



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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Foreword

Welcome to the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) Annual Report 2023. This year has seen remarkable transformations, fuelled by our GAIA 20:30 10-year strategy. GAIA 20:30 is our pledge to confront the urgent environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution. Through this strategy, our aim is to foster a deeper understanding of these issues and empower individuals and communities to take impactful action.

Our educational programmes, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE), Learning about Forests (LEAF), and FEE EcoCampus, have been pivotal in driving this initiative forward. We've expanded these programmes significantly, aligning them with the Greening Education Partnership to embed climate change education globally. Over 50% of schools have already adopted the Eco-Schools programme in 7 countries, showing our commitment to integrating sustainability into education. Furthermore, FEE is co-coordinating Pillar One of the partnership and our team is represented on the Advisory.

Collaborations have been key. Partnering with the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), we delivered impactful content and workshops at the 6th WOSM Conference. Our partnership with the Office of Climate Education (OCE) led to a new Climate Change Education course.

We've also played a significant supporting role in the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, that included partnering with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and UNESCO to support the education challenge 6.1, highlighting our commitment to reversing environmental degradation.

In 2023, our Blue Flag and Green Key programmes reached new milestones. Blue Flag co-organised a webinar on "Sustainable Management of Posidonia," and Green Key ran a campaign on "Reducing Environmental Pollution," focusing on litter, waste, and invisible pollutants in the hospitality industry.

Looking ahead, we're committed to sustainability by reducing our travel footprint by 50% and maintaining high environmental standards at our events. Our partnership with UNESCO continues to flourish, particularly under our coordination of the Greening Education Partnership's pillar one.

In conclusion, 2023 has been a year of progress and collaboration for FEE. We look forward to continuing our work with members and partners to make a lasting impact. Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we can protect and preserve our planet.



Daniel Schaffer
Chief Executive Officer



Lesley Jones
President of the Board

ABOUT US

Established in 1981, the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is one of the world's largest environmental education organisations, with 104 member organisations in 83 countries.



83 countries

104 member organisations



Our educational programmes, Eco-Schools, Learning about Ecosystems and Forests (LEAF) and Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE), empower young people to create an environmentally conscious world through a solutions-based approach. Our Green Key and Blue Flag programmes are globally recognised for promoting sustainable business practices and the protection of natural resources.

OUR MEMBERS

A Global Network

With over 104 members in 83 countries, the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is the world's largest environmental education network. As a global network committed to stimulating positive environmental change, our strength comes from our members who share our convictions and execute their programmes with tremendous dedication and efficiency on a daily basis.

Hand-picked by FEE for their enthusiasm and outstanding ability, it is these local organisations that make FEE the authoritative and respected entity that it is today.

[Go to our website for a list of all our members](#)



Vision

A sustainable world in which education creates positive change for all.



Mission

To engage and empower people through education in collaboration with our members and partners worldwide.

GAIA 20:30 STRATEGY

Our commitment inspired by Gaia

Inspired by the ancient Greek goddess Gaia, who personifies the Earth, GAIA 20:30 is our pledge to address the three critical environmental challenges facing our planet today: **climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution.**

Through this initiative, we aim to promote an understanding of the causes and devastating environmental, social, and economic impacts of these issues. Working closely with our members, we strive to educate and empower our audiences to act and implement solutions to mitigate these critical issues locally, nationally, and globally.

GAIA 20:30 embodies the actions and goals that support our commitment at FEE to tackle the major environmental priorities of our time. Our strategic plan is designed to demonstrate our dedication to reversing environmental damage in a meaningful way. We are building on our past successes with a strategy aimed at delivering real change.



AT A GLANCE

With 40 years of impactful experience in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), our new strategic plan - GAIA 20:30 - prioritises climate action across all five programmes to address the urgent threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. The iconic Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised voluntary eco-labels awarded to beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators. In order to qualify for the Blue Flag, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria must be met and maintained.

Green Key is a leading international certificate given to accommodations and other hospitality facilities that commit to sustainable business practices. Certified establishments comply with strict criteria, independently verified through regular on-site audits.

Eco-Schools is the largest global sustainable schools programme – it starts in the classroom and expands to the community by engaging the next generation in action-based learning.

