

The FEE Italy Blue-FLag program, an example of how education creates positive changes

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Established in 1987, European Year of the Environment, Blue Flag is the early program of Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and now it is a world-renowned eco-label adopted by 45 countries certifying at whole 4423 between beaches, marinas and eco-tourism boats.

Chosen by millions around the globe, the Blue Flag is the quality label assigned on the basis of stringent criteria: environment, education, safety and access are the Blue Flag program pillars.

The education is in the centre of the Blue Flag programme ideals, with the aim to sensitize people, increasing their knowledge regarding environment.

On the other hand the FEE programs, with members in 76 countries around the world, play an educational primary role for Sustainable Development and Environmental Education.

There are several programmes dedicated to educate young people to raise a deeper environmental conscienty: Eco-Schools, LEAF and Young Reporters.

Blue Flag and Green Key promote sustainable management practices, achieving the environmental improvement aims by exploiting the fact that economic operators rise profits obtaining the ecolabel.

It is the vision of the Foundation for Environmental Education that our programmes empower people everywhere to live sustainably and in an environmentally conscious manner.

Italy agreed to Blue Flag program in 1987, and at now the Fee-Italy assigned the Blue Flags to 163 Municipalities (342 beaches) and 67 Marinas which correspond to about 5% of the beaches awarded worldwide.

Despite every year, according to the international FEE, the sustainability criteria (from the quality of water to separate collection) are becoming increasingly restrictive, there is a continuous increase in the Municipalities participating in the program: only in the last year 49 new Blue Flags for the beaches (distributed in 11 more municipalities).

Indeed, every year the requirements to obtain the Blue Flag are revisited with a view to continuous improvement. The aim is to stimulate the Municipalities to an environmental awareness to face the various aspects related to the direct management of the territory

This work presents a summary of the most significant improvements introduced by FEE-Italy that the Municipalities had to reach to achieve Blue Flags and some brief examples of marine environmental education programmes. This short journey will be a witness of the FEE vision: "a sustainable world in which education creates positive changes". The best gift we can leave to future generations is a world of educated and environmentally conscious people. Every day the FEE contributes with its programs to make difference.