

## PROJECTO OCEANO – APRIL 2011 REPORT



April heralded the departure of Max and Margarida, Projecto Oceano's Australian-Portuguese on-site management team. Emotions were high amongst our Mozambican Project members in recognition of 9 months of hard work and emotional involvement by Max and Margarida. Their lessons and general impact on the Project will not be forgotten by the students, and it was with genuine sadness that we bid them farewell and *bon voyage* to Tanzania. Projecto Oceano organised a barbecue on the beach to thank Max and Margarida and to officially welcome James, with grilled fish and laughs aplenty.

April also saw Ilha's Palm Sunday celebrations, carried out in true African style with palm-branch processions and singing through the streets. The number of people participating belied the fact that only 10% of Ilha's inhabitants are Christian, and helped to ensure it was a memorable day.

A smooth induction week ensured that James, the new on-site volunteer, could hit the ground running with the various elements involved in managing the Project's operations. It was important in James' first month to continue the 'professionalisation' of the Project, involving workshops with our students to agree on rules for computer use, study time, class timetables and outlining plans to take us to the end of 2011. This will be a theme throughout James' tenure, as we look to introduce 'Western' standards of professionalism and accountability in an environment where 'vacane vacane' ('slowly does it' in Makua, the indigenous dialect of Ilha) often dictates the pace of life.

Events worthy of note included transferring capoeira practice from the beach to a closed courtyard, allowing the younger students to practice in private without their friends giggling at the odd tumble. We now have a weather-proof and secure practice area, and with increasing numbers of young students participating our Capoeira team continues to go from strength to strength.

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In the Project's classrooms, as one batch of students successfully completed the three I.T. courses taught by the Project teachers, the hunt began for increasing new student inscriptions. As ever, we were overwhelmed with subscriptions and work has started in earnest to control our larger classes. The highlight for James was to see Shany, one of the founding members of the Project, giving his 'punctuality' pep talk to a new batch of students. Late arrivals will not be tolerated!

April also saw the creation of Projecto Oceano's library, which currently consists of 40 items, ranging from curriculum-approved Maths books to foreign-language novels. We introduced a book borrowing system whereby Project students can take books home for homework purposes for up to 3 days. Parallel to this, we now welcome any student on Ilha to come into the Project for 'Study Group' between 16.00 and 17.00, during which time they are able to use our books, computers, and to study homework together. In the second half of the month a buzz descended on the Project as school term started again and our daily Study Group started running out of chairs! James' language capabilities were severely tested as secondary school French tests necessitated the explanation of when to use the imperfect subjunctive...it has been a long time since he last looked at his French grammar!

The end of the month witnessed James frantically juggling month-end budget and management reports, moving into a new accommodation and dodging knee high puddles in the street as the rainy season lived up to its name. It was a full month, full of new challenges for both the students and our new volunteer, and we hope to have laid the foundations for a challenging and gratifying 2011.