Learning about Ecosystems and Forests (LEAF) advocates outdoor learning and hands-on experiences which result in the pupils getting a deeper and more involved understanding of the natural world. While the focus of the LEAF programme is on tree-based ecosystems, the skills and knowledge acquired can be applied to any natural environment.

The Young Reporters for the Environment programme gives young people a platform to research environmental issues and promote solutions through investigative reporting, photography, and video journalism.

ESTABLISHED

1981

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ORGANISATIONS

Litter Less Campaign engaged over

4.6M

youth since its launch in 2011

4,800

Green Key-certified hospitality establishments in over 60 countries

5,041

Blue Flag beaches, marinas and tourism boats in 51 countries

Our education programmes engage over

21 MILLION

young people each year

FEE Academy is our online learning site developed to support our global members and their networks of students, teachers, hotel managers, site operators and more by providing them with key tools and resources to help them to successfully implement FEE programmes.

FEE Academy has over

7,000 users



Debeli Dab Eco-Village, Bulgaria



Debeli Dab Eco-Village, Bulgaria

PARTNERSHIPS



Through the LEAF programme FEE is supporting the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and leading Challenge 6.1 Ecosystem Restoration Education with our partners North American Agency for Environmental Education (NAAEE) and UNESCO.



FEE is proud to be an active part of the Greening Education Partnership (GEP) Advisory Board and co-lead of GEP Pillar 1 on Greening Schools. Pillar 1 - Greening Schools: All countries will have adopted a green school accreditation scheme with at least 50% schools, colleges, and universities with green accreditation and operating sustainably by 2030.



Founded in 2020, the Helvellyn Foundation is an independent charitable organisation funded by the Holmes family. The Foundation supports organisations working towards biodiversity protection and equal access to opportunities for young people.



The Mars Wrigley Foundation has supported the FEE Eco-Schools and YRE Litter Less Campaign since 2011. Over the past ten years, the Litter Less Campaign has been run in over 40 countries world-wide, engaging over four million youth in the process. Today, it is being implemented through 12 countries running the Eco-Schools programme and 11 countries running the Young Reporters for the Environment programme. Through the campaign, students are empowered to understand the key issues surrounding litter and waste in their communities, thereby driving individual and community actions that focus on consuming less, recycling more, tackling waste issues, and fostering long term behaviour change.

COLLABORATIONS

In 2023, FEE took proactive steps towards fostering collaboration and partnership in response to the emerging directive on Green Claims, empowering consumers in the green transition.

Through the creation of robust processes and active engagement with other certification bodies, FEE played a pivotal role in the development of a partnership aimed at addressing future developments in sustainable tourism practices. This initiative underscores FEE's commitment to promoting transparency and credibility in environmental certifications, aligning with evolving regulatory frameworks.

Building on its advocacy efforts, FEE leveraged the momentum generated by its involvement in the Running Out of Time (ROoT) initiative in 2022 to continue advocating for climate education. This advocacy materialised in FEE's co-leadership of Pillar 1 within the Greening of Education Partnership (GEP). Collaborating closely with UNESCO, FEE is at the forefront of efforts to integrate climate education into national curricula, ensuring that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address pressing environmental challenges.

Through these initiatives, FEE reaffirms its position as a key player in environmental advocacy and education, driving positive change at both the local and global levels.

In 2023, the Litter Less Plus (LLP) campaign was run from January to December, aiming at bolstering FEE's global efforts to raise awareness about and combat pollution. Integral to FEE's GAIA 20:30 strategy, LLP seamlessly linked with the Litter Less Campaign (LLC), leveraging resources and actions taken by all FEE member organisations. Notably, all participants in the LLC were also engaged in the LLP, highlighting the cohesive nature of FEE's pollution reduction initiatives.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the Office for Climate Education (OCE), we developed and launched a new course for Climate Change Education. A workshop was delivered at the OCE International Conference.

HIGHLIGHTS

Greening Education Partnership

The Greening Education Partnership (GEP) was launched by the UN in September 2022 to support countries in tackling the climate crisis by harnessing the critical role of education in a 'whole-of-system approach'. UNESCO has appointed FEE as coordinator of the GEP Pillar One on Greening Schools with a target of 50% accreditation of all schools, colleges, and universities to a green school scheme by 2030.

During the last quarter of 2023, we engaged our members to help shape UNESCO's new Green Schools Quality Standards which set the benchmark in eco-accreditation globally. The next phase of our commitment to GEP involves working with our members to align their Eco-Schools programmes and build new national level partnerships to support expansion. The FEE education team will also be working hard to build new programmes in priority regions to meet GEP targets through Eco-Schools and the Young Reporters for the Environment programme.



