



## ECOCARE Wrap-Up and UN Ocean Decade Blue Catalyst (bLYSSs) Kick-Off

International Conference and Workshop: September 24-25, 2025

Main Location: ÁRDNA - Samisk Kulturhus, Tromsø Campus  
and Teams link (25.9)

A Collaborative Project between Norway and Brazil (HKDIR UTF-2020/10084), Canada (UArctic 580512128), Thalassophile Project, The Asfour Initiative and Erasmus+ (Italy and Norway)

A deliverable of the UN Ocean Decade Commitment: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/ocean-all-reimagining-justice-love-and-law#deliverables>

### Authors

Rada Pandeva, University of Exeter, Thalassophile Project, BLYSS Team Member  
Margherita Paola Poto, Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, ECO\_CARE, OIN and BLYSS P.I.

Giulia Parola, UFAM, Manaus and ECOCARE Project coordinator from Brazil

Emily Murray, School of Law, University College Cork, Ireland. ECOCARE Team Member

Youna McGowan, McMaster, Ontario, Canada and ECO\_CARE practicum student

Annamaria Bonomo, Università degli Studi di Bari, Erasmus+ Visiting Professor

Claudia D'Andrea, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, BLYSS Team Member

**Pictures:** Charlotte Sofie Buksrud, Emily Murray, Rada Pandeva, Tainá De Andrade Santos, Larissa Gabrieli Dos Santos Munhoz.

**Illustrations:** Valentina Russo (Mucho Amor), Claudia D'Andrea

Septentrio Reports 2, 2025

DOI <https://doi.org/10.7557/7.8366>



## **Summary**

This report documents the International Workshop on Empathy, Compassion and Care, organised to celebrate the completion of ECO CARE (HKDIR UTF-2020/10084) and to reflect on the many connections established over the past five years of the project, between Norway, Brazil, and beyond, through research and education on water rights and governance. The event took place on 24–25 September 2025 at Árdna, the Sámi cultural building of UiT The Arctic University of Norway. The workshop was led by Margherita Paola Poto, Giulia Parola, Emily Murray, Youna McGowan, and Annamaria Bonomo, and was attended by over twenty participants. Structured over two days, the programme followed the three pillars of ECO CARE, *Empathy*, *Compassion*, and *Care*, as the keys to re-read participatory rights (access to information, participation, access to justice). The two-day programme consisted of three interactive one-hour sessions exploring the interactions between emotions, law and water and the implications of applying empathy, compassion and care as a legal methodology. These sessions provided opportunities for participants to connect through positionality exercises, co-creation, food and storytelling. Throughout the workshop, team members collaborated in groups to co-create activities, fostering creativity and exchange. The event concluded with the launch of the newest UArctic Project, the Ocean Decade Blue Catalyst (bLYSs) (580512127). The second day was dedicated to some concluding remarks and ways forward on care, followed by a series of presentations by Brazilian researchers and students. The outcomes of the workshop are expected to extend beyond the event itself, with a scientific publication planned for 2026,

fostering international partnerships and inspiring the continuation of the impactful work initiated by ECO\_CARE.



Figure 1 The original ECO\_CARE banner. Credit: Emily Murray



Figure 2 The flyer and cover of the booklet for the Workshop on Empathy, Compassion, and Care. Design: Youna McGowan; Booklet co-creation: Emily Murray, Youna McGowan; Editing: Rada Pandeva.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank: The Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HKDIR), the Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, UArctic, and the other co-funders (Erasmus+), as the students, researchers and teachers who have supported the project over the past five years. Thank you to Magne Frostad, Endalew E. Enyew and Hildegunn Bruland for opening the two days with their welcoming greetings and insights. This final conference of wrapping up ECO CARE and kicking off The Ocean Decade Blue Catalyst (BLYSS) would not have been possible without all of you. We extend this gratitude to the leaders of our Host and Partner Institutions, the funding institutions and donors and 30+ satellite projects that were born out of ECO CARE. Last but not least, we thank all the Indigenous communities who collaborated with us, to the illustrators, communication experts, students, children, elders, early career and senior researchers and educators.

## Background

Brief information about ECO CARE and its achievements shown in Figure 3.

