



## The Importance of Being FEE

The FEE Secretariat has asked a handful of key actors from the development of FEE to bring forth their thoughts and memories of FEE. The responses have been enlightening to read and in full would double the pages in this annual report.

Thus we have attempted to extract bits and pieces from the contributions of Mr. Harry Wals, Mr. Ole Løvig Simonsen, Mr. Graham Ashworth, Mr. Jan Eriksen and Mr. José Sánchez Moro in order to compile a short article of the first 25 years of FEE.

When thinking about the history of FEE a metaphor of development comes to mind, like the development of a child opening its eyes, learning to walk and talk, and then to run. And later learning when is the right time to run and when is the right time to sit and talk. During the life of FEE the organisation has likewise undergone three developmental periods: The Visionary Era, The Era of The Practitioners and The Professional Era.

### The Visionary Era

The current president, Mr. Jan Eriksen, defines the first 7 to 10 years – from the early start in the Netherlands in 1981 until the first years with the Blue Flag Programme as the era of “The Visionaries”. At this time the founding members of FEE formulated their ideas of what would later become a flourishing organisation and expressed them at internal meetings, external seminars, conferences and in a number of publications.

Mr. José Sánchez Moro explains that in 1980, Harry Wals organised an international seminar with the imposing title, “Pedagogical instruments to stimulate social participation in finding solutions to the environmental problems in the urban environment”. The theoretical basis of this seminar and the group of people involved gave birth later that year to FEEE.

Mr. José Sánchez Moro describes the involved members as “a thriving, international, heterogeneous team with a shared vision that environmental problems do not have barriers”. The group believed that valuable environmental work could be done through network cooperation, cooperation with local and national authorities, with methods of prevention rather than cure, and through stimulating and awarding

positive attitudes rather than only punishing negative ones.

### The Practitioners

Then came the Era of the Practitioners. Introducing the genius French idea of a European Blue Flag award scheme for beaches and marinas in 1987 had a tremendous impact on the Foundation. No one could have predicted how the new development would call for a new era of FEE actors, “The Practitioners”.

“The Practitioners” realised that FEEE lacked proper structure. There were no regular general assemblies and a majority of countries were running FEEE’s programme without being a member of FEEE. In the late 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s big constitutional changes were made and the organisation was stabilized.

### More programmes

Until 1993 FEEE only had one programme, though many ideas for more were still being supplied by the Visionaries. In 1993 the idea for Eco-Schools came from Denmark and the idea for Young Reporters for the Environment from France. Over the next couple of years they were implemented as FEEE’s second and third programmes.

It then became clear that many of the tough discussions taken during the first six years of the Blue Flag Programme had resulted in the creation of a manageable system for running other programmes. The experiences of the national branches, the national operators, and the European Coordination had created a very sustainable way to run the organisation and its programmes.

In 1996, Jan Eriksen’s presence at a conference in Paris about environmental education resulted in

a completely new way for getting the next FEEE programmes on board. An already existing network, Forests in Schools, from Sweden, Finland, and Norway wanted cooperation with the FEEE network and so the first step was taken to establish the fourth campaign LEAF (Learning about Forests). The fifth campaign, The Green Key, was later introduced in the same way.

### Going global

By the time the 20th anniversary General Assembly was held in Copenhagen in 2001 the organization had expanded beyond Europe into South Africa and could no longer limit itself by being FEEE, so it dropped the last E which stood for Europe and became the globally active FEE.

The last 7 to 9 years has been the “Era of The Professionals”. During this stage the operation of FEE and its programmes reached a good level of maturity and experience, enough to successfully see the organisation through a period of quick growth and expansion. FEE and its programmes, visions, members, and partners has nearly tripled since the UK took over the responsibility of the FEE(E) Secretariat in 1997.

Under the current Secretariat of FEE in Denmark the organisation continues to experience growth and changes, primarily with the addition of new member organisations from outside of Europe.

### The fellowship

The voices telling us of their FEE experiences also express gratitude in being part of this extraordinary “fellowship” and movement, uniting first north and south Europe and now different regions of the World. There has been great value in sharing memories, getting to know each others countries and cultures, and always taking the positive elements from each situation to bring FEE and the programmes further on to something better.