Seven FEE members have already registered over 50% of schools in the Eco-Schools programme (Malta, Mauritius, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Ireland).

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2023

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals. Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity.

The UN Decade runs from 2021 through 2030, which is also the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the timeline scientists have identified as the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The UN Decade is building a strong, broad-based global movement to ramp up restoration and put the world on track for a sustainable future. That will include building political momentum for restoration as well as thousands of initiatives on the ground.

This incredible challenge can only be met if everyone—including Member States, local and city governments, the private sector, academia and civil society and individuals at large—come together to find viable, lasting solutions.

A Year in Review

Blue Flag Programme



In 2023, Blue Flag held two international juries for the Northern and the Southern hemispheres. Blue Flag awarded **4,212** beaches, **711** marinas and **122** boats for a total of **5,041** sites in **51** countries. That is respectively -8 beaches, -23 marinas and +6 boats compared to 2022. The global balance was mainly impacted by the loss of Blue Flag awarded sites in Russia and Ukraine (-60 BF sites between the two countries). The US and Albania received their first Blue Flag awards, opening new regional areas.

In 2023, Blue Flag International renewed its corporate partnership agreement with Pick a Pier for another two years (2023/2024).

Blue Flag International (BFI) answered an EU Interreg Baltic call for proposal together with Climate Service Center Germany (GERICS), Danish Outdoor Council (DOC), FEE Latvia, and Coastal Union Germany (EUCC-D). The project focuses on Climate Adaptation Local Communities Action Plan in the Baltics and was approved. The project kicked off in September 2023. BFI continues to engage in data sharing with EU research institutions and participates in the EU Tourism Dashboard and started a collaboration for the EU Nature Based Tourism assessment. FEE was approached to join the UN Ocean Decade NGO taskforce.

The global Blue Flag criteria revision working parties kicked off in early 2023, with the setting up of seven working groups looking at the GAIA 20:30 strategic pillars and other important themes for the standard.

5,041

Blue Flag beaches,
marinas and tourism
boats in **51 countries**



Newly awarded Blue Flag site at Westward Beach, California, USA, 2023



International Blue Flag Director, Johann Durand, at World Marina Conference, Portugal, 2023



Green Key Programme

In 2023, Green Key experienced significant expansion, witnessing a remarkable surge in certified establishments. The programme saw a nearly 30% increase, with the number of certified establishments growing from approximately 3,700 to around 4,800 by the end of the year.

Green Key's growth was facilitated by successful collaborations with major international hotel chains and tour operators. Building on existing partnerships with prominent names such as Radisson Hotel Group and NH, Green Key expanded its reach by welcoming three new international hotel chains, including Accor Hotels and IHG (InterContinental).

Additionally, strengthened cooperation with tour operators like Jet2holidays further propelled Green Key's impact. In 2023, Green Key solidified partnerships with key industry stakeholders to advance sustainable tourism efforts.

Notably, formal agreements were established with the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, aiming to empower sustainable tourism initiatives globally, including certification programmes in the Caribbean region.

Internally, Green Key introduced new online application and audit tools to streamline certification processes. Partnering with a new database provider enabled faster collaboration with online booking platforms, enhancing visibility for certified establishments, and catering to the growing interest in sustainable accommodations among travellers.

Green Key's impact was further underscored by increasing attention in the media and online platforms. The programme's website experienced a significant surge in unique visitors, reflecting heightened interest in sustainable tourism and in the programme's work. Additionally, media monitoring initiatives yielded positive results, indicating growing recognition and visibility for Green Key in the public sphere.

4,800+ Green Key-certified hospitality establishments in over **60 countries**



Regent Porto Montenegro, receiving the Green Key certificate



Debeli Dab Eco-Village, Bulgaria



Eco-School Programme

In 2023, the Eco-Schools programme engaged over one million teachers and more than 14 million students across 49,600 schools in 74 countries. Eco-Schools expanded to include Bangladesh and Armenia, while Australia transitioned its membership to Keep Australia Beautiful regional offices. However, the Environmental Center for Arab Towns (ECAT) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ended its membership, leading to a collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Education. The programme also extended to 47 international schools in non-member countries.