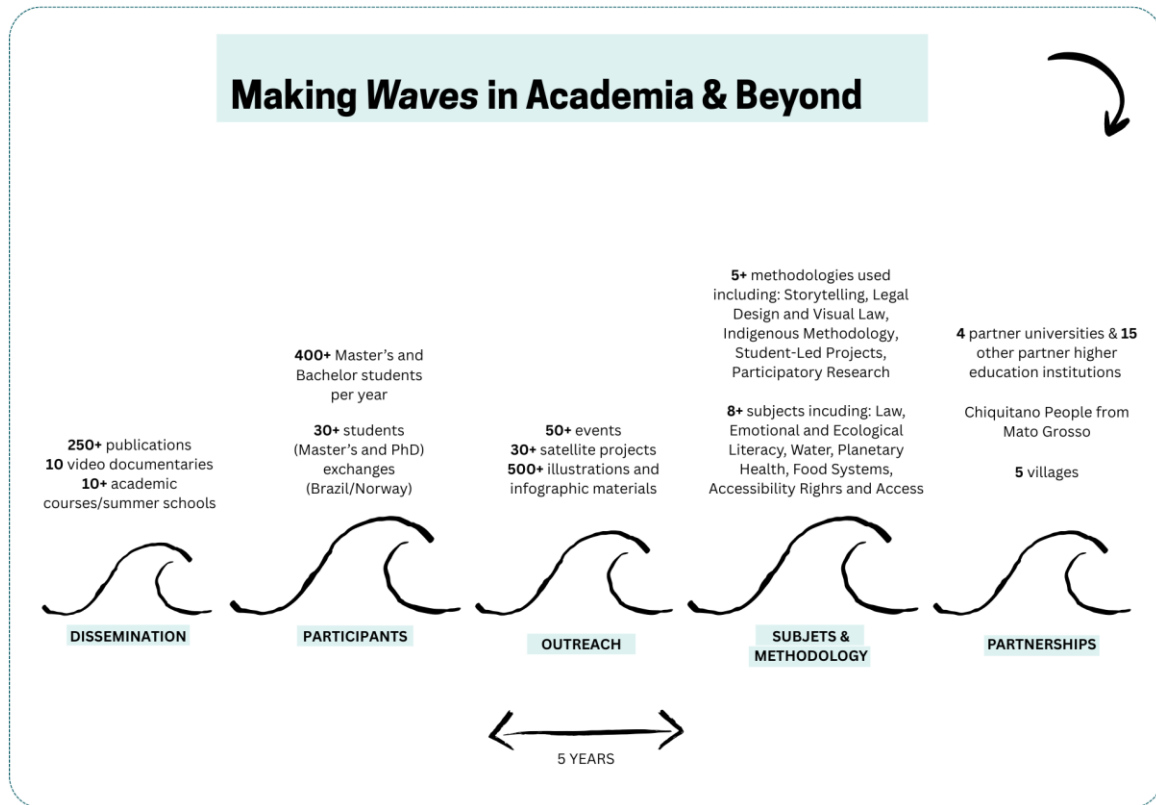


Figure 3 A wave-series depicting the project's achievements. Image: Emily Murray

## The Workshop: Empathy, Compassion, Care & Co-creation

The aim of the workshop was to celebrate the many partnerships fostered over the course of ECO CARE and the advancement of research and education on water rights and governance, while reflecting on the achievements along the way and connecting with each other. The workshop was split into three parts, each corresponding to the main pillars of ECO CARE — **Empathy, Compassion, Care & Co-creation**.

### Empathy

(n.) *The ability to understand the feelings of others.*

The first session was dedicated to **Empathy** and was chaired by Youna McGowan and Emily Murray. With the aim of building relationality, the activity consisted of an Empathy Game during which each participant received a card with a connecting keyword (e.g., an emotion, a natural element, or an environmental participatory right). Their task was to find other participants who share the same keyword and get to know each other. Once the groups were formed, participants would discuss how they both relate to the card they share. Afterwards, their task was to collaborate to create a visual representation of their connection. Prompts such as dolls crocheted by Dana Ahmed, books co-created by the



ECO CARE team, stickers and various other artefacts co-created with our partners in Brazil, were provided to inspire creativity (Fig. 8).

