

**The Integrated
Solid Waste Management
Programme - BARBADOS.**

**The
Plastic Bag
Project**



"Reduce The Use!"

SEWERAGE AND
SOLID WASTE PROJECT UNIT
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



RESEARCH

FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

"By 2004 we will be using 100 MILLION PLASTIC BAGS unless we Reduce the Use", says Minister.

The Hon. Phillip Goddard, Minister of Health, told retailers and other stake-holders that *"Plastic bag use by retailers in Barbados is escalating at an alarming rate and so the Ministry of Health has embarked on a campaign to urge Barbadians to reduce the use of plastic bags and to promote the use of a re-usable bag."*

For this reason, the Ministry of Health's Sewerage & Solid Waste Project Unit (S.S.W.P.U.) is devising a comprehensive plastic bag reduction campaign.

According to Ms.Sandra Prescod, Project Manager Solid Waste, *"the research findings on the growing problem of plastic bag use in Barbados show the urgent need for all of us to come on board and reduce the use of plastic bags."* Ms Prescod also stressed that *"apart from plastic bags clogging drains and being strewn in public locations in an unsightly manner, many Barbadians remark that they often have a stock pile of plastic bags in a drawer or cupboard at home intended for reuse but often disposed of eventually because the volumes are too great to manage".*



RESEARCH

Two research companies were employed to inform the development of the project: 1) The Halden Group and 2) Applied Marketing Consultants.

The Halden Group carried out quantitative and qualitative research in order to find out:

- * *What is the present consumption of plastic bags in Barbados?*
- * *How fast is this growing?*
- * *What will be the probable consumption over the next five years?*
- * *What is the attitude of retailers towards the issue?*

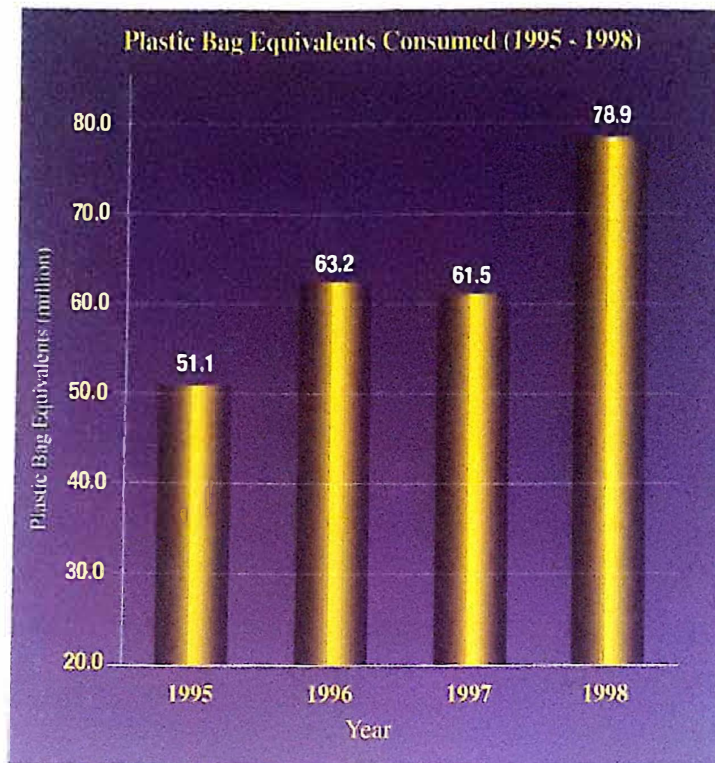
They researched the import and export data relating to plastics as provided by the Barbados Statistical Service and held one-on-one interviews with retailers.

The main findings were:

