

BLUE FLAG PROGRAMME
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES
HANDBOOK 2013



BLUE FLAG

Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded to 3850 beaches and marinas in 46 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean. The Blue Flag works towards sustainable development of beaches and marinas through strict criteria dealing with Water Quality, Environmental Education and Information, Environmental Management, and Safety and Other Services.

The Blue Flag Programme is owned and run by the non-government, non-profit organisation, Foundation for Environmental Education.

FOUNDATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is an international organisation that has been promoting environmental education for sustainable development since 1981. FEE is an umbrella organisation with member organisations in more than 60 countries around the world. FEE is active in environmental education mainly through five programmes: Blue Flag (www.blueflag.org), Green Key (www.green-key.org), Eco-Schools (www.eco-schools.org), Learning about Forests (www.leaf-international.org), and Young Reporters for the Environment (www.youngreporters.org).

Through formal school education, training of staff, and awareness raising, FEE's programmes involve people of all ages and nationalities.

For more information, please visit www.fee-international.org.

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www.shipmate.nl



www.beach-tech.com

Welcome to the second edition!

THIS BOOK HAS BEEN CREATED TO...

...help beach and marina managers to organise environmental education activities that fit with their goals and capacities; and to share good ideas throughout the Blue Flag network.

WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION?

Environmental Education offers a broad framework that encompasses a number of different ideas and approaches to learning in, for or about the environment, in pursuit of sustainable development. The purpose of this guide is not to debate the different definitions, but to encourage a shared acceptance of the diversity of learning approaches. This introduction, therefore, offers a brief description of environmental education approaches and offers a simple classification to help users to navigate their way through the different activities and worksheets.

One way of understanding environmental education is to see it as education that engages learners with nature, encourages them to ask questions about the environment, and engage with environmental change. This means that environmental education is not just concerned with spreading messages about the environment, but it also provides opportunities to enhance learner understanding, question environmental problems and take action for environmental change in pursuit of sustainable development. Therefore, the classification we offer is tentative and open to change.

- **INFORMATION SEEKING OR ENQUIRY**

Learners are encouraged to ask questions about the environment and gather information or materials. This might be through surveys, counting, collecting, or measuring different items on the beach, for example.

- **AWARENESS RAISING**

Awareness-raising is an educational activity focused on raising a learner's awareness about environmental problems, in the HOPE that they will do something as a response. An example might be an information campaign.

- **ACTION ORIENTED**

Action-oriented learning is an approach based on environmental change and improvement. The learners take action on a particular environmental problem and try out one or more solutions with the aim of achieving a better environment for all. A typical example is a litter pick.

- **CONTACT WITH NATURE/EXPERIENTIAL/EXPLORATORY**

Experiential approaches to environmental education are often based outside, in the particular environment in question, and seek to inspire learners to care for the environment by encouraging contact with nature and exploration, usually around a particular theme, such as 'the sea shore'.

How to use this book

HOW IS THIS BOOK ORGANISED

The activity sheets are organised by theme:

- **Beach** **page 5**
- **Biodiversity** **21**
- **Events** **34**
- **Marina** **50**
- **Marine Life** **57**
- **Waste** **65**

The different categories overlap and are not mutually exclusive; hence a learning sequence might actually address all four types of environmental education activities in pursuit of sustainable development. Although a specific “Marina” category has been included, the activities under the other categories may easily be adapted for marinas.

The same tagging system is used throughout the document, each activity answering the same questions: target group, theme, method, communication, tips, etc.

ACTIVITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Some activities are specifically targeted for wheelchair users. Most of the activities throughout this book can and should be adapted for disabled people.

WHERE TO FIND THIS BOOK?

Both editions of the Environmental Education Activities Handbook, 2011 and 2013 are available for free (fully or by theme) on the Blue Flag international website, in the Publications section:

www.blueflag.org

Animals Instead of Garbage!

Target group: Children 3 - 10 year old

Type: Action-oriented

Duration: 1 hour

Country: Brazil

BEACH

- **METHOD:** Children meet the Blue Flag team on the beach and play an interactive drama, which script is based on the ecosystems of the region (Atlantic forest, marsh, swamp, beach, rocky shore and sea). In this play, the trash "appears" on the beach because of human action and it is scattered around the stage. The lecturer explains the problems caused by irresponsible behaviour and garbage in nature. Children are invited to interactively remove the pictures of the trash stuck on the board and replace them by pictures of animals. The animals should be placed in the right location – in the environment where they usually live in real nature.



