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EASA2016: Anthropological legacies and human futures

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Paper

Care farming in Switzerland: challenges of an emerging field

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Short Abstract

This paper explores care farming in Switzerland, an interface of two fields in crisis: care and agriculture. Applying a transdisciplinary approach, we focus on challenges and opportunities for all persons involved in these emerging paid care services.

Long Abstract

The term care farming refers to paid family integrated care for children, juveniles and adults on farms, for educative or therapeutic reasons or due to other care dependencies. Care farming is the interface of two fields in crisis. The care crisis on the one hand, is manifested in state austerity measures, a growing demand for care work labourer, unaffordable costs and problems of reconciling work and family life. On the other hand, national and global crisis in agriculture cause growing economic and social pressure on Swiss family farms.

Care farming is an emerging field. To offer paid care services is one strategy of farmers to diversify and secure their livelihood. But it can be very inconstant, incriminatory and payment is low. However, care farming is also a possibility for the state to outsource care services to more economic suppliers. Numerous questions arise on this reorganization of paid care work, as for example on the challenges and opportunities for the persons involved; on responsibilities; on the workload of farmers; on the quality of care services; and on new conditions of precariousness of the farming families as well as their clients/guests.

In this paper we provide new insights on these questions. We draw on preliminary results of an ongoing transdisciplinary study, carried out in strong collaboration with non-academic stakeholders. To generate comprehensive data, explorative and participative methods were chosen.