

PROJECTO OCEANO – FEBRUARY 2013 REPORT



It's a strange feeling as I sit down to write what will be my penultimate monthly report from Projecto Oceano, Ilha de Moçambique. Knowing I've only got a few weeks left now fills me with fluctuating degrees of panic, grief, excitement and pride. But before I get too sentimental, let's take a look at what's been going on over the last month.

February has been another month of change as a good chunk of our former members have officially flown the nest, and we have recruited the next cohort, ready and willing to take themselves and the project forward over the next couple of years.

It was with great pride (slightly tinged with sadness) that we sent our 2013 scholars on their merry way, as Mingos and Firoza have now both started their courses in Architecture and Medicine, in Maputo and Beira respectively. This is a huge deal for both students, and a huge life change... but they seem to be taking it in their stride so far, getting stuck into their studies, sorting out accommodation, making new friends, and embarking on what are bound to be bright futures.

Meanwhile we have also waved goodbye to Zito, now studying I.T. Engineering at the Universidade Pedagógica in Nampula; Rauf, also studying Architecture in Maputo; Gito, taking part in the outstanding teacher training offered by ADPP in Nacala; Shany, taking a professional course in computer hardware and maintenance in Nampula; and Mamy who is already half way through her tourism course in Nampula.

Each of these signifies a massive personal achievement for our former members and lots of exciting adventures ahead for all of them. And while this has all been going on we also made our final selection of incoming project members. I'm very pleased to welcome on board Almirante, Almiro, Bassma, Fauzia, Magda, Martinho, Riquito, Sofanias and Saulo - a really fantastic bunch who have thrown themselves into their first month with lots of gusto. You can meet them all personally [here](#).

Our first group activity was the renovation and conversion of our second classroom, previously home to the project ping-pong table (which we decided to donate to the island's secondary school), into a children's library and comfortable, creative learning space. One hot Saturday morning out came the paintbrushes, and despite a lot of paint ending up on one another's faces, we managed to give the room a whole new lease of life, ready for the

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insertion of new entirely local hand-made furniture and the organization of our amazing new collection of books, catering to all ages and all tastes.

After an initial handover and training period from the departing members, the new kids on the block have already begun teaching their own classes in the project – including reading and writing, Maths and English classes for kids, and I.T. classes for young adults – as well as participating in our new 'Innovation Sessions', writing articles for February's edition of Voz Jovem, and organizing various creative undertakings, sporting activities and social get-togethers. Just one month in, I'm left feeling rather overwhelmed with all the enthusiasm, acumen, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit already emerging among the new members. They are grabbing the opportunity with both hands and I'm seeing potential practically bursting at the seams. The possibilities here are endless, not only for the personal and professional development of these young people themselves but also the potential impact that they can have on the wider community, and I feel confident that I'm leaving the project in extremely capable hands...

Actually, I'll save the getting sentimental for next month, when I will actually be leaving, but for now I'd just like to give a very warm welcome to Denny Newhouse, who has just arrived on Ilha and will be stepping in to my flip flops as Project Manager as of next month. Boas vindas à família do Oceano, Denny!