

## PROJECTO OCEANO – OCTOBER 2011 REPORT



As expected, October was one of the most hectic months since my arrival on Ilha de Moçambique back in March of this year. The annual Onhipiti Festival was the focus of the Project in the latter half of the month, whilst many of our students were studying hard for the end-of-school year exams at the start of November. On a general note, I was very impressed that the main body of our students organized themselves so well in October, finding time to both study and work in the Project. We are proud to say that Projecto Oceano's contributions and activities provided many of the highlights of the Festival; a fair reflection of the constant hard work of the whole AZLera team. Photos on the website will show a selection of our activities...

The OnHipiti Festival affords Projecto Oceano its biggest annual chance to showcase our talent and work to the wider community. Where we have previously taken on a big role in the overall organization of the event (transport, logistics etc), 2011 saw us focus more closely on our own participation in the festival. As a result, we were able to put on a very impressive show of our capabilities, whilst not being overly distracted by the wider organizational chaos of the Festival!

As many of our classes focus on children from the age of 10 years and older, the Festival gave us a great opportunity to work with some younger kids. With the help of our most experienced students we came up with a variety of activities to involve both our students, young kids and the wider community. My idea was to delegate as much of the responsibility for each activity to an individual member of the Project, empowering them to organize the separate events themselves. On the whole, this was a successful approach, thanks to the endeavor of our students, and their hard work ensured that the Project was strongly represented over the 2 days of the festival. In summary, our main students and the activities they organized are outlined below:

### **Coman & the Art Competition**

Coman once again demonstrated how consistently effective his organizational abilities are. During a hectic opening morning of the festival, he organized a fantastic art competition for 15 lucky primary school kids. The challenge was simple...each student was given 45 minutes, a pencil, a selection of crayons and a piece of paper to draw whatever came to their fancy.

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Although I am not sure we discovered the next Monet or Van Gogh, the winning 3 drawings richly deserved their prizes of textbooks, pens and biscuits! Well done to Coman for keeping the competition both fun and well-organised!

## **Firoza, Tino and sandcastles on the beach**

Another 15 young children from Ilha entered the sand castle competition, to be adjudicated by our social debates coordinator Firoza and our Voz Jovem editor / in-house poet, Tino. Although Tino would undoubtedly have preferred to be typing away at the next edition of the newspaper, and Firoza researching the impact of Gadhaffi's demise on the Mozambican exchange rate for our next debate, they both managed the competition very well. Lo and behold, more prizes were given out by Projecto Oceano, and Saquina Beach next to the fortress was the site of some impressive sand structures. Unfortunately, these were soon washed away by a rising tide, but photographic evidence was recorded in the event that the adjudication's decisions on the winners are questioned retrospectively. Both art competitions give Projecto Oceano a chance to get to know talented young kids on Ilha, and bring them into the Project when we next hold an art activity day. This, in turn, is a springboard for us to get these young students into our language and I.T. classes.

## **Project Stall**

The Project stall was the centre of our activities during the 2 days of the festival. Zito, Manuel, Jaime and Rauf were instrumental in spending many long evenings making paintings in the Project to sell during the festival. In addition, the stall had information for potential students and any interested parties on the Project's philosophy, classes and ambitions for the future. Although there were only a small number of tourists at the festival, we held some positive conversations with Mozambican visitors who were drawn to our space by the art work. It was another important step in increasing the profile of Projecto Oceano on Ilha, and getting our name known by Mozambicans from Nampula to Maputo.

## **Gito's Capoeira presentation**

As an increasingly popular entertainment on Ilha, Projecto Oceano's capoeira team was asked to perform twice during the festival. Our Friday evening performance was fantastic, with a freshly mixed capoeira music track providing a great musical background to the performance. Gito had put a lot of thought, as always, into the preparation of a routine, with good results. The first week of November saw a small result from this; Projecto Oceano has been approached by a local tourist organization interested in using us for exclusive performances. As our aim is to keep capoeira a community-based activity, we will try to swing this in line with what we feel is best for the wider community.

## **Zito's volleyball tournament**

With the allure of a small cash-prize for the winner, the volleyball tournament was a hotly contested and passionate affair. Rauf and Zito had done well to organize 5 teams (3 of whom arrived on time!) and a referee, and 7.30a.m. on the Sunday morning found James and Manuel Domingos raking the beach and sorting out the tournament structure. We had a great mix of teams, with local volunteers, Projecto Oceano members and an eclectic mix of Ilha residents taking part in randomly picked teams. During the pool games the wheat was sorted from the chaff, with many a frustrated player taking a leaf out of John McEnroe's book and debating 'line-calls' with the referee. As we had failed to organize television replay, we were lucky to have a competent and strong referee; congratulations to Rauf for doing his research and getting Ilha's finest to control the tournament! The final was a tense affair, comparable only to the Superbowl or a Wimbledon final, and saw AZLera's management team (Freddie and James) take on the might of Projecto Oceano's Zito and Manuel. What Freddie and I lacked in technique (lots, by the way!), we made up for in British pugnacity and vertical superiority at the net, and we ran out winners after a close three-setter. A pyrrhic victory for the British team perhaps, as whilst the Team GB won the game, the strength of the Mozambican sun gave our delicate English skin a beating it won't forget! The tournament was a great success, and again helped to push Projecto Oceano's profile on Ilha; we have had requests to hold fortnightly tournaments in the future. Again,

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volleyball provides a fun way for us to get Ilha's youth interested in Projecto Oceano, and provides a potential route to getting people into our classrooms.

Whilst the festival provided some fun and distraction from the classroom, October was also a month of preparation for secondary school exams in November. With many of our core group of Project members in their final year of school, the Project was as busy as ever with classes and focused homework groups making full use of our recently expanded library. We have some fantastic news on the language class front, as most of our students had such high marks throughout the year in French and English that they were given dispensation from sitting their exams. A big Mozambican thank you must go to Freddie, Max, Margarida and James for the work over the years in foreign language classes. Equally big AZLera congratulations must also be given to the students; we hope that they continue to lead their respective secondary classes with other exams.

You may have also noticed the name of Freddie cropping up in October's blog. AZLera's UK manager arrived on Ilha at the end of the month to spend some time with us. It has been great to welcome Freddie back to Ilha; November will see a hectic fortnight of work commitments as we look to maintain our strong connection between UK-based management and on-the-ground running of the Project. I am sure we will find some time for a little fun, but as AZLera makes significant strides in the UK, we must continue to ensure that they are aligned with our progress here on Ilha de Moçambique. Hasta la proxima...