

SANDWATCH TRAINING WORKSHOP

Mayaro, Trinidad and Tobago, 9th June 2022

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On Thursday 9th June, 2022 a Sandwatch workshop was held at the bpTT Mayaro Resource Centre, Beaumont Road, Mayaro. The theme of the workshop was, 'Adapting to climate change and education for sustainable development'. There were 30 participants consisting of curriculum officers, principals and teachers of the primary and secondary schools of Trinidad and Tobago, and two representatives from the UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean. The workshop commenced with greetings from Ms. Debra Lalloo, the Secretary General of the Trinidad and Tobago National Commission for UNESCO. This was followed by remarks from Dr. Jean-Paul Ngome Abiaga, the Programme Coordinator for Natural Sciences and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.

The presenter of the workshop, Mr. Andy Paul, Principal of the Mayaro Government Primary school, then proceeded to introduce the invitees to the Sandwatch program; highlighting that Sandwatch is an educational process through which school students, teachers and local communities work together in the field to monitor their coastal environments. The key components and skills required in the Sandwatch program were summarized by the acronym M.A.S.T. (monitoring, analyzing of data, sharing information and taking action) and the diverse equipment and material used for gathering data on the beaches were demonstrated to the audience. Mr. Andy Paul continued by sharing his experiences while interacting with other schools and countries that are part of the Sandwatch program. He emphasized the need for principals, teachers and communities to get involved in the Sandwatch program, showing its relevance and adaptability to the school curriculum across many subject areas such as: Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Geography and Social Studies.

The afternoon session entailed the practical approach to Sandwatch. All invitees proceeded to the Mayaro Beach. Once on the beach all persons were placed into groups where they interacted with a lead member of Sandwatch, who displayed the skills required in the collecting of data. Teachers learnt the proper technique in completing the following: calculating longshore drift, measuring the length of beach area, calculating the height of the waves, measuring wind speed and sketching the cross section of the beach using proper tools. Teachers were better able to make the connection to Sandwatch and popular environmental issues such as: beach erosion and accretion, sediment composition, the impact of human activities on the beach as well as the effects of pollution.

After the field visit to the beach, all persons returned to the bpTT Mayaro Resource Centre. Teachers were introduced to the Sandwatch website, which is used to upload and share data gathered about the beach studied. Reflections on the experiences of the entire Sandwatch program were shared. The teachers expressed that it was fun, interesting and others saw it as a suitable avenue for their field trips and school based assessments. At the end of the session seven teachers pledged their commitment towards spearheading the Sandwatch program when they returned to their schools, while others shared their interest in follow-up workshops in the future.

Photographs of the training

Mayaro Beach



Participants

UNESCO representatives (left) and Curriculum Officers (right)



Measuring beach width and beach length



Measuring beach profiles

