

Projecto Oceano Monthly Report – October 2013

This month included a number of fun events and moments for Projecto Oceano, in addition to our work with classes according to the usual timetable that we have.

At the end of the month we threw a Halloween party and had a beach bonfire, also as a celebration of the end of the year and start of the school holidays. All the members contributed in some ways, with either cooking or cleaning and organizing the space. Everyone came in costume as well, which was a fun addition to the festivities – we had a giant worm, several monsters and vampires, princesses and one *matapa de siri siri*. Generally I think that everyone had a really great time!

One other fun event that Projecto Oceano organized on the day of Halloween was a parade of children, which was organized in conjunction with a play that was being held on the island, called “Algo Vai Chegar”. We had a suitcase full of costumes for kids and we invited all the normal Projecto Oceano children to come and get dressed up. Then, we organized them into a little parade and walked around the streets singing and dancing. Throughout the parade we collected more children and I think that by the end we had more than 100 with us.



This month was also the Baile das Finalistas (Mozambican Prom, essentially, but also a type of graduation ceremony for the high school kids who are graduating this year), and three of our students participated – Fauzia, Naiza and Tania. As Projecto Oceano we helped out by organizing a few little things, such as a slideshow of pictures and a photo booth for the attendees. The evening was really well-planned and all the finalistas looked beautiful and happy.

The debate this month was about pharmaceutical drug patents as I wrote about in the last month's report. I appreciated that the students came to the debate more informed and prepared – I think that they benefitted more from this and the discussion was more engaging. We really had a mix of opinions on this topic, which was great. Some of the students adamantly believed that patents are a necessary part of the system in order to encourage



innovation and give just rewards for the hard work and risk that these drug companies take. Other students believed that it was unjust for the drug companies to have patents that allow them to keep drug prices prohibitively high for the people who need them the most (those in developing countries). We talked about the effect that drug patents have on global drug pricing, and ideas of economics and morality both came into play in the discussions. Additionally, I lead a current affairs class at the beginning of the month on Malala, the Pakistani girl who was shot in the head by the Taliban one year ago. This was a very important topic to me and I believe for the members for three reasons – firstly, because Malala is the same age as most of the members, secondly because she was standing up for women’s education rights and thirdly because her story showed two competing ideologies of Islam which the members are always keen to discuss. None of the members had ever heard about Malala (or groups such as the Taliban) and so it was important to give some background and discuss the environment under which these events occurred.

I have started showing TED talks in the Project this month during our allotted time for current affairs. The first time I did this we watched Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talk about “O perigo da história única” and afterwards read an excerpt from Mia Couto’s speech from the book *E se Obama fosse africano e outras interinvenções*. In the second class, we watched a TED talk from Amy Cuddy about body language and how our body language can actually change our minds. All the members were quite interested in both of these topics and generally seem to love the TED talks. The only issue I found was that some of the talks can get quite technical or esoteric and so even the topics and main ideas when heard/read properly are challenging. However, I think that this is a challenge that the members are up for and I have enjoyed seeing them help each other out by each explaining what they learned and took away (and occasionally I step in to explain better certain parts).