

PROJECTO OCEANO – NOVEMBER 2011 REPORT



Mozambique Secondary Schools finish for the year in November, so this month has given Projecto Oceano an opportunity to focus on issues outside the Mozambican Curriculum. We have had a great and action-packed month, encompassing volleyball tournaments, exam results, university applications, guided tours for tourists in the Project, and CV writing classes. Read on for more information...

We were lucky enough to have Freddie Brunt, AZLera's UK Manager and ex-manager of Projecto Oceano, visiting the Project for 2 weeks at the start of the month. As Freddie's role in AZLera grows and time on Ilha becomes an increasingly precious commodity, we had a very busy fortnight packed with meetings, evaluations and activities with the Project teachers, and a cheeky dhow trip to one of Mozambique's most beautiful beaches. Aside from exhaustive year-end evaluations, one of our main focuses was identifying the next steps for some of our more mature students, and discussing the practicalities and requirements of university in Mozambique. Having invested nine years of education into our core students, they are now undoubtedly ready to take the next step to university education: our challenge, which is a considerable one, is raising funds to pay for their education. In our nine years to date, AZLera has successfully run Projecto Oceano on a very small budget – our effectiveness in the community, and in particular on our core Project members, has been fantastic

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given the tight financial ship that we run. The moment has now arrived for greater investments; university fees (circa US\$1,800 per annum per student) are very low in comparison to the developed world, but are an insurmountable amount for a low-income Mozambican family. Public scholarship schemes in Mozambique are largely unobtainable due to complicated and unfortunately murky details; the only realistic option for our students is funding through AZLera or external donors. In addition to keeping Project Oceano's day-to-day classes running, we must now focus on fundraising for the most talented of our group of Mozambican students.

Our shifting focus this month has been reflected in the on-the-ground running of the Project. Whereas in past years we have run activities and *campos de férias* for younger children during school holidays, this year we have taken on an altered curriculum for the next 2 months. We have identified a big gap here on Ilha de Moçambique for students who finish secondary school with the requisite grades. In many developed countries there are established processes leading from school to tertiary education or the world of work; Mozambique has not yet developed these systems. Given that many Projecto Oceano students are coming to the end of school, these 'holiday' weeks are best used in starting CV, job application and university application classes. The classes were open to the wider community and have started well; the next challenge will be to progress the theory of job applications and CVs to the practical world of the job market. More than any other classes I have run here in Mozambique, Projecto Oceano's CV course has attended regularly and participation has been free of the *brincadeira* attitude that occasionally creeps into language classes! See our website for uploaded CVs showing the calibre of students we work with.

The last week of November was nervously anticipated, as final secondary school grades were released after the end of exams. We know our students well, but there were still some anxious moments as we waited to see if their hard work over the past months and years would pay off when it counted. Thankfully there were no reasons for concern, and our core group of students excelled relative to their peers. Looking at the long lists of exam results, it was a fantastic feeling to see Projecto Oceano's students leading the field in practically all of their respective subjects. Our focus in the past couple of years on languages and I.T. was particularly evident, with Tino Chamudissine, Manuel Domingos, Firoza Abdulcadre and Jose Issufo leading the whole school in English and French marks. Our best performer in I.T. was unsurprisingly Manuel; the classes he has been teaching voluntarily in the Project for the last few years have taught him much more than most Mozambican students ever get the opportunity to learn. Jose Issufo, whose goal is to study architecture, gained very impressive grades in Maths and Design, the core requirements for entrance into Architecture courses.

One of the most impressive things in November has been the attitude of our core group of students towards their grades: they are justifiably proud of their achievements, but are by no means resting on their laurels. They know that whilst they have already achieved more than their peers on Ilha, the bigger challenge lies in how they can use their hard work to make a better future. They have focussed on CV and job application classes, and are actively looking for routes into university (entrance exams, application procedures etc.). AZLera's role for the cream of this crop is now to facilitate and guide them into tertiary education through whatever means we can find.

In an effort to spread the word about AZLera's work, Projecto Oceano has started this month to invite tourists and residents of Ilha de Moçambique into the Project space. We are approaching a decade of work in Mozambique, and are very keen to share our achievements and ambitions with others. We believe we have a unique education model with proven success – increasing awareness of this can only go to motivate and help others. We have had several groups of visitors to the Project, and we hope that they will support us in the future, either financially or via other means. From Swedish venture capitalists through to American website designers, Australian social workers and Mozambican headmasters, we have had a lot of interest in Projecto Oceano. Ten years is a big landmark for AZLera – we want to share this achievement not only with those who have played a big part since

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2002, but also with those keen to work with us in the future. If you would like more information on our organisation and our achievements to date / objectives for the future, please write to info@azlera.com. We are, as ever, open to all suggestions, enquiries, questions and comments!