

## WHV – Mahabalipuram

### *Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram, India*

◆ Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List since 1984

11/07/2016 – 24/07/2016



The group of sanctuaries, founded by the Pallava kings, was carved out of rock along the Coromandel coast in the 7th and 8th centuries. It is known especially for its rathas (temples in the form of chariots), mandapas (cave sanctuaries), giant open-air reliefs such as the famous 'Descent of the Ganges', and the temple of Rivage, with thousands of sculptures to the glory of Shiva. Most of the monuments, like the rock-cut rathas, sculptured scenes on open rocks like Arjuna's penance, the caves of Govardhanadhari and Ahishasuramardini, and the Jala-Sayana Perumal temple (the sleeping Mahavishnu or Chakrin at the rear part of the Shore temple complex) are attributed to the period of Narasimhavarman I Mamalla.



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**Project objectives:** The project, in its second year, targets the long-term commitment and participation from the local community and volunteers, with a great emphasis on supporting the newly established local “Young Guardian clubs”, youth-led heritage education and preservation clubs based on the successful example of the first long-term World Heritage Volunteers project started in 2009 in Borobudur. The improvement of the environmental conditions and bio-diversity at the site, as well as the implementation of a Heritage conservation awareness raising campaign toward visitors and the local population, are additional objectives of the project.

**Project activities:** The activities will follow-up the previously initiated activities by local youth, with the first local “Young Guardians” network having been created between local students, tourist guide association and Rotary Club. The school students are today maintaining the trees that were planted last year, and the tourist guide association promoted the non-use of plastic in and around the monument. The international volunteers will be supporting the local youth in establishing the

annual planning of activities of the “Young Guardians” club, and will run capacity building workshops. Volunteers will continue planting around 100 indigenous casuarina trees abutting the groyne wall to prevent salt laden sea breeze from affecting the monument, as well as cleaning up the areas surrounding the site together with the young guardians, at what is one of the most extended areas inscribed on the World Heritage list. Street plays based on the Forum Theatre approach and an Awareness Walk will contribute to sensitise the local community, and the results of the camp will be presented to the tourist guide association in order to support them improving interpretation methods strategies.

**Partners:** The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Kanchipuram, State Horticultural department of the Government of Tamil nadu, and Government Architecture and Sculpture college Mahabalipuram.