*“Maybe the most important lesson I learned was how to manage to achieve a sustainable compromise, how to understand and accept a different cultural background etc.... I find it fantastic that the FEE family spirit is unchanged. The family is growing but the feelings are strong.”*

- JAN ERIKSEN

*“We had very little and we shared it: A seminar planned and advertised as national became international; a good local idea was copied and adapted in other places etc. We searched for synergies to grow rather than to stop.”*

- JOSÉ SÁNCHEZ MORO

*“I believe that the FEE members will be successful in bringing the message of FEE all over the world, working on a global scale... [to] improve the World through cooperation, experience based, with love and understanding.”*

- HARRY WALS

### Presidents of FEE(E):

1981-1989	Harry Wals, Netherlands
1990-1994	Ole Løvig Simonsen, Denmark
1994-1996	Lauge Prip, Denmark
1997-2004	Graham Ashworth, United Kingdom
2004-	Jan Eriksen, Denmark

Ole Løvig Simonsen believes that the different elements of spirit, organisation, and creativity coming from the different countries and cultures has resulted in a winning mixture crucial for the later development of FEE.

### Future challenges

The original ideas and revelations that were there in the minds of the FEE visionaries have come alive and have now become history. José Sánchez Moro expresses that the spirit of FEE continues to thrive as a symbol of hope for an environmentally sustainable World. This spirit is being carried on by the current FEE actors, who will together face new challenges and changes in the future.

Ole Løvig Simonsen expresses that although FEE is growing it is “deeply rooted both locally and globally” and that with growth comes risk. He also states his belief that FEE is sufficiently grounded and will “stick to its original values where we through dialogue and discussions will form our opinions and visions together”.

Looking into the future, Graham Ashworth believes that the biggest challenge will be to find the trigger that turns public awareness into action. The current president Jan Eriksen believes that one of the future challenges lies in staying focused on environmental responsibility and sustainable development while also being responsible to the different conditions in the countries of the World. The goal of FEE will be to continue to successfully promote and create, “a high level of environmental education through the FEE method of awareness raising, training and formal education”.

## BLUE FLAG IN SOUTH AFRICA

The expansion of Blue Flag outside of Europe has been one of the biggest and most exciting developments since it started in 1987. The idea to expand started in 1997 when the Municipality of Durban on the east coast of South Africa became interested in the programme and started researching how the Blue Flag was relevant for their country. They persisted with the idea and made several reports on how the programme could be implemented in South Africa. The national Ministry



of Environment and Tourism then became involved in the implementation of Blue Flag as part of the national Coastcare programme of sustainable coastal management.

The Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), one of South Africa's largest environmental NGO's, was appointed as the service provider to the Ministry and became a member of FEE in 2001. That same year, a delegation from FEE visited South Africa and reviewed the sites and the proposed regional criteria. In November 2001, the first Blue Flag awards were raised in South Africa. WESSA has been running the South African Blue Flag programme since.

Today the Blue Flag programme in South Africa is strong and flourishing. They are dedicated contributors to the international voice and profile of the programme and FEE is very pleased to have their participation.



## 10 YEARS WITH ECO-SCHOOLS

The 2005 Eco-Schools Conference and Annual Meeting of National Programme Managers was the biggest single event organised in the frame of the international Eco-Schools programme. Students, teachers, representatives from Municipalities, regional government and governmental agencies for environment and education, representatives from international organisations such as UNEP and UNESCO, and invited guests from the corporate sector, as well, of course, as our own partners from non-governmental organisations around the world all contributed to the memorable experience.

It was an open event to mark the 10th anniversary of the Eco-Schools programme, the opening of the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development, to congratulate the winners of all the national Eco-Schools "Eco-Code Competition", and the launch of the "Linking and Itinerary" online project for schools.

This event was possible, with all its richness, only with the full collaboration of ADEAC/FEE Spain, and its supporting entities. The ADEAC

team were generous in their consideration of so many elements in organising the event, including subtleties such as careful and responsible "procurement" of materials, services, and foodstuff from ecological or fair-trade sources.