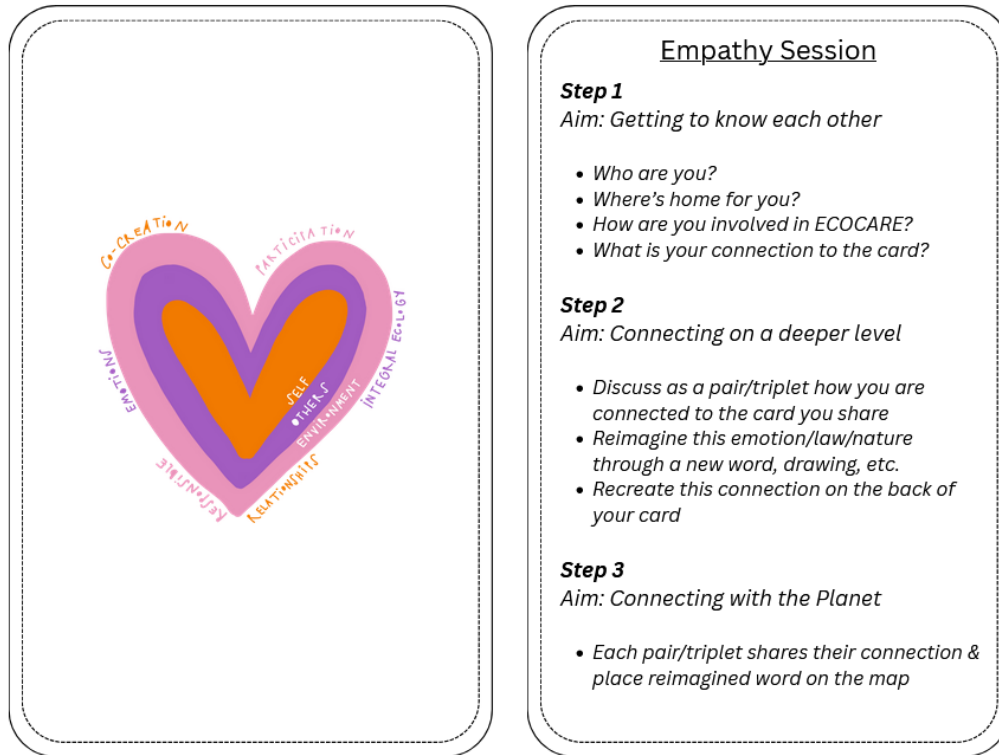


Figure 4 The Empathy Card developed by Emily Murray & Youna McGowan

### A Story of Stories

Towards the end of the activity, each group had the opportunity to share the story they had developed around their connection. These stories were then represented on a world map through a photo, drawing, or written thought, symbolising the shared bond and its place in the larger narrative (Fig. 5). After all the participants had shared their stories and creations, a thread was used to physically connect all the stories on the world map, symbolising the interconnectedness of our experiences and the collective journey we had created together (Fig. 6).



Figure 5 Sharing Bonding Projects on the World Map. Photo: Claudia D'Andrea



*Wrapping Up ECO CARE: A Workshop on Empathy, Compassion and Care*



*Figure 6 The Map of the World at the end of the co-creation and storytelling exercise. Image: Emily Murray*



*Figure 7 The room set up with the final co-created projects. Photo: Emily Murray*



Figure 8 Participants co-creating during the Empathy session. Photo: Emily Murray

## Compassion

*(n.) The ability to share feelings together.*

The aim of the second session, chaired by Margherita Paola Poto and Giulia Parola, was to nurture each other and spark **Compassion**. Prior to the workshop, attendees were encouraged to bring some of their favourite food from home.

