

WHV – Sustaining Youth interest in Preserving Cultural Heritage Property for Posterity

Asante Traditional Buildings, Ghana

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (1980)

12 July - 01 August 2025

THE SITE - Near Kumasi, a group of traditional buildings are the last remaining testimony of the great Asante civilization, which reached its peak in the 18th century. Arranged around courtyards, the buildings are constructed of timber, bamboo and mud plaster and originally had thatched roofs. The unique decorative bas-reliefs that adorn the walls are bold and depict a wide variety of motifs. Common forms include spiral and arabesque details with representations of animals, birds and plants, linked to traditional “Adinkra” symbols. As with other traditional art forms of the Asante, these designs are not merely ornamental, they also have symbolic meanings, associated with the ideas and beliefs of the Asante people, and have been handed down from generation to generation. The buildings, their rich colour, and the skill and diversity of their decorations are the last surviving examples of a significant traditional style of architecture that epitomized the influential, powerful and wealthy Asante Kingdom of the late 18th to late 19th centuries. Asante Traditional Buildings reflect and reinforce a complex and intricate technical, religious and spiritual heritage.

OBJECTIVES - The project aims to engage youth in preserving the cultural heritage of the Asante traditional buildings by creating a platform for learning about indigenous architectural knowledge. It will promote sustainable preservation practices through case studies and best practices, address the impacts of climate change on traditional earthen architecture, and identify strategies to mitigate these effects. Additionally, the project seeks to leverage digital technologies for the documentation, promotion, and long-term conservation of these historic structures, ensuring wider accessibility and awareness.

ACTIVITIES - Volunteers will lead a range of awareness-raising activities aimed at promoting cultural heritage within the community. They will organize community talks, conduct house-to-house engagements, and facilitate thought-sharing sessions to encourage open dialogue on the value of heritage preservation. Through radio and television advocacy, as well as social media campaigns and cinema screenings, they will reach wider audiences with messages about protecting cultural sites. Volunteers will also provide education and training on how to use the internet and social media to promote heritage. Community durbars will be held to showcase cultural artefacts and bring history to life through storytelling, helping to strengthen the community’s connection to its heritage. Participants will also engage in hands-on activities focused on the preservation and maintenance of heritage sites. They will repair cracks in walls, carry out painting and decorative work, and clean the buildings and surrounding areas. In addition, they will help restore photographs, paintings, models, and other artefacts associated with the sites. Volunteers will also gain practical experience by trying their hands at traditional building techniques and participating in educational trips to other traditional earthen architecture heritage sites across Ghana. As part of their efforts, they will conduct vulnerability assessments of the buildings to identify and address climate-related risks to their long-term preservation.

PARTNERS - Ghana Museums and monuments Board; Local community and youth groups.

Voluntary Workcamps Association of Ghana-VOLU

Mr. William Richardson

voluntaryworkcamp@gmail.com



<https://whc.unesco.org/en/whvolunteers>