

Case study

Náttúruskólinn – The Nature School

Iceland



The Nature School's main goal is to increase children's and adolescent's self-esteem and activity through collaborative challenges and training in nature.

The school offers courses in cooperation with schools during school season and leisure courses in cooperation with youth associations outside of school time.

The headquarters of the Nature School are in Óbyggðasetur Íslands in Fljótsdalur. The school also has access to several mountain- and forest cabins in eastern Iceland.



natturuskolinn.wordpress.com



Education



Wellbeing



Art and creativity



Forest activity

Education



Activity



The forest and wellbeing



The Nature School emphasizes outdoor, experiential learning, which is a form of teaching that generally reaches a wide group of students. Outdoor education is suitable for most children, especially the ones that are not in favor of much book learning and those that might be passive in traditional studies. Their self-confidence increases when they discover their own strengths as well as their respect and affection for their environment and nature.

Many of the projects that the participants undertake in the Nature School are related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Courses and activity for adults are under development.

Diversity, cooperation and self-confidence, environmental awareness, health promotion and challenges are essential in the school.

The educational projects include e.g., the following: Outdoor cooking from scratch, pitching, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, climbing and rock climbing, line work and knots, rock loading and wilderness first aid, creating art from natural wood, mindfulness in nature and learning to use a map and compass. Students are taught about culture and history, the highlands, the wilderness, Vatnajökull National Park, the biosphere, geology, sustainability and much more.

Some courses take place in forests and students benefit from the healing energy of the trees.

They learn about the forest, practice mindfulness, work on their creativity and craftsmanship through artmaking and benefit from various types of exercise and health-promoting outdoor activities and share quality time and reflection out in the open air.



Energy

Iceland is known for its renewable energy - almost every house in Iceland is heated by geothermal heating or electricity that is produced with hydropower. Electricity in Iceland is mostly produced with hydropower. In addition to that, The Nature School uses locally sourced firewood in their outdoor cooking and practices shared driving to use as few cars as possible, and they are working on activating carbon offsets regarding their trips.



Waste

When purchasing, consideration is given to buying domestically if possible and otherwise the most environmentally friendly option in terms of packaging and contents. Garbage is sorted, and the Nature School tries to reuse and recycle as much as possible.



Social responsibility and activity

The Nature School's work is largely about connecting children and adolescents, and in fact everyone, as much as possible with nature. Nature is therefore used as a teaching platform and as a framework for various kinds of self-improvement and work. Connecting people and society to the power and tranquility that can be found in Icelandic nature and forests is regarded as a definite step towards sustainability.

