

WHV – Saving architecture Tata Somba

Koutammakou, the Land of the Batammariba, Togo

◆ Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List since 2004

20/07/2016 – 30/07/2016



The Koutammakou landscape in north-eastern Togo, which extends into neighbouring Benin, is home to the Batammariba whose remarkable mud tower-houses (Takienta) have come to be seen as a symbol of Togo. In this landscape, nature is strongly associated with the rituals and beliefs of society. The 50,000-ha cultural landscape is remarkable due to the architecture of its tower-houses which are a reflection of social structure; its farmland and forest; and the associations between people and landscape. Many of the buildings are two storeys high and those with granaries feature an almost spherical form above a cylindrical base. Some of the buildings have flat roofs, others have conical thatched roofs. They are grouped in villages, which also include ceremonial spaces, springs, rocks and sites reserved for initiation ceremonies.

Project objectives: The project aims to promote the traditional *Tata* houses and their architecture threatened by the construction of more and more modern houses which do not make use of traditional building materials, replacing ages of tradition. It also aims to limit pollution and to struggle against the endemic poverty in and around the property.

Project activities: After having attended workshops on the construction of *Tata*, the volunteers will build and repair *Tata* together with the inhabitants of the site's villages. The volunteers will build 20 toilets in schools allowing the children to have access to toilets. The toilets will be built with local materials respectful of the environment. They will lead workshops about social banks and micro credits techniques to be provided to the local community to face the poverty.

Partners: Traditional leaders, chiefs and other villages of the locality, local schools and colleges, Cultural Bank Koutamakou, Museums