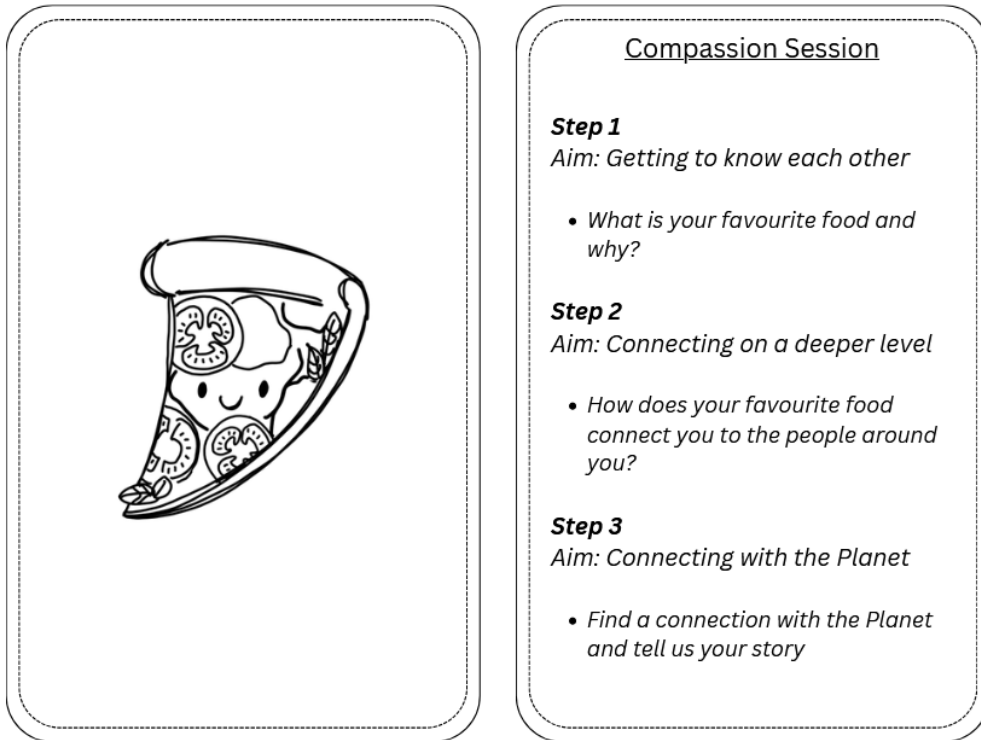


Figure 9 The Compassion Card developed by Giulia Parola and Margherita Poto

The activity began with a brief introduction about the significance and meaning of food in ECO CARE projects, as a way to provide both tangible support in the shape of food supplies to our communities, but also intangible, by building connections and care.

Each participant was then invited to share the story behind the dish they brought, reflecting on their personal connection to it and its role in nurturing themselves and others (Fig. 10). This exchange encouraged a deeper appreciation of the cultural and emotional significance of food.





*Figure 10 Gathering to share stories about food and our connection to it. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud*

The session culminated in the participants enjoying an international meal, celebrating the diversity and unity of our gathering (Fig. 11, 12, 13).



*Figure 11 Sharing food from around the world: the heart of our symposium. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud*



*Figure 12 Sharing food from around the world: the heart of our symposium. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud*





Figure 13 The 'sweet' table, including Brazilian brigadeiro, Bulgarian delight and Canadian butter tarts. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud

## Care

(n.) *The ability to take restorative actions*

The third and final session, introduced on day one and continued on day two by Claudia D'Andrea and Annamaria Bonomo, centred on **Care** (Fig. 15). The activity, *Message in a Bottle*, invited participants to reflect on the past and look ahead towards a shared future. Each person created a personal "care message," which could be addressed to themselves, to other participants in the room, or to the audiences of future projects (Fig. 14).

