

PROJECTO OCEANO – SEPTEMBER 2012 REPORT



As hard as it is to believe that September's over already, here I am again writing my month-end reports. I guess that means we've been busy. Here's how...

This month we've kicked off a series of special classes, presentations and workshops to add more variety to our curriculum, and expose our students to a wider array of knowledge, experience and activity by inviting both local and visiting experts in assorted domains. First of all we opened our doors to Ilha's resident journalist, Jona Mussa, to talk to our students about what journalism is, and crucially to share his thoughts on our monthly newsletter, *Voz Jovem*, and how we can ensure that we maximise the value both for our budding student journalists and for the community readership. Levelinha, our *Voz Jovem* coordinator and passionate writer, is now full of ideas, some of which you'll see implemented in the next issue which will be up on the website soon.

Next up was Pedro, a Portuguese medical student who, fortunately for us, managed to squeeze in two trouble-shooting science sessions, and a one-off tutorial on the topic of the workings of the human body, during his few weeks in Mozambique. As several of our students are aiming to study medicine in the future this was a valuable experience for all.

Meanwhile, we also collaborated with a new community-focused tourism business on the island, Ilha Blue, to give a series of tourism workshops, encouraging the students to think why tourism is important for the island and how we can ensure that it develops in such a way that it continues to benefit the community and to preserve the island's culture and history. These sessions then inspired us to hold this month's debate on the subject of tourism, in the offices of Ilha Blue which set the scene nicely, and where the students debated the ins and outs and ups and downs of tourism and its future here on Ilha.

As if this wasn't enough for one month, we also implemented a short 'Introduction to Business Administration' course, this time the special guest being Lisa Fujisawa of Technoserve, and the students coming up with new business ideas for the island, conducting market research and putting together their first ever business plans.

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But we've not only been busy in the classroom; there's been a heap of extra-curricular activity going on in September too. First there was Ztoziva, a gastronomic fair held at the old pier on the island. Projecto Oceano signed up to have a stall and then we set about preparations, deciding our menu and dividing up the tasks amongst the members. And lo and behold, our stall was one of the big success stories of the event. We barbecued chicken and vegetable kebabs which went down a storm and sold out within a couple of hours – with the luxury of hindsight we could have made and sold three times as many. Our chocolate salami proved to be a very popular dessert and sold long before the night was out too.

The fair was a true community event and it was great to see so many people out on the pier, both locals and tourists, old and young, appreciating both the local and foreign cuisine that was on offer and, in true Mozambican style, dancing the night away. And for Projecto Oceano it was a chance for us to be 'visible' and spread the word amongst the community about the work we do on the island, as well as being a great team effort and a useful exercise for our young people in event coordination and dealing with a range of people and situations (of course there were a few hiccups along the way but nothing that the team couldn't handle!). With the money we made I'll be able to buy a selection of new educational materials for the project as well as some treats for the members as a thank you for their hard work.

In other news, the Projecto Oceano capoeira group has hardly had a moment's rest this month, having enrolled to give two presentations at the gastronomic fair, two more over the course of the long weekend of celebrations for *Dia da Cidade* (Ilha's 'City Day' which landed on a Tuesday so meant 5 days of festivities), and another at an Afro-Brazilian party over on the mainland. Onwards and upwards as we now look forward to the Festival Omuhipiti, the big annual island event, in November.

As all this has been going on, of course, the usual timetable has been running as normal in the project with Foreign Languages, IT, Reading and Writing for kids, Current Affairs and Academic Skills courses, and member Rauf has started some Saturday morning football classes for kids as well. Now, as October materialises, we are very excited about the arrival of another volunteer, Daniela, who will be with us for 2 months to give some special courses in Biology and Chemistry, and to generally help out at the project and as many of our students prepare for their final exams at school.

On a personal note, I'm just about to approach the 6-month anniversary of my arrival on Ilha, which also marks the half-way point of my time here. This leaves me with mixed feelings of disbelief at how quickly the time has passed, contentment as I reflect on how happy I've been here and how happy I continue to be, being involved in such a valuable project and working with a truly fantastic group of young people, and fear at how quickly the next 6 months are going to pass and all the things I want to do and achieve in that time. So I better get back to work!

The next few months are going to involve a lot of concentration on the AZLera scholarship process as we continue our fundraising efforts ([please see here for more details](#)), develop and commence the application and selection procedure for our top candidates. This is a big step for AZLera and, being the only NGO on the island to offer university scholarships to students it's a big deal for them as well. So, all hands on deck! If you haven't already watched the Projecto Oceano video where you can meet our students and find out why university is important for them, please do so [here](#).