

Senegal



COUNTRY FACTS:

Capital: Dakar

Population: 12,323,252

Area, sq. mi.: 75,955

Real GDP per capita: 1,900

Adult literacy rate: 51% (male);
29% (female)

Ethnic make-up: Wolof 43.3%,
Pular 23.8%, Serer 14.7%, Jola
3.7%, Mandinka 3%, Soninke
1.1%, European and Lebanese
1%, other 9.4%

Religion: Muslim 94%, Chris-
tian 5% (mostly Roman Catho-
lic), indigenous beliefs 1%

School Classes

In Senegal, students are evaluated on written assignments and exams in addition to oral exams for languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German) for the national exams. Students remain in one classroom throughout the school day and the teachers rotate. The majority of schools in Senegal are mixed gender and boys and girls can sit side by side.

School Relationships

Students in Senegal consider teachers to be like a parent. Culturally in Senegal, elders of the same age as a child's parent are considered an aunt or an uncle.

School Rules

Many Senegalese 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 vary by school.

Family Life

The Senegalese household is typically comprised of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins, and children. It is becoming more common for both parents to work outside of the home in Senegal, however traditionally it is the man who is the main financial provider for the family. Traditionally, the father has the primary authority in the home, however it is becoming more common for both parents to share the authority.

In Senegal, it is considered respectful to allow family members to regular, individual time by themselves, to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax. Typically teens are not given household chores to participate in, however some may be given from time to time. Families in Senegal typically eat together out of one dish and most meals are presented and shared on the floor. Meals are cooked for the entire family by the women of the house.

Teen Life

If a Senegalese teen has something, it is generally his or her own, and not understood to be the shared property of siblings. This includes clothing. When siblings want to borrow something from each other, it is generally understood that they must ask first. Teens are not given allowances and their expenses are covered by an adult member of the family. While it is important to always be respectful, many Senegalese teenagers interact informally with all of their family members.

Parental Involvement

Many Senegalese students do not have internet at home and are not familiar with regular internet usage. Parents prefer to monitor their teen's use of the internet, but most will access the internet from a café, if they can access it at all. Parents are typically in direct contact with their teen's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Teens in Senegal are largely dependent on their parents and parents are often very involved in every aspect of their lives.

Pets

Many families in Senegal have pets, however Muslim families will not keep dogs in the house.

Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing

Mixed gender socializing is generally not allowed in Senegalese culture except at school during classes and occasionally as a group.

Friendships

Teenagers socialize in groups and one-on-one. Senegalese teenagers make most of their friends through common activities, and not necessarily from family/neighborhood connections. It is not uncommon for teens to share money with each other when they have it. Friendship is very important in Senegalese culture, and the bonds between friends are strong.

Eye Contact

In Senegalese culture, eye contact with an elder is not allowed, even between younger and older adults.

Personal Hygiene

Senegalese teenagers generally take a quick (5-15 minute) shower once a day, and sometimes maybe twice if they are involved in physical activities. Teenagers in Senegal are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away).

It is generally thought to be unclean in Senegal to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear them twice before washing, however the income level of a family can impact this.

Religion

Attending religious services is often a family event in Senegal, and the community aspect of the service is often very important in addition to the religious aspect. The prevalent tenet in Senegal is that Muslims are not allowed to attend a Christian church service.

Holidays

During Ramadan the Muslim community fasts together and lamb is eaten with the family when fast is broken.

The major holidays are Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and Christmas.