- **MATERIAL:** Panel with an image of the local environment, pictures of general garbage and animals from the local ecosystem to be stuck on the panel, camera.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Environmental educators, either voluntary or hired and teachers.
- **COMMUNICATION:** The activity might be posted on the common information board and/or environmental education centres.
- **TIPS:** The activity can also take place indoors. Registration of the participants in advance will help you to organise the school groups by number of children.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Conscious Behaviour on Beaches

Target group: Everybody

Type: Awareness-raising

Duration: Whole season

Country: Brazil

- **METHOD:** Printed materials promote conscious behaviour on the beach in an easily understandable way. They might be distributed in shops, restaurants, beach hotels, environmental education centres, lifeguard stations etc.



- **MATERIAL:** Stickers, posters, totems, calendars, camera.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Environmental educators, either voluntary or hired.
- **COMMUNICATION:** The material might be posted in several places as posters, leaflets or stickers.
- **TIPS:** The material can be used to support other environmental activities.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Beaches Without Cigarette Butts!

Target group: Beach visitors

Type: Awareness-raising

Duration: 2 - 3 hours

Country: Cyprus

BEACH

- **METHOD:** Cigarette butts are the number one polluting item on Cyprus beaches. Due to their composition, cigarette filters take a long time to disintegrate and remain in the sand or sea for up to 15 years. In this context, an information and awareness-raising campaign on all the Blue Flag beaches was launched in order to motivate smokers to participate in solving the problem instead of causing it. Therefore, a group of students properly trained and dressed looked for smokers among beach visitors, gave them leaflets explaining the problem and a specially designed beach ashtray for their personal use.



- **MATERIAL:** Posters, leaflets, ashtrays, tee-shirts. Camera.
- **PARTNERS:** Tobacco company, local tourism organisation, municipality.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Local media, press conference, touristic centers, kiosks and bars on the beach.
- **TIPS:** Ask tobacco company to be a sponsor and partner of the campaign.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Scanning the Beach for Cleanliness

Target group: School children

Type: Experiential/Action-oriented

Duration: 2 - 3 hours

Country: Cyprus

- **METHOD:** This activity was based on the connection between theoretical knowledge and experiential education. It was divided into two parts: a half-hour introduction with a power point presentation and printed materials in a conference centre close to the beach and two hours of field work which included ice-breaking games and art creations. The main outdoor activity was based on the international NALG protocol which is the scheme developed for assessing the aesthetic quality of coastal and bathing areas. Scanning the area by using ten children per group covering 150 m², about 8,000 cigarette butts were collected – a small item leading to huge pollution! At the end, a discussion about the bad habit of littering the beach took place and children promised to talk to the parents who smoke on the beach about it.



- **MATERIAL:** Educational posters and flyers about sea life and human impact on the coast, shovels, gloves, camera.
- **PARTNERS:** Environmental education centre, schools, youth clubs.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Advertised in schools, tourist offices and local media.
- **TIPS:** As a part of creative activity children can make special mini-bins for their parents or grandparents who smoke - made of photographic film or pill containers.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Create Your Own Beach Aquarium

Target group: Families, children, disabled

Type: Experiential/Awareness-raising

Duration: 2 – 3 hours

Country: Denmark

BEACH

- **METHOD:** *There are many fascinating animals and plants in the shallow water on the beach and in the harbour. Build your own aquarium! Put four branches into the sand and fold the transparent bag out of the branches. The size depends on the bag. Fill the bag with water and seaweed and use fishing net to catch different species or things in the water which can be put into the tank. Remember to pack up again and take the bag back home with you.*



- **MATERIAL:** *Supervision of parents or another adult, four branches per. person, transparent bags, fishing nets, camera.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Rangers, NGOs for disabled, schools, nurseries.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *Invitation emails to schools and nurseries, notices in local shops, local newspaper.*
- **TIPS:** *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Fjord Safari

Target group: Families, children, adults

Type: Experiential/Awareness-raising

Duration: 2 hours

Country: Denmark

- **METHOD:** Children are invited to go hunting in the shallow waters and find water eggs, tadpoles, shrimps, small fishes etc. Participants are equipped with fishing nets and buckets so the animals can be seen at close range. The lecturer introduces different species and explains the importance of marine biodiversity.



