In Mozambique, students are accustomed to living in large households composed of parents, children, grandparents and sometimes uncles and cousins. Mozambican teens interact formally with their family members. It is rare for a Mozambican family to have a housekeeper or hired help. Students are expected to clean their room, bathroom, do their own laundry and contribute to the upkeep of the house as well. Both parents are professionals and financially responsible for the family; they exert equal authority in all household decisions. Family members are allowed to do their own activities and socialize with their friends or to relax, as long as they respect their curfew. In Mozambique, meals are eaten all together as a family.

**Teen Life:** In Mozambique, it is common for siblings to borrow clothes and electronics with permission from the owner. Mozambican students value respect, and permission is typically granted for most requests. Teens in Mozambique are mostly dependent upon their parents.

**Responsibilities:** Mozambican students rarely work even part-time or small jobs. Whenever they are given some money from their parents it is expected to be used for transportation to and from school. The money may be given daily, weekly, or monthly. In Mozambican families, it is not uncommon for teenagers, both boys and girls, to have to cook for either themselves or for their family.

**Parental Involvement:** Few families in Mozambique have access to the internet at home. Students may be very happy to have 24/7 internet access in the U.S. and may have difficulty in limiting access on their own. Mozambican parents are in contact with their children’s schools through their student. Periodically, the parents are invited to have a meeting with their children’s school to share their academic progress.

**Pets:** In Mozambique pets stay mostly outside and are not allowed to go anywhere inside the house.

In Mozambique, there are two types of schools – general and technical-professional. In the technical-professional schools, students have different classmates in each of their classes, while in the general schools, students have the same classmates in each of their classes and teachers rotate to the different classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classrooms in Mozambique and are not seated apart in class.

**Classes:** In Mozambique, students generally take six to nine subjects at a time and each class occurs every other day. Mozambican high school classes generally have around 40 to 50 students. In Mozambique, students are evaluated through homework, class participation, periodic written and oral exams, and sometimes on classroom behavior. Subjects in Mozambique are taught with the same level of difficulty, there are no remedial or AP courses available. There is a set of subjects to be taken in each grade and they all have the same level of difficulty. Students are only allowed to choose subjects in 11th grade.

**School Relationships:** Students in Mozambique show their respect to their teachers by using the formal titles “Mr.” or “Mrs.”

**Extracurricular Activities:** Schools in Mozambique do not offer extracurricular activities. Students can join local private sports clubs or find other community offerings at their own expense. Parents in Mozambique support and help their children in extracurricular activities, but the initiative to participate in the activity must always come from him or her; parents rarely arrange activities for their kids. Activities normally include soccer, netball, dance, athletics, basketball, English, and debate clubs

**School Rules and Attire:** Many Mozambican high schools have a “zero tolerance” policy regarding cell phone usage and fighting. These activities are generally not allowed at all in school and the penalties for engaging in them are often severe. Students have uniforms or dress formally for school. This generally depends on which school the student attends. In public schools, students have to wear uniform in the colors stipulated by the government for all public schools in the country. The colors for public school uniforms are dark blue for trousers, skirts and ties, and white for shirts. There is no specification for shoes. Private schools, however, are free to pick whichever color they find suitable for their uniforms.

**Returning from Exchange:** The year in the U.S. does not count towards the students’ academic progress. This depends on the grade in which the student was when they left for the US and their academic performance while they are away. In some instances, students return home and are able to proceed to university using their US high school diploma. In others, students have to write their grade 12 exams at an external testing center in order to get high school diploma while those needing to go onto twelfth grade can do so without having to repeat grade 11. It is very rare that a student has to repeat a grade after returning from program.
Mixed Gender Socializing: Mozambican teens socialize in groups and one-on-one, and both are considered appropriate. It is also acceptable for teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

Friendships: Mozambican teens make most of their friends through their neighborhood connections as well as their common activities. Friendship means brotherhood or sisterhood, people with whom they feel comfortable and who share common interest and activities. In Mozambique, greeting someone every day is expected and it involves shaking hands, kissing cheeks, hugs, and a small conversation. It is uncommon for Mozambican students to share their money with each other.

Communication Styles: Mozambicans tend to communicate indirectly. Negative emotions are considered personal in Mozambique and are not to be expressed to their friends or family. In terms of personal space, Mozambicans share the same living space and are very close with friends. They typically want to discuss everything with each other and assume that they are invited to participate in all family and friend activities. Mozambicans try to be punctual, but arriving 15 minutes after the agreed upon meeting time is still considered “on time.”

Eye Contact: Making eye contact is considered disrespectful in Mozambique, especially between youth and elders.

Cultural Norms: In Mozambique, girls typically do the cooking and boys may do the gardening. It may be difficult at first for a boy to feel comfortable doing chores in the U.S. that are considered female chores back home.

Religion: In Mozambique, attending religious services is often a family event, and the social aspect of attending the services, being part of the community, is often just as important as the religious aspect.

Holidays: Mozambicans are very outgoing people who enjoy socializing. This makes holidays in the country extremely vibrant. Families usually come together to celebrate public holidays. Religious holidays are often celebrated at churches and mosques, with activities typically lasting 1 to 2 days. It is also normal for people to dress up in religious costume to mark certain holidays. In addition, national holidays are celebrated with specific themes declared by the government. Special capulana (sarong typically worn by women) designs are launched around special days on the national calendar. It is also normal for all citizens to gather at places such as the Heroes Square to pay tribute to those who fought for the independence of Mozambique. It is possible that students will miss these vibrant gatherings with family and friends, the festive meals, and the opportunity to get new clothes made from capulanas in celebration of a national holiday. Among the most celebrated holidays are: Heroes Day (February 3rd), Women’s Day (April 7th), Independence Day (June 25th), Day of Peace (October 4th); Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are nationally celebrated.

Guest Culture: Mozambicans generally offer guests food and will do so more than twice if necessary. However, politely declining is not seen as rude.

Lunch and Diets: Halal meat is easily found everywhere in Mozambique and meals are always prepared from scratch. Food portions in Mozambique can be considered average when compared to American ones. It is normal for people to eat leftovers for breakfast or even lunch. Students will generally pack their own lunch or buy food from school tuck-shops or street vendors depending on their family background and preferences – they are accustomed to both cold and hot lunches.

In Mozambique, it is normal to wear clothes two days in a row if they do not show any outward signs of being dirty. All clothes washing is done by hand in Mozambique, so students will need to learn about using washing machines and dryers and understand that frequent washing will not hurt clothes. It is normal in Mozambique to take a shower and change clothes when returning from school or work. Mozambican teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up and hygiene products are put away). Most Mozambican teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body, and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face.