

CASE STUDY

LEAF Programme



"We are bringing children closer to nature"

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PROFILE SNAPSHOT

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Country Denmark

Main sector Private

Uforest thematic discipline Socio-economics

Stage of development Implementation



By spreading environmental knowledge and skills that develop critical thinking on real-life sustainability issues.



By promoting access to green spaces for children, and by developing natural-cultural bonds.



By fostering actions to increase and preserve biodiversity and tree canopy.





START-UP

LEAF –Learning about Forests– is an international programme that promotes **tree-based outdoor learning for children**. Stemming from the 'Forest in Schools' programme in Norway, Sweden and Finland, since 2000 it operates on a global scope through the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).

LEAF'S GOALS:

- Ensure students learn to enjoy, experience and observe nature.
- Ensure students understand the ecological web and the interplay of human and nature.
- Ensure students can make decisions on environmental issues and take responsibility for their future.



INITIATIVE MODEL

MAIN ACTIVITIES:

What does LEAF do?

It offers 4 **Pedagogical Steps** for schools. The 4 LEAF Pedagogical steps are: **1) Look and observe, 2) Explore, 3) Analysis, 4) Function**. As part of their work with the LEAF pedagogical steps, schools are invited to:

- Create a forest committee that **engages students** to help plan and implement LEAF activities.
- Carry out a **research project** on a problem to solve or a question to answer connected to the four functions of forests: ecological, economic, social, and cultural.
- Develop an **education plan** to implement awareness-raising actions about forests (e.g., tree planting, creation of pollinator-friendly gardens, installation of bird feeders or insect hotels).
- Monitor and report progress about increased levels of awareness and changes in behaviour directly related to the research project and the educational plan.
- Inform and involve the whole **school and the wider community**, spreading the LEAF message.
- **Develop a forest code** that reflects on the school values in connection to the forest and nature. It can take the form of a poem, a poster, a song, or a mission statement.

LEAF also produces resources to execute the programme and help teachers engage with students effectively in outdoor activities. In addition, it maintains a FEE Academy and e-learning platform for the professional development of teachers and national operators, and develops an outdoor education course for teachers.

BENEFICIARIES:

Who benefits from LEAF's activities?

- 1. Young students** understand and reconnect with nature, gaining knowledge and a sense of responsibility towards the nature around them. They also build interpersonal and social skills and experience active citizenship.
- 2. Teachers** use a structured methodology to enrich their curricula with outdoor learning and assessment. They also enhance their professional skills and knowledge.
- 3. The local community** is engaged in the learning/teaching process, which helps develop social bonds.
- 4. Schools** that fulfill LEAF goals are awarded with a certificate that recognise their work, which helps them build a positive reputation among the educational community.
- 5. Public bodies** enrich their national and regional education curriculums with environmental programmes.

PROMOTION:

What is LEAF's promotion strategy?

LEAF's communication strategy and channels:

- LEAF promotion global and national websites.
- FEE website.
- E-mail.
- Online newsletter.
- Social media.
- National Operators meetings.



- LEAF brochure.
- Thematic campaigns (e.g., biodiversity, global action).

GOVERNANCE:

How does LEAF implement its activities?

LEAF is managed and coordinated from the **FEE Head Office** in Denmark:

- The **FEE Head Office** manages the programme and its activities, supports the development of the programme in new countries, and shares best practices with existing member countries.
- The **International Steering Committee** advises the FEE Head Office.

Activities are executed by FEE members at national level through a **LEAF national operator** that:

- coordinates and oversees the programme.
- encourages schools to work on the current LEAF theme.
- assesses and delivers the LEAF Award certificates.

In countries without a LEAF national operator, international schools report to the FEE Head Office.

FINANCES:

What are LEAF's main resources?

FEE member organizations running the LEAF programme pay an annual 400€ levy to the FEE Head Office. The costs of running LEAF at national level are covered through:

- **Private funding:** fees, corporate sponsorship, and donations.
- **Public funding:** government grants.

POLICY AND STANDARDS LEADING THE INITIATIVE:

LEAF is part of the FEE's '**GAIA 20:30 10-year strategy**' to address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. Moreover, the project was selected by HundrED, an NGO for innovation for education, as an inspiring initiative for a post-COVID world.



UNIQUENESS

What makes LEAF a one-of-a-kind project?

- It targets environmental challenges from an educational point of view, offering a **holistic methodology** that takes into account the cultural, economic, social and ecological aspects of forests.
- Through its international scope, there are over 960,000 students and 43,200 teachers involved.
- In several LEAF countries, the programme runs through an existing forest school programme.



EXPECTATION

By **2025**, LEAF aims at further scaling-up by reaching new countries, member organisations and more students. At the same time, it seeks to promote school ground greening projects and to engage in research opportunities.

What does LEAF need to be successful?

- Economic and human resources both for the FEE Head Office and for LEAF national operators.
- New assessment and evaluation tools to measure the programme's impact.

What are today's main challenges?

- Scale and adapt activities to different national contexts, realities, and academic curricula.
- Overcoming teachers' reluctance to conduct classes outdoors.

Promoted by:



In partnership with:

