



## An amazing experience and cultural exchange in Mozambique

### Before departure

Since I first heard about the possibility to do my bachelor thesis as a Minor Field Studie I was sure I wanted to apply because I love to travel, learn about new cultures and meet new people. By conducting a MFS I had the possibility to get a firsthand experience of and learn about the country, community and people that my project would interact and be adapted to. Another major reason way I wanted to do a MFS was so I could have the possibility to conduct some practical work and study with the help of the theoretical knowledge I had received during my first 3 years.

I started quite early to search for a contact person, organisation or company to do my project with. I contacted as many professors and organisations as possible in the country and field where I wanted to do my project. I also asked other students that already went on a MFS and that's how Emilia, with whom I performed the study, and I came in contact with Ellie Olsson and Wilma Diaz who introduced us to Michel Olofsson and Project Vita. The organisation is active in Mozambique, Africa and because both Emilia and I wanted to go to Africa and we got interested in the organisations and its projects we started to have meetings about what project we could conduct that would benefit the community of Linga Linga where the organisation is most active. We finally decided to go with a project where we would design and evaluate the energy system for a community center in the small village.

Before the journey I did not have any big expectations except what we heard from our contact Michel and Ellie and Wilma. We heard that it would be worm and remote but were beautiful where we would live. When our MFS application got accepted, we started with the preparations like booking flights which went smooth. We got the relevant vaccinations and especially malaria tablets because Mozambique is a high-risk country for malaria. We applied for our visas and the application process was a bit complicated because we needed to go to the embassy to lev our passports. But the application process changed during our stay and now it is possible to apply online. In Mozambique they mainly speak Portuguese, so I tried to learn some essential phrases and used some of the Spanish that I had learned during the autumn semester.

### Upon arrival

We flew to Mozambique after our last spring exams and arrived in the beginning of April. We got picked up at the airport in Vilanculos by a taxi and drove 3 hours down to Morrumbene where our contact person Michel picked us up and drove us the last 45 min on a dirt road until we arrived at TOR Linga Linga where we would stay. We were in total 7 students from KTH conducting our projects with Project Vita so the first evening and week we used to get to know our contact Michel, the village and used to adapt to where we would live for the next 2 months and how things worked there.



### **Financials**

The largest expenses were the flight and the vaccinations like the malaria tablets that needed to last during the whole stay.

In general, it was cheaper to live in Mozambique than in Sweden, but it also depends on the lifestyle. To save money we cooked our own meals. This meant that we needed to buy our own food. In Mozambique, people eat a lot of fish and seafood, and it's often quite cheap, but as vegetarians/vegans, we needed to find other options. The cheapest alternative was to buy vegetables and beans from local markets. However, some products that need to be imported are more expensive and could have similar or higher prices than in Sweden.

### **Accommodation**

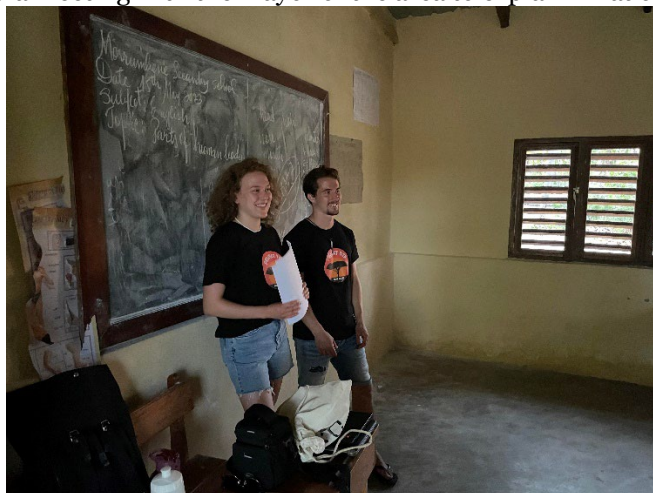
Our contact Michel organised our accommodation at his own place TOR Linga Linga. This was very helpful because the village is quite remote and there are not so many options for accommodations. We got our own wooden bungalow 30 m from the ocean, and we could fall asleep to the sound of it. The accommodation was 8400/month and we had breakfast, cleaning and washing included. The place was amazing, very peaceful and is located in the middle of the village. We had a common area where we studied, our own kitchen and a small gym.

Living next door with our contact Michel made it very easy to get help with questions regarding anything about the village, the project and life in Mozambique.

### **Project**

The purpose of the project was to design and evaluate the energy system for a community center in the village. Things we needed to consider and figure out was what the energy demand of the center would be, what components should be included, which energy source should be used, what components are locally available, the cost of components and how applicable the system is from a social aspect. During the first weeks we mainly focused on a literature study for the different components of the system and the area. During the same time, we started to conduct interviews in the village to find out the energy demand and performed a survey. Later on, we surveyed the lot where the community center will be built and took measurements of the lot and the distance between the different buildings. When we knew what components we needed for the system we looked for what components were available locally and their price. During the whole project time we got support from our contact person with different stuff like information about the plans of the community center, the lifestyle of the people in the village, translations information on where to find components and much more.

In the first weeks, all 4 project groups that worked with Project Vita had a presentation for the local municipality and had a meeting with the mayor of the area to explain what our projects was about.



### **Country**

My first impression of the country was super great. Because I had never been to Africa or Mozambique it was so nice to see the bountiful nature. Both the nature, climate and how people live was quite different to Sweden and that made it so interesting and I really liked the calmness everyone had. Things worked often a bit slower than in Sweden but it always works out in the end somehow. The pace of people's life seemed more relaxed and without stress. In the beginning I wasn't used to punctuality not always being a habit but that was generally not a problem and I adapted quickly. I also enjoyed seeing that people could live and be happy with a simpler life.

### **Leisure and social activities**

As we lived in a small rural village there was not a large variety of activities close by so we stayed mostly at our accommodation and enjoyed swimming, going for walks, cooking food, reading and talking with each other, the founder of the organisation and the locals. On the weekends we usually did some activities in the village like going for a boat ride to an island, learning about bees from a local beekeeper and meeting locals. We also did two trips during a weekend to a town where we could go whale watching and to a safari park. There are more possibilities but it always means a long drive, so it was often more convenient to stay in the village. Before leaving back home we organised a big dinner party for the whole village where everyone could enjoy some food and some local music and dance.

### **Sustainability**

Living in a rural village in a developing country we needed to go with the car if we wanted to leave the village but it was common to pick up other people along the way into town so that made it more resource efficient. There are also cars going between the village and the nearest town like small shuttles that could be used.

The accommodation had a solar energy system so the electricity we used came from a renewable source. Most food we eat was vegetables that came from the local market and was thereby locally produced. The field study was about designing an energy system with a renewable energy score for a community center giving the people in the village access to use electricity for lights, phone charging and computers in an affordable way which has the connection to SDG 7 that aims to Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Also SDG 4 and 11 can be connected to the project because the community center will create more safe and inclusive learning opportunities for everyone in the village.

### **Other recommendations and observations**

My biggest recommendation is to try to learn the country's language to be able to connect with the locals as well as possible and it will also help you be integrated into the society and culture faster. The second thing is to try to research and write as much as possible on your project before leaving to your

country. This will make it easier for you and you will have more time to explore and get to know the culture. Try to start early with searching for a project to do or an organisation, university and contact person.