

Nature connection

Trained facilitators
ensure cultural sensitivity,
accessibility,
and group continuity

Peer support
+ nature-based experiences
chosen by participants

Inspired by the Finnish Circle of Friends® model,
FiN translates NBSP into a concrete model:



GROUP PROCESSES
Empowering participants and fostering meaningful connections.

- Agreeing on activities together
- Establishing secure and open group dialogue
- Creating opportunities for connections and social interactions.
- Motivational interviewing and empowerment letters
- Dedicating time to celebrate together

NATURE BASED EXPERIENCES
Nature as the roots to build connections

- Shared experiences
- Sensory connections to the environment (taste, smell, sight, touch and sound)
- Creative activities
- Creating new memories and reconnecting with cherished moments from the past

The FiN Recipe:
a synergy of ingredients for change

SKILLED FACILITATION
Trained facilitators support the group process, emphasizing individual and collective strengths.

- Partnering with primary care and community organizations.
- Facilitating a balanced and inclusive group environment.
- Encouraging independence of the group beyond the intervention.



Directions



Mix the ingredients to create synergy (group processes, skilled facilitation, and nature-based activities).



Simmer for 10 weeks, with 2-hour meetings per week.



Servings of empowerment, connection, and transformation.

The Nature dose formula

Experiences in natural settings where sensory connections awaken a sense of belonging and provide meaningful and shared experiences. Nature becomes a "third facilitator".



Changing lives: what we learned

FiN fosters meaningful connections to nature, others, and oneself.
It is adaptable to diverse contexts and for populations with different needs.

Intrapersonal benefits

Greater empowerment, self-efficacy, confidence, enjoyment of daily life, and alleviation of loneliness.

Interpersonal benefits

Strengthened peer support, deeper relatedness, stronger social ties, and confidence building.

Mental well-being

Reduced loneliness, anxiety, and pain; improved sleep, mood, cognition, and subjective well-being.

Long term health and quality of life benefits

Sustained improvements in mental, physical, and social well-being.

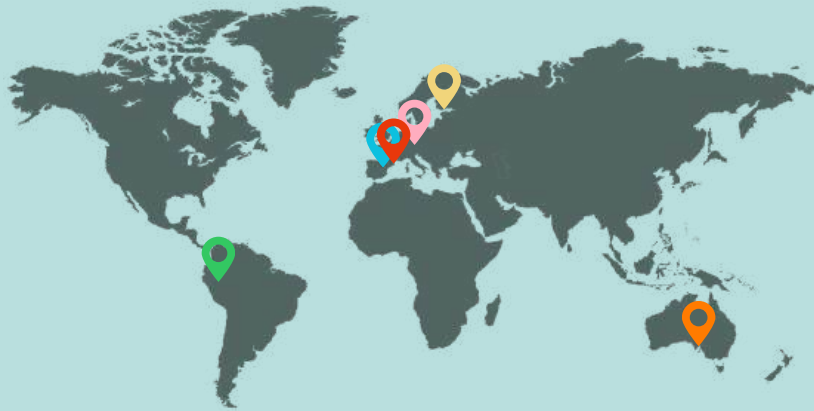
Nature contact and pro-environmental health behaviors

Increased time in nature, physical activity, awareness and value of nearby natural settings.



6 Pilot Cities, measuring change

Research studies testing and evaluating the FiN approach across Europe, Latin America and Australia.



 Cuenca

 Helsinki

 Barcelona

 Melbourne

 Marseille

 Prague

**1200 participants
worldwide**

REDUCTION IN LONELINESS

FiN reduced loneliness at 3 months, with sustained or improved results at 6–12 months, while boosting emotional wellbeing and nature connectedness.

- Cuenca**
- Reduced loneliness
 - Effectiveness in both community and institutional settings

- Barcelona**
- Loneliness alleviated at 10 weeks
 - Continued improvements at 6 and 12 months
 - Economic effectiveness and social return on investment

- Marseille**
- 25% reduction in loneliness
 - 11% improvement in mental wellbeing

- Helsinki**
- Loneliness shifted from severe to moderate
 - Increased belonging and confidence

- Melbourne**
- Loneliness shifted from severe to moderate
 - Increased belonging and confidence

- Prague**
- Reduced loneliness among older adults
 - Reduced depression at 6 and 12 months, improved perceived social support, and quality of life
 - Economic effectiveness demonstrated

Cost-Effectiveness for the Healthcare System

The FiN intervention is cost-effective.

Over the 1-year trial period, it generates social value, and suggests potential for good long-term value for money.

