



## Koutammakou, the land of the Batammariba

*Koutammakou, Kara region, Togo – 17 July - 6 August*

### ◆ Cultural site

**The site:** The Koutammakou landscape in north-eastern Togo, which extends into neighboring 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 Koutammakou is an outstanding example of a system of traditional settlement that is still living and dynamic, and subject to traditional and sustainable systems and practices, and which reflects the singular culture of the Batammariba. It is also an eloquent testimony to the strength of spiritual association between people and landscape, as manifested in the harmony between the Batammariba and their natural surroundings.



**The project and its objectives:** The aim the project – gathering around 20 local and international volunteers during three weeks – is to run awareness raising activities for the promotion, protection and preservation of the site, in particular through the use and valorization of traditional preservation methods and techniques. Attention will also be given to the necessity of promoting the touristic potential of the site without damaging its authenticity, and allowing its inhabitants to conserve their cultural landscape while at the same time benefiting from an increase in the quantity and quality of the tourist activities around the site. The multicultural composition of the group will increase the diversity of ideas and experiences and contribute to a renewed local and international dynamic around these issues.

**The activities:** Volunteers will work on the planning and maintenance of the paths giving access to the site, suggesting new tourist circuits and building hosting and accommodation infrastructures respectful of the typical architecture of the region. They will run targeted awareness raising campaigns involving all the Koutammakou communities and schools, focusing in particular on the need for reforestation of the indigenous species which constitute the building material of the Takienta houses. In cooperation with the local population, volunteers will then start a nursery to replant the species that were identified during the 2008 campaign as endangered. Debates, reflections and exchanges on the role of World Heritage in a region growingly facing modernisation, urbanisation and environmental challenges will also be organized with the international volunteers and the local population.

**Expected results:** The international and local volunteers, the local community as well as the concerned authorities will be sensitised on key issues related to World Heritage. In particular, the contribution by youth and voluntary service organizations to WH promotion and preservation through non-formal education will be highlighted. The concrete activities, planned and implemented on the basis of the needs identified in coordination with the site management, the local and national authorities and the inhabitants of the WH site and its region, will also result in a more sustainable site – in particular through the reforestation of the indigenous species essential for the construction and renovation of the Takienta houses, and through the realisation of touristic infrastructures respectful of the local culture and social dynamics.

**Partners:** At local level, the project will see the active involvement of local volunteers of the Association des Jeunes Volontaires pour le Développement Communautaire (AJVDC) in Nadoba, and of the Batammariba Community. At the national level, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Tourism and the UNESCO National Commission are among the confirmed or potential partners, together with the Koutammakou Promotion and Conservation Service.

### ***Organisation responsible for the project:***

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### **World Heritage Volunteers - "Patrimoinito Voluntary Action 2009"**

Sources: for the description of the World Heritage site: UNESCO World Heritage List, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>  
For the description of the activities: FAGAD Togo and CCIVS, [www.unesco.org/ccivs](http://www.unesco.org/ccivs)