The inaugural joint educational programmes National Operator Meeting for Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment, and Learning about Ecosystems and Forests was held in Rabat, Morocco, hosted by the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection. FEE EcoCampus underwent review, with plans for a development strategy and the first international conference scheduled for 2024.

The Eco-Schools Alcoa W5 project concluded, while the E-SPACE project, supported by Pratt & Whitney's E-STEM Awards, concluded successfully in multiple countries.

FEE participated in the New European Bauhaus (NEB-LAB) project launch. By building on the concept of Open Schooling, the selected pilot sites will develop concrete and replicable climate action plans, raising citizen awareness activities to facilitate social innovation, promote education and training for sustainability.

In 2023, a total of 47 international schools were actively part of FEE's programmes in 21 countries. FEE played an active role in the development of the Greening Education Partnership (GEP), launched by the UN Secretary General in 2022, and was well represented at COP28 in Dubai. Additionally, the FEE Teacher Award was celebrated on World Environment Day, with a call for new applicants launched later in the year.

Eco-Schools engaged over

1M teachers and **14M** students across **49,600** schools
in over 60 countries



A certified Eco-School in Georgia



CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHT

LITTER LESS PLUS



Litter Less Campaign participant

Circular Economy Projects in Schools: FEE received 110 project proposals from teachers around the world and disseminated 60 grants; each about €500 to schools from 13 countries. The schools designed and implemented projects on circular economy on the whole school approach and submitted reports on their projects.

Pollution Quizzes and Webinars: quizzes on pollution garnered significant participation, with over 1,300 individuals taking part. Additionally, FEE hosted seven successful webinars on various pollution-related topics, attracting a total of 1,127 participants.

Global Action Days (GAD): The two-week GAD campaign held in April witnessed a 25% increase in registrants compared to the previous year. With 1,581 institutions from 87 countries participating, GAD 2023 engaged over 217,000 participants globally. The campaign garnered substantial online engagement, with the GAD Facebook group witnessing a significant increase in membership and interaction.

Lesson Plans Competition: A Lesson Plans Competition on pollution was conducted for teachers, with the best four teachers recognised for their outstanding contributions.

COP28



Pramod K. Sharma, Sr. Dir. of Education and delegates



Young Reporters for the Environment



Pramod K. Sharma, Sr. Dir. of Education, Lesley Jones, FEE President, and Daniel Schaffer, FEE CEO

FEE had an active engagement at COP28 as a key stakeholder of the Greening Education Partnership. The FEE team, that included Lesley Jones, President, Nikos Petrou, Vice President, Daniel Schaffer, CEO and Pramod Kumar Sharma, Senior Director of Education, had a series of meetings with key stakeholders that included the Ministry of Education United Arab Emirates (UAE), UNESCO, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Office for Climate Education (OCE) and FEE Members to have a collaborative approach to achieve the Greening Education Partnership.

FEE representatives participated in over 15 side events and led discussions on various aspects of the Greening Education Partnership including monitoring and evaluation, Green Quality standards at higher education level, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in early childhood education and best practices at the national level.

An agreement was also signed with the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi to collaborate on running the Young Reporters for Environment in the UAE and the education challenge under the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Learning about Ecosystems and Forests Programme



In 2023, the Learning about Ecosystems and Forests (LEAF) programme was implemented in over 3,900 schools across 27 countries. Over 669,000 students and 23,700 teachers participated in the programme, including planting over 275,000 trees worldwide.

At the international level, LEAF is leading FEE's involvement in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration as a Supporting Actor. FEE is also co-leading the Education Challenge 6.1 which aims to embed ecosystem restoration education (ERE) into formal and non-formal education systems worldwide by 2030.

After the last meeting with UNESCO and North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) in September, it was agreed that the next programme efforts will focus on the establishment of an Advisory Board.

In September, LEAF was represented at the International Conference on Sustainability Education (ICSE) and gave a presentation on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration's initiative. For the third year, LEAF has been selected as one of the most impactful and scalable innovations in education by the HundrED.org Global Collection.

FEE has also linked teachers from the network using the eTwinning platform with the University of Hohenheim (Germany) to assist with the pilot of an educational bioeconomy board game.

FEE Head Office participated in the first Advisory Board of the sister project – GEN B. Through the LEAF programme, FEE secured extended funding from the Helvellyn Foundation until 2025, supporting actions aligned with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.