In examining the "ecological footprint" for the event, and mindful of the intent to concentrate also on the issue of climate change, it was noted that over 60 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> were produced by the air travel of all the international delegates to the event. Under the partnership with Climate Care, this amount was "repaired" through investment in sustainable energy and reforestation projects in developing countries.

The 2005 Conference and Meeting was the most international of all events previously organised, and with the vitality shown in this programme, we look forward to future developments.



## WORKING WITH GREEN KEY

The Green Key is not just one more label for tourism. It requires a real and long term involvement of the management. As part of the Green Key programme they are obliged to fulfil criteria and then to show improvement every year.

As an example, the Campsite Holiday Green in France (Fréjus) had to take several measures to keep the Green Key award year after year since starting the programme in 2003: they installed low energy bulbs (about 2000), water saving taps, drip system for the garden with a night-run programme, and re-did the drainage system.



To communicate these actions towards guests, staff, and the local community the campsite printed a newsletter on recycled paper, including other environmental information as well.

And that is not all!! The owner of the campsite has more projects in line for the next year: building a noise-barrier wall to protect campers, renewing a sanitary facility block, and from now on, every project and installation will be done with respect for the environment.

"It is perhaps more difficult to deeply change a big establishment versus a small one", says Daniel Damia, owner of the big campsite Holiday Green (680 sites). But the label seems worthwhile since, "2 out of 3 campers know the label and some choose this campsite specifically for this reason".



## LEARNING ABOUT FORESTS PROJECTS

During many years of forest projects, schools from countries participating in the Learning about Forests programme all over Europe have worked on various themes related to forests. But sooner or later each group of pupils, teachers and each school has expressed their own attitude towards forests as one of the most important aspects of life – and created many contributions to a general law between mankind and forests. The lines below can be seen as a summary of all of these contributions, no matter which of the countries in the North, South, East or West of Europe they come from:



### The Request of the Forest

(submitted by Bulgaria)

Man, I am the shelter of your house,  
Table of your dinner; bed on which you sleep,  
The wood, from which you build everything.  
I give warmth to your fireplace during the cold  
winter nights,  
And pleasant shadow against summer sun.  
I generously feed your herds with my juicy leaves.  
My ancestors lie deep in the ground  
And you use them for heating.  
With my streams and rivers  
I water your gardens  
And with my green shield  
I protect your earth from floods.  
Listen to my request:  
Use me, but do not destroy me!

## YRE SUPER AWARD 2005

Every year the best articles and photographs from each country are chosen and forwarded to the International Jury for review. Awards are given to the top articles in each topic category, and to the top three photographs. The abstract below is from the article which received the YRE article Super Award in 2005.

### Environment in Potters Complex: Catastrophe and Hope

(abstract)

By Higher School Lamrani Private, Morocco

On the road between Marrakech and Agadir, lies "Douar Ain Dada" (Dada small village). At the heart of this Douar lies "the Potters Complex" where around 100 pottery-makers are producing all pottery and clay objects, like traditional bricks, roof tiles, porcelain-ware. Clay objects are fired in traditional kilns which are heated by using woods sometimes or by using plastic material and rubber tires (which contain 80% of carbon). However Potters prefer using rubbers tires since they produce energy higher than the energy produced by wood. This results in a dense cloud charged with toxic gases as well as suspended particles causing health damage to the people of "Douar Dada", particularly workmen.

According to Dr. "Boubid FIHRI" (a medical practitioner in the health center of "Douar Ain Dada") the majority of people coming to this health center suffer from Asthma and allergy, particularly children below the age of five. A number of breathing diseases have been recorded among many workers, in addition to the abnormal dilations of the bronchial tubes.

These were grounds enough to urge the Development Center of Tensift to intervene in order to draw up a project geared to replacing traditional kilns with gas kilns. Despite the decision to ban the user of rubber tires, some pottery makers are still using them.

The first step required in this course line is finding sufficient subsidy for the pottery makers in order to be capable of buying the kilns, since it is beneficial for the country and the people. The center is still looking for other partners.

