

Nature-based reef solution for coastal protection and marine biodiversity enhancement

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Within the NatuReef project, is responsible for collecting data before and after the construction of the reef on the adjacent beach to understand the impact the reef may have on that stretch of coast.

What sparked your passion for geomorphology?

I am inquisitive; I like observing the things around me and understanding the reasons behind them. Since I was a child, I was drawn to knowledge. I would come home from school and never miss an episode of Piero Angela, who then broadcasted BBC documentaries, and I dreamed of discovering nature. I imagined myself as a science communicator, a cameraman, or in professions connected to that world, which I couldn't do without until I finally landed in the role of a scientist when I started studying Environmental Sciences in Venice. There, a wonderful world truly opened-up for me, allowing me to grow by exploring many different disciplines.

What attracts you to your work?

I love the interdisciplinarity of my work, dealing with various professionals like biologists, geophysicists, engineers, and architects, allows me to enter other worlds. However, my true passion is the shape of nature, Nature has wonderful shapes. Studying nature means having the privilege of discovering the invisible processes and mechanisms that govern it, and understanding why it is shaped and functions as it does. Thanks to remote sensing, I can also observe natural systems from above. The beauty of the shapes leaves you breathless.

Tell us about a challenge you've overcome or an unexpected success.

The challenge I overcame was becoming an expert in remote sensing. I approached this discipline during university when maybe only three or four people were involved in it, and it was mainly the domain of men, mostly engineers, with a completely different approach from mine. I wasn't interested in building sensors but in analysing satellite data to understand natural processes.

An unexpected success was becoming an associate professor with my background. I came from ten years of consultancy in remote sensing, and experience as a teacher and researcher at Duke University in the USA, and upon returning to Italy, I dedicated myself to a Marie Curie project on remote sensing. Yet, I participated in a competition for a fixed-term researcher position and won! Without connections, without prior knowledge, and without following the path that until then was deemed essential. My experience demonstrates that the situation in Italy has changed. The Italian academia has changed.

If you could change something in the future, what would it be?



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Today more than ever, we need to increase awareness of the environment. It is important to make people understand the significance of environmental changes for our future, even if it is inconvenient or goes against someone's interests. More environmental education is needed, starting from the legal field, which should be more sensitive to these issues. Often, regulations end up protecting private interests disguised as environmental interests. In my small way, I aim to involve more law students in my projects. Change must start with the young.



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