

## Projecto Oceano Monthly Report – May 2013



The month of May flew by quicker than any of us at Projecto Oceano could have anticipated. At the beginning of the month we started thinking about and planning for Dia da Criança, which happens every year on June 1<sup>st</sup> here in Mozambique. In many parts of the country Mozambicans take this day to celebrate children, which for obvious reasons is a really lovely holiday and much appreciated by us all (as we have all been children at some point!). Leading up to Dia da Criança, families might buy their kids a nice new outfit to wear on this day, which is a big deal in these parts, and will start planning little celebrations. Projecto Oceano had participated in organising a big event last year, and this year we wanted to make sure that it happened again – which is exactly what we did, in collaboration with MOVE and Cooperação Portuguesa, two Portuguese NGOs on the island.

The Monday afternoon before the event, we put signs up all around the island announcing that we were going to be holding a big “festa” or party up at the Fortaleza de São Sebastião (Fort of Saint Sebastian) from 1pm – 7pm and that inscrições were now open for the first 200 children who arrived. I was worried that only advertising the event on Monday was too late, and that we would never reach enough children. However, as the Members all assured me, we would certainly get our 200 and much, much more... and sure enough by Wednesday morning we had reached 200 and were turning kids away, sadly telling them that we had reach our capacity.

We planned the day to start with a series of games, which were organized into 10 “postos” or stations. We had sack races, jump rope, a mini-version of capture-the-flag, an educational maths game, dodgeball, bowling, and even a dance station! Two of the stations were lunch, which consisted of rice and beans, served with water and later followed by bread. After the sun had set, we set up a projector onto one of the fortaleza’s walls and showed the film *Zambezia* in portuguese, with which we also handed out popcorn.

The entire event depended heavily on our volunteers, the core of who were the 10 Project Members, who had each recruited 2-3 other volunteers to make a total of 30-40 high school students. Each of the posts was manned by 1-2 of these students, who was responsible for



acquiring all the materials and running the game throughout the event. The rest of the volunteers were in charge of leading the children, who were organised into teams of 10 children each upon arrival. These volunteers did a really amazing job with the kids, marching them around the fort singing songs and entertaining them while they waited. The event was a great success, and I received so many compliments from various people on the island about how wonderful, motivated and responsible all the Projecto Oceano Members are, which always makes me proud!

Aside from planning Dia da Criança, the month of May was a nice month for the Project, with our classes continuing in full swing and the Members all happy and busy with their work. Our I.T. Level 1 classes started up mid-month and our only problem is that there is too much interest and not enough space! Luckily our teachers – Almirante and Sofanias – are dedicated and hard-working, so I am always able to assure these extra students that we will be offering the course again once this current one is finished.

Our foreign language classes have been fun. I began teaching English (both to high school kids and to younger kids, separately) and we still have a wonderful volunteer teaching Spanish. Our current affairs and innovation classes this month were very interesting – topics ranged from insects that can combat hunger to the economic crisis in Europe to development in Mozambique, the latter being a topic that is clearly very near and dear to all the members, as it was one of the liveliest conversations yet. The Members continue to amaze and inspire me with their intellect and curiosity, and I look forward to many more interesting months to come!