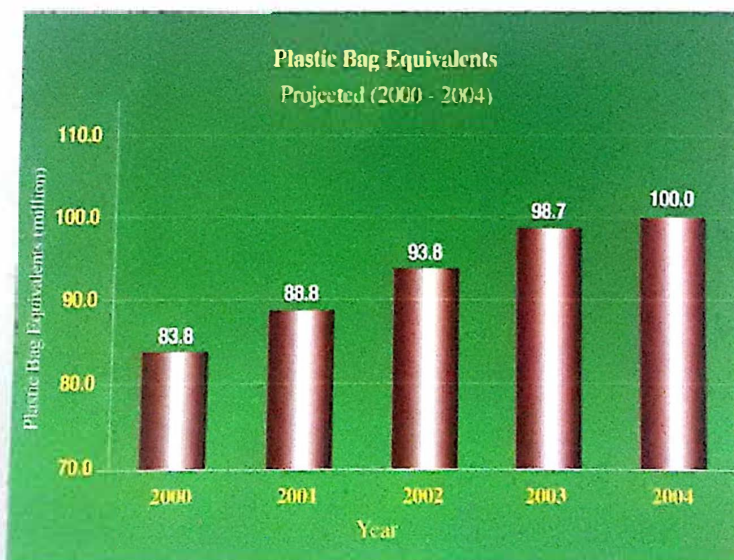
- 1) In 1998 Barbadians used 1,137,297kg of plastic bags which is the equivalent of 78,928,000 18" x 22" bags. Nearly 79 million bags!!
- 2) If current growth patterns continue we will be using 100 Million bags by 2004!
- 3) Retailers were sensitive to the issue. Some had attempted individually to provide alternatives in the past and those interviewed were willing to co-operate and collaborate to do so in the future. Applied Marketing Consultants carried out both



RESEARCH



Consumption of Plastic Bags from 1995-1998 estimated in millions



Projected use of Plastic Bags from 2000-2004 estimated in millions



RESEARCH

qualitative and quantitative research in order to find out:

- * *What people use plastic bags for in their homes?*
- * *How aware were members of the general public about the plastic bag problem?*
- * *How willing were they to change their usage of plastic bags?*
- * *Which alternatives did they prefer?*

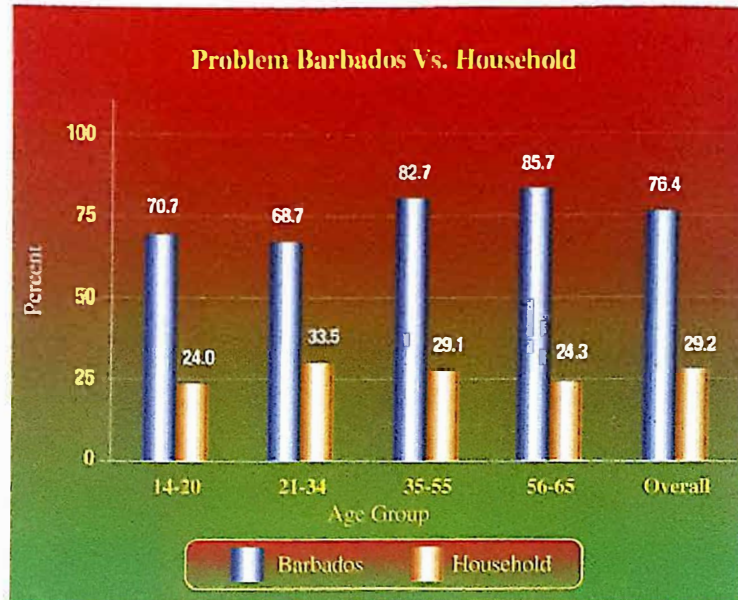
Focus groups were held and an island - wide telephone interview sample survey was conducted.

The main findings were:

- 1) 76.4% of interviewees acknowledged that there was a problem with the amount of plastic bags used in Barbados.
- 2) But only 29.2% perceived that there is a problem in their own household.
- 3) 96.8% use the "*free plastic shopping bags*" for garbage and storage.
- 4) Of these, nearly 80% (79.4%) said that they could reduce the number of bags that they use and still dispose of their garbage adequately and maintain sanitary conditions!
- 5) Also, nearly 80% (79.6%) said they were willing to take their own bags to the supermar-



RESEARCH



Projected use of Plastic Bags from 0-100%

ket and a cloth bag was the preferred type of bag for this purpose.

- 6) 75.6% of all people asked felt that a public education campaign to get Barbadians to use less plastic bags would be successful.



INDICATIONS OF RESEARCH

* The plastic bag does perform a useful function in garbage disposal.

* But clearly, the growth in consumption of plastic bags requires action! Whilst not trying to eliminate plastic bags, we must attempt to reduce our use of them.

* Most people agree that there is a problem with the number of plastic bags being used, but seem to think that they themselves do not contribute to the problem.

* The majority of Barbadians are however willing to play their part in the plastic bag project.

* The majority believe that this can be achieved through an educational campaign.





CAMPAIGN

In the light of the research the campaign will:

- a) Urge Barbadians to use less plastic bags.
- b) Help with the development and promotion of a reusable alternative.

The campaign theme will be

“Reduce the ‘e’”

and it will be championed by the Solid Waste Management Programme’s mascot -

“Grace Waste”.





