

Sandwatch Workshop in Cape Verde Islands, 2009

On August 25-28th, Sandwatch held with the assistance of the UNESCO Office Dakar, Senegal and the Cape Verde UNESCO National Commission, a `train-the-trainers workshop` on Santiago Island, in Cape Verde's capital city Praia.

Educators from several Cape Verde Islands, as well as from Senegal, Guinea Bissau, The Gambia and Mauritania flew in from around West Africa to learn about Sandwatch. Over the course of four (4) days, the delegates learned not only Sandwatch's tests and methods, but also several other technical skills, such as testing water samples for contaminants, how to edit simple videos, how to use Google Earth as a teaching tool, how to edit photographs and how to use several types of online resources and utilities. Teachers also got the chance to learn about each other's community projects and even had the opportunity to see some of the sights around Cape Verde.

During the workshop, educators had the chance to not only learn Sandwatch methods on a local beach, but also how to test sea water for various contaminants, using simple tests contained within a US made kit. These kits were made available to all participants courtesy of UNESCO who had them delivered from the US especially for the workshop.

The workshop was quite a challenge for everyone involved as it was conducted in three (3) languages. First, instructions would be given in English, then translated into French by Sandwatch's French Programme Coordinator, Mrs. Pascale Gabriel, which would be in turn translated into Portuguese by two local translators. This process had to be repeated innumerable times over the 4 day workshop, and of course the process had to be reversed every time a question was asked or an observation made.

But despite the language barriers, we managed to share quite a lot of new knowledge and skills, and also learned a great deal about each other countries and communities.

An increasingly important part of Sandwatch workshops and training is not only showing educators how to use the Sandwatch goals and methodology, but also how to network and expand your project using inexpensive or free technologies. Using Google Earth to show people where your country/community/school/beach is located, or using it to teach your students geography is very popular with teachers, especially the first time they use it.

Using the free video editing program, MS-Movie Maker to create and edit simple videos that you and your students can create even using a cell phone camera, is also a very popular and valuable skill with numerous uses, even over and above Sandwatch...though 2 dozen schools worldwide did use Movie Maker for The Sandwatch 2008 Climate Change Video Contest.

Also part of the workshop training is showing educators how to use such popular and useful utilities and programs, such as photo editing software, Face Book, You-Tube and even free online language translation sites such as Yahoo translate or Babel Fish.

Below are several photos of participants at the Cape Verde workshop using Google Earth, Movie Maker, photo editing software and several other useful online programs.



Classroom Work

