

## Projecto Oceano Monthly Report – September 2013

This has been a good month as there was a lot of activity and progress, though not without the usual ups and downs. The highlight of the month was the visit to Projecto Oceano by US Ambassador Douglas Griffith and his wife.

The purpose of the visit – which was organized by Patrick the Peace Corps volunteer – was to show the Ambassador the library which Patrick donated and that we house and to introduce him to the Project and the members, who as we know are some of the island's top students. As this was a visit by Americans and Patrick teaches some of our students English, we wanted to use this opportunity to show off and practice the members' English skills, and so each member gave a little self-introduction in English, saying his/her name, age, year in school, and area of responsibility in Project Oceano. Following this, I explained a bit about what we do in the Project, how we choose our members and gave a small 'tour' of the space. Patrick then showed a small slideshow of photos from Dia da Criança, Feira do Oceano and a couple photos from our own PO classes (IT, explicação, etc.) and we further explained our work and involvement in community events.



After the slideshow the Ambassador and his wife, who were sitting with all our members, began asking the members questions directly – some in English and some in Portuguese. I was very impressed with how well our members responded – they were polite but outgoing and articulate and all together came across as the wonderful students that they are. The Ambassador's wife was particularly interested in the photography that we now have displayed on the walls, and each of the members who have a photo up there took pride in showing which was theirs and discussing it with her and her husband.

When the Ambassador arranged to come see our little project we all expected the visit to last about 20 minutes – but I believe that they were all so impressed and interested in our work that it lasted for closer to 45 minutes to an hour. Before leaving, the Ambassador turned to the whole group and recited a quote by John F. Kennedy (founder of the Peace Corps) and another by Martin Luther King, Jr. – and then as a last minute thing he and his wife played a

quick trivia game with the kids, giving out Mozambique-US flag pins to those who got the right answer. [ex: “Who was the first Mozambican to get a university degree in the US? Mondlane” or “What is the name of the US President’s wife? Michelle Obama”].



Other exciting things this month included a boat trip to Carrusca with the members. It was a fun day and turned out to be quite an adventure and bonding experience because the boat decided to take us across the small channel and drop us on the other side of the bay and make us walk an hour to Carrusca (he said that the water was too low at that hour to sail all the way there). Nonetheless, the members and I had a blast, singing and dancing and chatting the whole walk – and when we arrived in Carrusca we all just needed a swim badly! It was a nice day to relax, get to know them all even a bit better and have fun as the Projecto Oceano family.

This month we had two current affairs classes, one about Islamic law and democracy another about drug patents and global drug pricing, which also served as part 1 to this month’s social debate topic. The idea was to use this class prior to the debate to introduce the topic and inform the members about all the issues surrounding it.

So, what we did was read an article about the Indian Supreme Court’s decision on drug patents and I explained about the concepts of intellectual property rights and the relationship between drugs patents and global drug pricing. When the students finally understood all the terms and issues, we divided each member onto one of two sides – “pro-patents” and “anti-patents” – and gave them each the assignment to research their side and come to the debate prepared. I very much enjoyed introducing the members to something that they had clearly never before learned or heard about, but something that I believe is vastly important in the world and is a morally, economically, socially, and politically charged issue.