- **MATERIAL:** Waders, barefoot or boots, towels, fishing nets, buckets and aquariums, water binoculars, cameras.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Notice on the beach/harbour and in local stores, municipal website, local schools and youth centres, the local newspaper, the local sailing, diving and kayaking associations.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Notices on the beach/harbour and in local stores, municipal website, local schools and youth centres, the local newspaper, the local sailing, diving and kayaking associations.
- **TIPS:** Divide the participants into smaller groups (max. 10).
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Beach Paintings Exhibition

Target group: Children

Type: Awareness-raising

Duration: One day

Country: Greece

BEACH

- **METHOD:** Children are divided into groups, each one supervised and guided by a teacher. They are invited to express themselves with respect to the environment which needs to be protected. The theme of the paintings is open. Before the children start, there is a short informative session by their teachers, concerning the importance of clean environment and how our approach affects it. Afterwards all the paintings are installed on the beach and exhibited as long as possible, depending on the weather conditions.



- **MATERIAL:** Painting materials, cardboards, wooden sticks and things to fix the paintings, camera.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Environmental educators, municipalities, hotel managers, teachers.
- **COMMUNICATION:** The activity might be posted at tourist offices, environmental education centres, hotels, municipalities websites, and the national operator website.
- **TIPS:** Invite the artists to choose the best painting and give it an award.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

“Blue Army” Voluntary Cleaning

Target group: General public

Type: Action-oriented

Duration: Continuous

Country: Iceland

- **METHOD:** *The “Blue Army” is an organisation of volunteers sponsored by the Blue Lagoon spa management. It has been in the forefront of various environmental projects, especially regarding the cleaning up of the ocean and coastline. The Blue Army rids harbours and the coast of any kind of rubbish, waste material and anything that pollutes the ocean and poses a threat to the ecosystem.*



- **MATERIAL:** *Truck, bags, rakes, water and camera.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Personnel from the cleaning services and adult associations.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity may be promoted via beach information boards, local newspapers, internet, and social media.*
- **TIPS:** *To attract more participants, organise the tour during bank holiday or weekend.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Guided Geothermal Walks

Target group: Locals, visitors, employees

Type: Contact with nature

Duration: 2 - 3 hours

Country: Iceland

BEACH

- **METHOD:** *The aim of the Blue Lagoon guided tour is to introduce the surrounding environment to the locals, tourists and employees. The tour combines information about history and nature along the way and physical exercise in this unique environment. The participants walk through the moss-covered lava which boiled over this area in 1226. They learn about the specific nature and local fauna, as well as old routes in the area; and explore countless caves and grottos. The tour concludes with a walk through the geothermal park in Svartsengi, leading to the Blue Lagoon, where it ends.*



- **MATERIAL:** *Outdoor equipment (good trekking shoes needed), snacks and camera.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Environmental educators.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity may be posted on the beach information boards, published in local newspapers, on the internet, and social media.*
- **TIPS:** *The activity could be linked with special days, such as Earth Day.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Marram Grass Planting

Target group: Students from 14, adults

Type: Action-oriented

Duration: 3 hours

Country: Ireland

- **METHOD:** *The participants learn about the importance of sand dunes at their local Blue Flag beach as a coastal habitat and a natural coastal defence; about the different flowers that can be found, and their importance to different creature food chains (butterflies etc). The damage that can be caused to dunes from human interference is then explained, areas affected by erosion shown and the process of replanting explained. The participants are instructed to dig marram grass from plentiful areas and transplant it to the areas that have been affected by erosion. The area is marked to ensure that it is not trampled and checked on an ongoing basis. This is an excellent way of learning about the flora and fauna of a local Blue Flag beach and protecting it at the same time.*



- **MATERIAL:** *String, signs, wooden stakes to mark the area, shovels, cameras.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Environmental educators, secondary schools, local environmental groups, and youth groups.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity might be posted at tourist offices, environmental education centres, schools, and local community centres.*
- **TIPS:** *The head of the marram grass should be curled over thereby tricking the plant into growing stronger and faster as it believes that it is buried in sand. The planting is done in zig zag formations that decreases the effects of the wind on the newly planted area.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Amateur Lifeguards

Target group: Students aged 15 - 17

Type: Experiential/Action-oriented

Duration: 4 hours daily during the season

Country: Israel

BEACH

- **METHOD:** In order to create a future generation of lifeguards, the beach management takes volunteer students to work alongside the lifeguards, while educating them to recognise the dangers and safety procedures necessary to guard the public, wildlife and the marine environment. Through "personal voluntary projects" in high schools, the students are chosen from these projects to join the lifeguards. The lifeguards instruct and educate these volunteers in all the fields related to: search and rescue; first aid; and basic marine training.