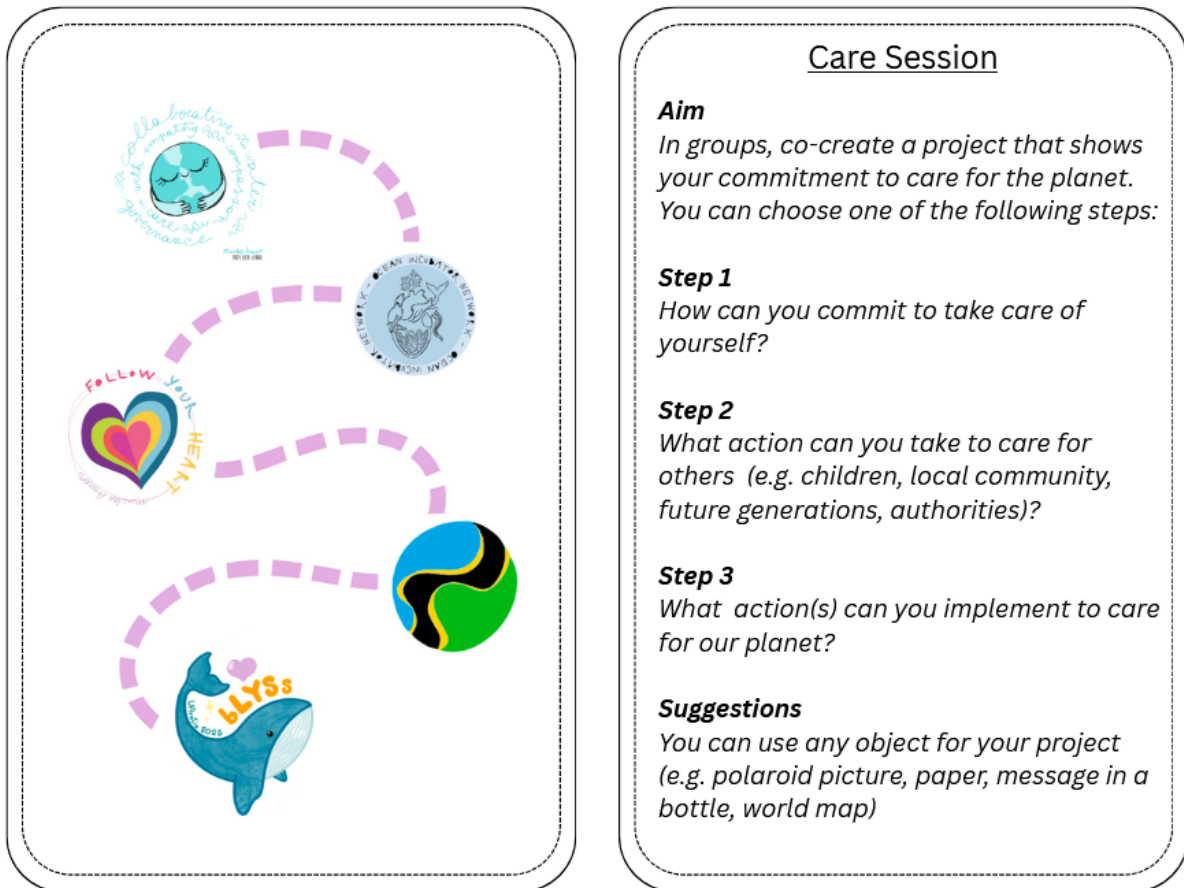


Figure 14 The storyline of the project and the Care session exercise developed by Claudia D'Andrea and Annamaria Bonomo

During this time, we also took a moment to reflect on the work accomplished so far and to outline future initiatives. This included discussions on how the outcomes of the ECO CARE Project will be further developed and implemented by the Blyss Project (UArctic) — with particular attention to their connection to the Ocean.

To conclude the session, we returned to the world map to share the results of the activity (Fig. 15). Together, we reflected on how empathy, compassion, and care interweave into a collective narrative — one that begins with our individual positionalities, builds meaningful connections, and ultimately extends outward to others.



*Figure 15 Annamaria and Claudia developing the Care co-created project*



Wrapping Up ECO CARE: A Workshop on Empathy, Compassion and Care



Figure 16 Some of the ECO CARE results. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud



Figure 17 Books and friends from the Asfour Initiative. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud



Figure 18 Part of the workshop's participants. From left to right: Tainá De Andrade Santos, Giulia Parola, Margherita Paola Poto, Michael McElhinney, Aline Braz, Annamaria Bonomo, Youna McGowan, Larissa Gabrieli Dos Santos Munhoz, Rada Pandeva, Emily Murray. Photo: Charlotte Buksrud

## Reference list

### Relevant literature

For a complete list, see: <https://en.uit.no/project/ecocare/cristin>

Lohse, E., Poto, M. P., Radovich, V., (2025) Knowledge Co-Creation in Climate and Marine Governance, Mohr Siebeck, ISBN, 978-3-16-164445-0 / eBook in Open Access 978-3-16-164446-7.

Murray, E. M., Poto M. P. (2022), The New Horizons of Law and Science through A Systemic Approach promoted through the lens of the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development. Some emerging issues, *Env. Policy and Law*, 2022, p. 1-14.



Panieri G., Poto, M. P., Murray E. M. (ed. by) (2024) Emotional and Ecological Literacy for a More Sustainable Society, Palgrave MacMillan, Springer Nature, ISBN: 978-3-031-56771-1 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-56772-8>

Parola, G., Poto, M. P. (2024), eds. Building Bridges For Effective Environmental Participation: The Path Of Law Co-Creation, The Chiquitano Multimodal Format for Disseminating the Escazú Agreement, Human Rights Intervention Series, Palgrave MacMillan ISBN 978-3-031-52790-6; ISSN: 2946-5117; series electronic ISSN:2946-5125.

Porrone, A., Poto, M. P., Russo, V. (2021) A Story About Knowledge. Illustrated Version. Aracne, 2021.

Porrone, A., Poto, M. P., Russo, V. (Illustrator) (2021) A Story About Knowledge. A Learning Tool to Engage with Illustrated Storytelling in Law and Global Studies, Aracne, 2021.

Poto, M. P., Parola, G., Bennet, A., Cummins, A., Ozroy, M. (eds.), 2024, [The ECO CARE Activity Booklet: Enhancing English Proficiency](#), Multifoco, Series Igarapé – Direito e água, ISBN: 978-65-5611-334-0.

## **Websites**

[The ECO CARE Project](#)

[ECO CARE Instagram profile](#)

[Faculty of Law, UiT The Arctic University of Norway](#)

[Ocean Incubator Network](#)

[Follow Your Heart](#)

[The Ocean Decade Blue Catalyst – \(bLYSs\)](#)