South Africa, 2023



Mexico, 2023



Ireland, 2023



Slovenia, 2023



Tanzania, 2023

Young Reporters for the Environment Programme



In 2023, we ran the Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) programme in 7,154 schools in 44 countries, involving 336,284 students and about 28,000 teachers. Our awareness raising YRE activities reached about five million people around the globe, calling for environmental actions. The YRE Competition saw 22,789 entries, where 7,804 were articles, 13,142 photos and 21,103 videos.

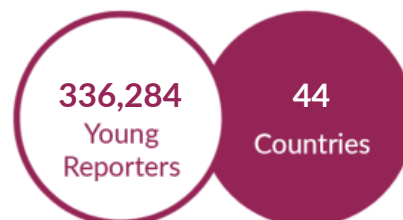
The new category was approved in 2023, and will become part of the International YRE Competition starting in 2025 and will be communicated to National Operators during 2024. The new category will focus on podcasting for the 2024/2025 competition and then in 2025/2026, the artistic journalism category will be implemented.

The YRE Director was a keynote speaker at the 6th World Organization of Scouts Movement (WOSM) Conference in December 2023. We also ran a workshop session with scout leaders from around the world to show how they could implement the YRE programme in their scout groups and how YRE can be used as a tool to help support the Greening Education Partnership (GEP) Pillar 4, and to foster youth leadership.

The vision of Pillar 4 is to engage the entire community by integrating climate education in life-long learning.

The collaboration with UNESCO's ASPnet schools is expanding through the YRE-Litter Less Campaign (LLC) and more countries came on board. Currently we have ten UNESCO countries that participate in campaign activities and three more will likely join in year three of the campaign.

In 2023, the Litter Less Campaign was combined with the Litter Less Plus Campaign and was opened for all of FEE educational programmes. The YRE programme and Litter Less Campaign strengthened the collaboration between YRE and scouts (WOSM) by presenting YRE and LLC at the Jota Joti international online scout event in October. Our successful collaboration with UNESCO ASPnet schools through the YRE-LLC is also expanding to more countries.





Financial statement

2023

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 €	Restricted funds 2023 €	Total funds 2023 €	Total funds 2022 €
Income from:					
Charitable activities	3	1,473,216	725,839	2,199,055	1,755,176
Total income		1,473,216	725,839	2,199,055	1,755,176
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	4	1,340,840	625,968	1,966,808	1,771,661
Total expenditure		1,340,840	625,968	1,966,808	1,771,661
Net movement in funds		132,376	99,871	232,247	(16,485)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		1,128,491	149,300	1,277,791	1,294,276
Net movement in funds		132,376	99,871	232,247	(16,485)
Total funds carried forward		1,260,867	249,171	1,510,038	1,277,791

The Statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

For the full financial history, follow this [link](#) for more information and full access to 'the trustees report on the Charity Commission's website.

Our Team

HEAD OFFICE

Daniel Schaffer, Chief Executive Officer

Rikke Florager, Administrative Director

Susan Fischer, Finance Director

Pramod Kumar Sharma, Senior Director of Education

Finn Bolding Thomsen, International Green Key Director

Johann Durand, International Blue Flag Director

Gosia Luszczek, International Young Reporters for the Environment Director

Shimon Ginzburg, Project Evaluation Officer

Kristina Madsen, International Coordinator of Education

Alessandro Venti, International Blue Flag Coordinator

Reeza Hanselmann, FEE Academy & Communications Coordinator

Claudia Bogensperger, International Green Key Coordinator

Chiara Cottone, International Green Key Coordinator

Katarina Cukovic, Administrative & Finance Assistant

Board of Directors

BOARD MEMBERS

Lesley Jones, FEE President

Nikos Petrou, FEE Vice President

Ian Humphreys, FEE Treasurer

Sanskriti Menon, Blue Flag

Sasha Karajovic, Young Reporters for the Environment

Joaquín Díaz, Green Key

Petra Schut, Learning About

Ecosystems and Forests

Laura Hickey, Eco-Schools

HONORARY MEMBERS

Ole Løvig Simonsen

Malcolm Powell

Jan Eriksen

José Sanchez Moro

Patricia Oliver

Erol Güngör

Henny Kromhout

Alikí Vavouris

Lourdes Díaz Colón

Amine Ahlafi

José Hendriksen