**“YOU, ME,
ALL AH’ WE!**

If we are to succeed we must all play our part.
So when you next go shopping -

- * Refuse unnecessary plastic bags - Ask yourself
- "Do I really need that bag?" If the answer is
"NO" then tell the shop attendant, "I don't
need that bag!"
- * Tell the packer to only use smaller bags
inside bigger ones if it is really necessary.
- * Carry your own bags whenever practical to
do so or try some other alternative to the plas-
tic bag, like a box for example.

“You, me, all ah’ we...

reduce the use

of the plastic bag!”

DEFINITIONS

Qualitative Research: Research which is concerned with the nature of an issue and does not yield numerical findings.

Quantitative Research: Research which is measured by quantity and yields numerical findings.

Plastic Bag Equivalent: The mass of plastic contained in an 18" x 22" x 0.03mm bag.

BACKGROUND

Following input from the general public and other interested parties, the Sewerage & Solid Waste Project Unit (SSWPU) of the Ministry of Health embarked on a public waste reduction drive. This was part of the Government of Barbados' Integrated Solid Waste Management Programme. One of the elements of this drive was identified to be the reduction in the number of plastic bags entering the waste stream.

Having completed a trial campaign, SSWPU decided to further develop the reduction drive with the assistance of a professional communications company. Bowie Cross Advertising was selected to assist Government with this task.

The Objectives of the Promotion were as follows:

1. To reduce the amount of plastic bags in the solid waste stream.
2. To reduce the amount of plastic bags being issued to the public by retail outlets.
3. To assist businesses to encourage customers to participate in the promotion.

The following outlines the campaign strategy:

Phase 1: Research to determine:

- * The quantity and type of plastic bags retained in Barbados.
- * To project the impact of the continuation of current practice.
- * To assess current attitudes among sectors of the population to bag usage.
- * To gain insights into the receptivity of various segments of the community to behavioural change with respect to bag reduction.
- * To test opinion towards various bag alternatives which may be considered for implementation.

Phase 2: From the research a clearer idea of the communications strategy was developed and the most effective communications channels selected to reach the targeted section of our society.

This brochure will provide the Barbados public with insights into the Plastic Bag problem by highlighting the key research findings. It will also describe the communications strategy developed. This will allow the public to better appreciate the benefits of the campaign and therefore harness that vital public support for the successful outcome of the project which is to **REDUCE THE USE OF PLASTIC BAGS.**

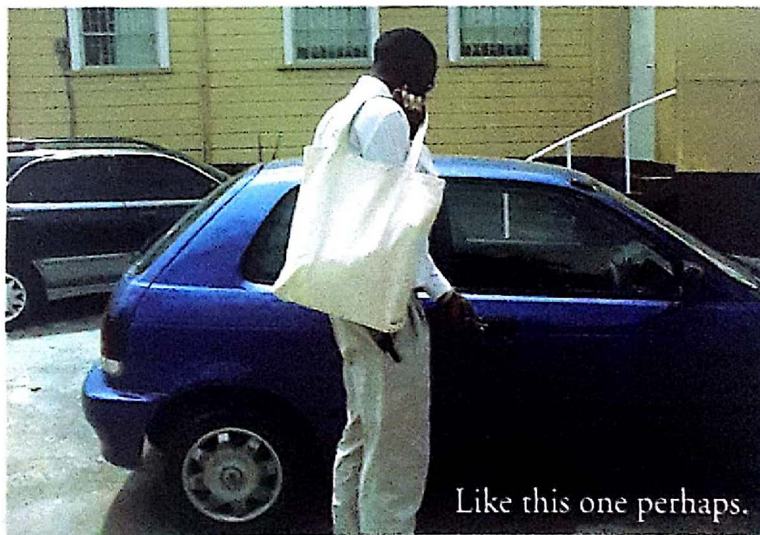


BRING YOUR OWN BAG

Going to the shop, supermarket, store or 'where-so-ever' you do your shopping is not a new phenomenon or recent practice. We can see from the advertising of the 1800s how popular and competitive the retail trade was. Barbados had so many shops that it could have borrowed Napoleon's phrase used of England that it was "*a Nation of shopkeepers.*"

What is different about yesterday's shopping methods and today's? Many areas of practice have undergone significant change, some for the better, some unfortunately for the worse.

PLASTIC BAGS are now so overused in the shopping exercise that a serious problem is now being created with the sheer volume of plastic bags. We can solve this problem if we take two easy steps. First, everyone must use less plastic bags. Secondly, please BRING YOUR OWN BAG when you go shopping.





**Now on
at a store near you!**

Rated GPP
General Public Participation

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