

Cameroon

School

Classes

In Cameroon, students are evaluated mainly on sequential written exams; class participation may count in some instances. All students in a single grade study the same subjects. Students remain in one classroom and teachers rotate between classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classroom and are not seated separately.

School Relationships

Cameroonian teenagers have both a friendly and formal relationship with their teachers and can call them by their nicknames.

Extracurricular Activities

There are few clubs in Cameroonian schools. Extracurricular activities are limited and few clubs exist at school. During the school year there is a week set aside for students to show their talents and abilities in all fields, called "Youth Week." Most parents are not actively involved in their student's extracurricular activities since they don't consider it to be important. However, some encourage their children in activities like music, drawing and football (soccer).

School Rules

The use of cell phones in class is forbidden in Cameroon.

Family Life

In Cameroon, extended families including parents, children, grand parents and cousins live together. However, recently, most young couples with enough financial means prefer to live alone with their children. Meals are eaten together as a family, or separately depending on the family member's schedules. While people will take individual time to for themselves, usually adults are involved in all aspects of time at home.

Both parents can be professionals, but most of the time the husband is the most financially responsible in the household. Both parents have equal authority in the household and for their children, however traditionally the father is the head of the family and often times he will make decisions alone.

Teen Life

Since most families are large, it is rare to find a child with his or her own room and children typically share a bed. Siblings will share some items like clothes, jewelry, or magazines. Respect, especially for the elders, is part of Cameroonian culture. Teenagers may interact freely with all family members but they still respect the elders. Teenagers in Cameroon are not very independent; they are mostly dependent on their parents.

Responsibilities

Teenagers in Cameroon are expected to take responsibility for their personal hygiene, academic life and also participate in the care of the younger children. In Cameroon, families with high incomes give weekly or monthly pocket allowance to their children. Others try to earn money by doing small jobs during the weekends and holidays. Teenagers typically must budget for buying clothes, magazines and other small personal items.

In Cameroon, most wealthy households have housekeepers and nannies. In poorer families, the children do most of the household chores. In Cameroon, the mother mostly cooks for everybody. Sometimes girls help with cooking. Males rarely participate in the cooking.

Parental Involvement

The internet is not available everywhere in Cameroon and very few families have internet at home. Students are not accustomed to controlled access or parental monitoring of internet access. In Cameroon, parents are typically not in contact with their children's schools. Rather, they wait for children's report cards that arrive at the end of the term.

Pets

In Cameroon, most people have dogs to guard the house and the cat is meant for catching mice. They are not treated like family members and are not typically let inside.



COUNTRY FACTS:

Capital: Yaoundé

Population: 19,294,149

Area, sq. mi.: 183,568

Real GDP per capita: 2,300

Adult literacy rate: 77% (male); 60% (female)

Ethnic make-up: Cameroon Highlanders 31%, Equatorial Bantu 19%, Kirdi 11%, Fulani 10%, Northwestern Bantu 8%, Eastern Nigritic 7%, other African 13%, non-African less than 1%

Religion: indigenous beliefs 40%, Christian 40%, Muslim 20%

Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing

In Cameroon, youth socialize in groups with their peers. At school, teens make friends with the opposite sex. However, typically, parents don't like to see their children have friends of the opposite sex.

Friendships

Cameroonian teenagers make their friends through common activities and interests. They also make friends with other children of the neighborhood. Cameroonian teenagers think of peers with whom they are casually associated as friends. A teenager may have as many friends as possible. Teenagers in Cameroon sometimes share money with close friends by buying food and eating together.

Eye Contact

In Cameroon, teenagers are not supposed to make eye contact with adults, especially when the adult is angry, as this may be considered a sign of disrespect and rebellion.

Cultural Norms

In traditional Cameroonian families, there is a gap between the adults and the teenagers. They cannot freely discuss sensitive topics such as sex. The cultural norms for showing negative emotions include: frowning, maintaining silence, dragging ones feet on the floor, crying and shouting. Directly communicating negative emotions is not common and is typically shown through body language.

Personal Hygiene

Most of the time, Cameroonian teens bathe twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening before going to bed. Cameroonian teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them with towels hung up, and hygiene products put away. Teenagers have just one towel to dry their body and face.

In Cameroon, it is common to see people wearing the same clothes two days in a row and they believe that too much washing ruins the clothes. Typically clothes are washed by hand, and students have never used a washer or dryer. Cameroonian teenagers change their school uniforms upon entering the house.

Religion

Religion is a family event for some, but for others it is an individual event. In Cameroon, Ramadan is observed by fasting, prayers, and abstinence from sex and alcohol. Then there is feasting during Eid.

In Cameroon there are public holidays as well as academic holidays. The two major public holidays are on the 11th of February and 20th of May. The 11th of February is a day set aside for youth. The 20th of May is the reunification day when southern and eastern Cameroon became united. The academic holidays include the Christmas holiday, the Easter holiday and the summer holidays.