

PROJECTO OCEANO – JANUARY 2012 REPORT



For Projecto Oceano's leading students, January has been a month of waiting. University admission exams were taken in December, and the nervous wait for results continues. To make best use of the time, however, we have started to prepare a research library for any Ilha students who are interested in tertiary education. Two of our university applicants, Zito and Tino, have started to compile information on public scholarship applications, admission exam dates, and course information. My role has been to provide background information to answer many questions that face school-leavers across the world. Why should I consider university? What are the benefits and costs? Which courses and faculties are appropriate to my skill set and ambitions?

Since my arrival on Ilha almost a year ago, in-depth work with students has revealed a major gap following completion of secondary education. There is a paucity of advice and information available on the important choices students must face after finishing their exams. How can they find out more about university? If university is not an option, what is the best way to go about getting a job, and in which area? Many talented students finish school and, due to a lack of available information and a culture which does not always push for excellence, end up confused and rudderless about their short and long term future. Through information on universities and a series of classes on writing CVs and job applications, we hope to move towards addressing these problems. In November and December we focussed efforts on our core group of departing Project members. Our approach worked well, and will now be rolled out to give guidance to the wider student community. The North of Mozambique will develop rapidly over the next decade, with the building of a new international airport, the deepest

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container port on the East African coast, and continued foreign and domestic investment in infrastructure, mineral extraction and education. Such development requires a skilled work-force; herein lies a major source of motivation for all students on Ilha.

As a final point on tertiary education, AZLera (the umbrella organisation behind Projecto Oceano) has officially started working towards providing annual university scholarships for 2 carefully-selected Projecto Oceano students. Our proposals include a variety of courses that we believe are key to the future development of Mozambique; if you are interested in hearing more about / contributing to this scholarship fund, we urge you to contact Freddie Brunt on Freddie@azlera.org. Scholarships not only reward the hard work of rigorously-selected students, but they provide motivation and ambition for younger students to follow their dreams. Our scholarship system will provide a way for the most talented students to realise their potential and, eventually, to take Mozambique forward. Without contributions such as this scholarship fund, it remains extremely difficult for the intellectual capital and potential of Mozambique to come to fruition. For more information on the courses we sponsor and the students competing for our scholarships, please see the relevant section of the website. This is a bold new initiative in Northern Mozambique, and we believe that AZLera / Projecto Oceano's ground-breaking approach will deservedly attract a lot of interest.

Back to more practical issues, the Mozambican team at Projecto Oceano is extremely excited to be receiving new computers in February. In addition, we hope to receive some donated machines in March, which will greatly improve the quality of our I.T. classes. Once the new I.T. system is in place, we will be able to improve our classes to include a greater variety of programme courses, and more complex Microsoft Office content. A key skill for both university study and later work, the demand for I.T. instruction remains extremely high on Ilha; we are very excited at the possibility of meeting and satisfying that demand with a greater range of classes. We have also launched exciting plans to renovate our classroom building; more will follow in February as James gets familiar with the complications of limestone / sand mixing, the bureaucracy involved in obtaining permission to renovate a building in a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and 'sweating' walls!

Projecto Oceano's staff, both in Mozambique and further afield, are very proud that 2012 marks a decade of work in Mozambique. We have seen consistent and promising growth over the past 10 years; we now look to build on these developments with our ambitious university plans for leading students. However, this is also an appropriate time for reflection on our many achievements to date; we must thank Wilbert, Beatrix, Freddie, Max and Margarida and Joao for all their hard work over the years. Our reward has been influencing the development of a special group of students. Over the past 10 years we have seen them grow from promising young students to mature and responsible adults. Students such as Firoza, Coman, Mingos, Tino and Zito have become the essence of the Project, and with the help of some external financing we hope to help them to the further education they deserve. As one door closes, however, another opens, and we have a new generation of younger Project members ready to step up and put their mark on the Project. The progression of our students is a tribute to the sustainability of AZLera's approach to education: *aprender para ensinar aos outros*.