- **MATERIAL:** Lifeguard posts, cameras.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** All the education volunteers from local high schools.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Local radio and newspapers, the beach director's website, the beach director's Facebook events page.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Recycled Art Workshop

Target group: Everybody

Type: Awareness-raising

Duration: Three hours

Country: Mexico

- **METHOD:** *The activity has two parts. The first one consists of: introduction and discussion about recycling – why it is important, how long does it take to decompose different kinds of waste, especially plastic bags and bottles. In the second one are the participants divided into smaller groups. Each group gets different waste material such as PET bottles, paper, plastic lids etc. The aim is to create a sculpture and beach users vote for the winner. The most beautiful, innovative and interesting piece of art gets a prize. The sculpture can remain on the beach for a couple of days.*



- **MATERIAL:** *Recycled material, wires, ecological glue and adhesive bands, tables, prizes, cameras.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Environmental educators, either voluntary or hired. Artists as jury members. Recycling company to provide the materials.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity might be promoted via tourist offices and environmental education centres.*
- **TIPS:** *Registration is needed to organise the groups by age.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Environmental Relay Race

Target group: Children and adults

Type: Experiential

Duration: 20- 30 minutes

Country: Portugal

BEACH

- **METHOD:** *The participants are invited to take part in a relay race and learn by playing about the local environment, positive and negative aspects of tourism and the Blue Flag programme. They use various objects and overcome obstacles. They are provided with cards to identify these characteristics by guessing the right answer to the questions concerning sustainable tourism. The team which collects the biggest amount of correct cards in the shortest time wins!*



- **MATERIAL:** *Sand bags, road signs, cards with questions, pail, squares and wooden boards, cameras.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Environmental educators, either voluntary or hired.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity might be posted at tourist offices, environmental education centres and on the information board on the beach.*
- **TIPS:** *Registration of participants will help to organise groups by age and number of children.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

Educational Walk about the Blue Flag Criteria

Target group: School children, adults

Type: Awareness-raising

Duration: Half day

Country: Serbia

- **METHOD:** “Ada Ciganilja – Savsko jezero” is the first beach in Serbia awarded the Blue Flag. School children, their teachers, and parents, were invited to take a half day visit to the beach (any beach visitors welcomed as well) guided by a National Operator. During the first part of the walk, the Nature Trail was introduced and typical local nature and the need for environmental protection discussed. The second part consisted of an informal lecture on the criteria that the Blue Flag beach has to meet to be awarded. The guide also talked with children about how they could help to keep the beach clean.



- **MATERIAL:** The Blue Flag brochures, camera.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Schools, beach staff, volunteers, environmental education centre, municipality.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Invitation letter for schools, information boards at schools and on the beach, local newspaper, printed programmes available at various kiosks on the beach.
- **TIPS:** Invite schools that participate in the Eco-Schools or YRE programmes.
- Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!

Educators Workshop

Target group: Teachers

Type: Experiential/Awareness-raising

Duration: 4 hours minimum

Country: South Africa

BEACH

- **METHOD:** *The workshop educates teachers on how to use the Blue Flag programme as an educational tool and the Blue Flag beaches as an outdoor classroom. The teachers are introduced to the coastal and marine environment, local plant and animal species, and pollution and litter issues. Practical activities and ideas that might be used in school are also discussed.*



Photo by: City of Cape Town, 2012.

- **MATERIAL:** *Indoor venue; educational materials, examples of animals and plants, camera.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Environmental education and marine conservation NGOs, local municipality, schools. .*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *Invitation emails for schools, municipality website.*
- **TIPS:** *Ensure that this activity doesn't interfere with normal teaching hours.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*

"Lenteprikkel" - Spring Feelings

Target group: Children, families

Type: Action-oriented

Duration: One week in spring

Country: The Netherlands

- **METHOD:** *The purpose of this activity is to raise awareness among the public about sustainable beach cleaning. "Lenteprikkel" is organised during the holiday weekend in spring. All participants are invited to clean part of the beach. In the meanwhile a professional lecturer explains how waste appears on the beach, how it harms the environment and how it is usually cleaned. This activity highlights the consequences of human behaviour and environmental protection.*



- **MATERIAL:** *Tee-shirts, beach flags, wheelbarrows, containers for litter, camera*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Municipality, province, campsites, environmental education organisation.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *The activity might be promoted via tourist offices, educational centres, campsite offices and local schools.*
- **TIPS:** *Registration might help to organise the participants into groups based on age or number of children.*
- *Remember to take a picture and post it on the Blue Flag Facebook page!*