

OPERATION: LOVE YOUR BEACH

UNESCO COMMUNITY SANDWATCH PROJECT COMPETITION

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Our project was quite interesting and fun. At times it proved a little more difficult than we initially thought, but the community and school support made us continue. The students and some teachers at our school were very interested in our project. I think our principal was happy that we were doing a UNESCO project. At the start we were excited, but we didn't even know what **UNESCO** was. Mrs. Sweeting explained it and help us brainstorm about the Sandwatch Project.

We started during our Christmas vacation. We met many people from the South beach area. At first they looked at us strange, especially since our school wasn't the nearest school to the beach. When we explained that our Island is so, small the beach is near to everyone and that we use the beach too, they understand stood. From talking to people we found out that the beach is cleaned by the Member of Parliament for the area often, so we set out to talk to her. Her name is Mrs. Marcel. She introduced us to some of the people who had help to clean the beach. We also found out who use the beach. It is used by church groups for early-morning prayer meetings, by people who want to have lunch by the beach, by families in the evenings and week ends and at night time by young people who want to be alone together.

From our many interviews and observations we figured out the problems. There were two things: (1) People did not give much thought to the cleanliness of the beach and (2) there were no garbage bins on the beach. To solve these problems we ran a poster competition for students, and gave winning posters out as flyers. Secondly we made garbage bins for the beach by painting fifty-five gal drum with environmental messages. Imagine how disappointed it was when return to find all our garbage bins had gone missing missing. Our Coordinator told us not to worry, we'll try something else and that our report was going to be more interesting. To fix the problem of the stolen bins we came up with the idea of trying to get one the extra large industrial size bins for the beach. This created other problems though; we could not find one and didn't have any money. Finally we were able to get one.

This project taught us a lot of things. One lesson is never to give up because the environment needs us. We learnt that children can make a difference. South beach is cleaner from our effort and we had fun.

INTRODUCTION

Our project was originally named Beach Lovers, Earth Preservers. Later we changed it to **Operation Love Your Beach**, because we thought that would make it more personal. It did, especially after we were on TV.

South Beach is a beach on the Southern part of New Providence, the Bahamian island we live on. South beach is next to a community called South Beach in an area called South beach. It is not very near to our school, but of all the beaches on our island, it was the worst. It needed more attention than the others. Our coordinator said the only challenge would be getting there and we could go half at a time during the first stage then, everybody at clean-up times.

We knew our project was a big challenge because even though the represent organized clean-ups of the beach on a regular basis, it was still in poor condition. At the beginning it was just us 12 in what seemed like a gigantic problem. There was even a plane crashed on the beach. The problem was huge! And we were just little children. Motivational talks by our coordinator and sharing up the tasks made it look a little easier, until we came to another problem. Now that we're done we are happy we did this project. Supplying a large bin for this beach is one the government can support our efforts.

OBJECTIVES

- **Study the South beach area**
- **Let people on New Providence especially in that area know about the problem.**
- **Try out a solution to the pollution problem**
- **Get people to help**
- **Give the Member of Parliament recommendations**
- **Write a report for the Sandwatch Competition**

RESULT OF MONITORING

We found out that:

- the a wide variety of different people were using the beach
- people use the beach all times of the day
- Once people understand our purpose they were cooperative
- Young adults used the beach generally after dark
- We had to distribute flyers that could be enjoyed by people of different ages
- Our assessment had to be on going

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Although we started our project in November it took a while for us to decide on an angle from which to tackle our problem. We knew we wanted to work on South Beach because we had done a coastal survey there before. We had a hard time getting everybody to agree on what to do on south Beach. Four days a week in December we visited the beach. Our coordinator helped out at night time.

When we combined all of our notes, we realized what the cause of the problem was. There were no garbage bins and people did not want to keep garbage in their car to carry back home.. They did not give much thought to the cleanliness of the area and so nobody really noticed the extent of the problem. The Member of Parliament, who had also been trying, was very happy with what we were doing. We shared our findings with her.

We got support from clubs at our school. The 4-H Club, The Pride Club and The Red Cross Link help us with the clean up effort. After cleaning the beach we installed garbage bin we had painted and decorated. At first the bins weren't collected by the garbage collectors. When our coordinator called Environmental Health Department they picked it up the next week. Two weeks after we had placed the bins on the beach, there were no bins left. They had all been stolen. We think people wanted to use them at home for their personal garbage bins.

We were very sad and felt that we had gone no where with our project. Our Coordinator call Environmental Health for an extra large garbage container that can not be easily stolen, but they said that they had none. Theirs were all in the schools and at major corporations. Mrs. Sweeting called and wrote letters to

private companies. During this time our beach was getting dirtier by the minute. Finally, someone got a brilliant idea to call ZNS our TV station. We planned another beach clean-up for anyone who would come. It was a success.

People from Dolphin Encounters were also invited. They spoke to everyone about why we should not litter on our beaches. Mr. Renaldo Smith, who was our speaker told us how it is easy for marine animals to get trapped. We were each given a rubber band and told to put it across the back of one hand and hitch it onto our thumb and smallest finger. With the other hand behind our back we had to try to get the rubber band off. Most of us did not get it off. Mr. Smith said if we were animals in the sea, we would have died. He also told us that turtles eat jellyfishes, when we litter the beach with plastic bags they go and float in the water. Now, along comes this hungry turtle he looks up and see what he thinks is a big jellyfish. The turtle eats the plastic bag not knowing it is not what he thinks it is. The bag blocks off his stomach because it can not be digested. Days go by and the turtle starves its self thinking its full, then suddenly one day the turtle dies. Clean-up day was an interesting one. We had a little competition to see which group could gather the most trash. After hearing it was competition, every-one did their best by picking up lots of garbage. The beach was really clean. We found many things such as clothing, tools, plastic bags, forks, straws, refrigerator parts, glass bottles, plastic bottles, condoms, food trays, tires, shoes, cans, and draws. After an hour and a half we stopped and tallied everything we found.

ZNS TV came and our coordinator and several students were interviewed. By the end of that week one of the private garbage companies called to say they would let us have the garbage container for a month, if we could agree to pay the taxes. Our coordinator agreed. We are already seeing the benefit from the container. We feel this is one thing the government can do to help

the situation. The ideal solution would be for a cleaning crew to be assigned to take care of the beach and a large Industrial bin be put there for garbage. From this project we learnt children can make a difference. Without money, things move slowly, but if we have patience and never give up, we can have success. And that's what we want for our beach.

CONCLUSION

We were pleasantly surprised to find a simple yet difficult solution to our problem. When we brainstormed at first we talked more about beautification of our beach. Conch is a popular food in our country and so there are a lot of shells lying around. We thought about making benches and unique sculptures out of conch shells for beautifying our beach. Little did we know just cleaning it up would take all of our time.

Although very late in project, we are especially pleased that Private Garbage Company came through. We are hoping to make this an on going project. We plan to produce brochure of the do's and don'ts for users of our beach. We will also wish to have a meeting with the opposition representative for South Beach to get some help from her or name of people she thinks can help us keep an Industrial garbage container on South beach. We know we can not afford to pay for the container but we will not stop looking for people who can help.

We are grateful for hundreds of people who have had to help with this project. We are especially proud of our school for its support.