



LONG BEACH CLEAN-UP REPORT 2024

CARIBBEAN YOUTH ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

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Description

On 20th January 2024, the Barbados Chapter of CYEN coordinated a beach clean-up with Gildan at Long Beach, Christ Church. The clean-up, which had a total of 23 participants, began at 6:30 am and ended at 8.30 am, lasting a total of 2 hours. Although weather conditions were windy and overcast with a few scattered showers, participants were able to clear 0.23km of the beach.



Figure 1: Image of CYEN in Barbados member and Gildan employees cleaning along the beach

During the 2-hour clean-up, the groups cleared the area, collecting 13 garbage bags of discarded materials. A total of **2670** items weighing **173.3kg** were collected; some of which included food wrappers (**122**), straws/stirrers (**46**) and construction materials (**39**). The top 3 items of local concern were found to be microplastics (tiny plastic pieces) (**709**) which accounted for **26.55%** of collected items, plastic bottle caps (**509**) which accounted for **19.06%** of collected items and rope (**316**) which accounted for **11.84%** of collected items. Other items which occurred frequently included plastic beverage bottles (**219**), other plastic/foam packaging (**137**), plastic lids (**132**), food wrappers (**122**) and foam pieces (**106**). In addition to the recurring items, the groups also noted the odd items they collected and/or saw. These included a turkey baster, plastic toys, toothbrushes, pedals, and hangers.



Figure 2: Image of CYEN in Barbados member weighing a collected garbage bag

From the compiled data, plastic accounts for more than half (**71.22%**) of the total garbage collected and it should be noted that most of these plastics were partially broken down. These plastics travel far and wide resulting in their effects being felt worldwide such as the population of the oceans by plastics. This data, therefore, continues to support the plea for the complete ban of single-use plastics and the creation of programmes and campaigns focused on reducing existing plastics within the environment. It was also noted that fishing gear accounted for **13.15%** of the total garbage collected. When this fishing gear is not collected, it can have devastating effects on marine ecosystems if washed out into the sea. For example, they can entangle and trap juvenile and mature fish and other sea creatures and destroy ocean floors. Therefore, fishing gear must be retrieved after use and initiatives must be put in place so that the gear is collected from beaches. Legislation surrounding punishments for discarded fishing gear should be updated to act as deterrents and a preventative measure against the destruction of marine ecosystems and to reflect a concern for the environment.



Figure 3: Image of large marine debris being collected in garbage bags.



Figure 4: Image of CYEN in Barbados Members and Gildan employees

Conclusion

With the effort of 23 participants, 0.23 km of beach was covered, resulting in the removal of 173.3 kg of marine debris within 2 hours under windy, overcast weather conditions. It can therefore be inferred that Long Beach may have a high density of marine debris, and ongoing cleanup efforts, such as the ones undertaken by companies like Gildan and organizations like CYEN, are needed to maintain a clean and safe environment.