INFOSHEET FOR INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS JOINING ASTOVOT ONG

- KPALIME, TOGO -
GENERAL INFORMATION

Introduction of ASTOVOT
The Togolese Association of Volunteers at Work (ASTOVOT) was founded in 1957 with the name «VAT» (Volontaires au Travail – Volunteers at Work). Nowadays, the association has become an apolitical ONG for International voluntary work, community education and development done for and by young people. Officially approved by the Togolese Government in 2002, ASTOVOT made its mission to improve the citizens’ life conditions supporting their blossoming and their welfare through social and cultural activities, for example in terms of environment conservation or awareness regarding health issues.
Pictured this situation, ASTOVOT is engaged to support the people’s and ideas’ flow through International and intercultural exchanges in order to arouse the mutual comprehension and the peace promotion.
During the year, ASTOVOT welcomes volunteers for long, medium and short term volunteer for International solidarity projects. The workcamps happening during the summer represent most of the short term projects. They are including activities in different fields such as peace promotion, support for disabled people, environment safeguard, promotion of culture and education. In order to realize these projects, ASTOVOT is supported by National (Kpalimé Town Council, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Development, National Agency for Volunteering in Togo, etc. ) and International partnerships (CCSVI, SCI, IJGD, Solidarités Jeunesse, Concordia, Jeunesse et Reconstruction, Compagnons Bâtisseurs, COCAT Spain, JAVVA Belgique, Nice etc...).

WELCOME
Welcome to ASTOVOT (Association Togolaise des Volontaires au Travail), the largest and most well-established association of international volunteering in Togo.
We offer a place to share your personal experiences and we hope you will take advantage of our knowledge and local expertise by asking us questions in our friendly and multicultural environment.
We count on two branches, one in Kpalimé and one in Lomé, but our office is based in Kpalimé, the artistic centre of Togo.

OUR TEAM
Our team coordinates the placement of volunteers with host families, the projects in which volunteers work, and several activities and educational opportunities for both local and international volunteers. The team consists of:

- The council of administration, the decision-making group of the association;
- The executive team, which includes:
  - The programme and workcamp coordinator and their assistant;
  - The person in charge of the welcoming of the volunteers(eg. airport pick-up);
  - Two people taking care of the placement and integration of the volunteers in the host families;
  - The organizer of the volunteering projects;
  - The person in charge of networking and evaluating;
  - A secretary;
  - Eventual interns or volunteers.
VOLUNTEERING WITH ASTOVOT
If you are going to volunteer with ASTOVOT you have made the best choice! You will learn in a multicultural environment and gain new skills and life competences. With our organization you have reliable support and a trustworthy partner.
Apart from our International workcamps we also offer long-and mid-term volunteering projects. The volunteers of those projects stay at least 1 month and work in health centres, schools, orphanages, libraries and centres for disabled people. To participate and be integrated even better in the African culture and Togolese lifestyle the volunteers are accommodated in host families. ASTOVOT welcomes about fifty long- and mid-term volunteers from many different countries each year.
To take part in our projects you need to be at least 18 years old. A basic level of French or English is required.
It is also recommended to participate in all the activities organized by our partners before leaving for Togo, as these will prepare you for your stay here.
We can give you information and contacts of the partner organizations, which are closest to you.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION
Participation fees:
Astovot demands a contribution to its volunteers, whose amount depends on the length of stay:
- One month: 290 euros
- Two months: 580 x 3%: 562 euros
- Three months: 850 x 5%: 826 euros,
- Six months: 1740 x 10%: 1566 euros

All the participation fees make up the budget of Astovot. Thus, the volunteers contribution will be used for: promotion activities, administrative procedures, actual realization of the projects, purchase of materials, accommodation of the volunteers in the hosting families (3 meals a day), evaluation post-project and running of the association.
Please consider that Astovot does not receive any subsidy from the Togolese Government nor from any private institutions. Therefore, it can count only on the participation fees of the volunteers.

Accommodation: You will be accommodated in a local family and a private, furnished room will be at your disposal.

Tips for your personal budget
Apart from the expenses included in the participation fee for the workcamp, you will have to bear the costs of the trips you will probably organize with the group, for going out and for your shopping (ie. souvenirs).
For the trips, we would suggest to make sure you have an amount of 10/20€.
For everything else, your budget depends on what you want to buy in Togo and where you want to go outside the workcamp. Usually, if you do not plan big trips (eg. To the North of the country), a budget between 100€ and 200€ (not considering the participation fee) is more than enough. Please, remember that these amounts are only indicative.
You can easily change your euros into CFA francs in Lomé or directly in Kpalimé. This way there is no commission fee on the exchange. On the opposite, if you have changed too many euros and
before leaving you want to change the CFA you have left, there is a commission fee. Thus, we suggest you to change your money accordingly to your needs without exceeding. Usually, only the VISA card is accepted in Togo, but some ATM accept now also the Mastercard.

F.1 1€ = 655,957 FCFA

**Culture**

Please pay attention to the cultural differences you will encounter. You will go to Togo with your background, culture, personality and experiences and you will there meet many people (other International volunteers, Togolese volunteers, villagers, Togolese people) with also their own background, culture, personality and experiences.

The aim of a workcamp is not absorbing others’ culture, it is more about discovering and understanding it. It does not mean accepting everything but being open-minded and accepting the differences. Thus, you may be bothered or even shocked by certain behaviours of other people, but they can as well be bothered or shocked by yours.

In this eventuality please do not keep the disappointment for yourself, but talk directly to the people involved and try to understand their reasons. The problems are due mainly to misunderstanding. If one understands the reason of someone else’s behaviour, it is easier to correctly explain their actions, even without agreeing on them. **The dialogue is fundamental for mutual comprehension.**

French is the official language in Togo, but in the southern part of the country the most spoken language is Éwé. French can be considered as the language relegated to a role essentially administrative.

**NB: The projects languages will be French and English.**

**KPALIME**

Located in the south west of Togo, the town of Kpalimé is the ideal place for nature lovers and hikers who are eager to discover its beautiful mountains and tropical flora.

With its 100’000 inhabitants, Kpalimé is the administrative centre of the Plateaux-Region and is very close to the border with Ghana.

It is plenty of natural waterfalls where is possible to cool down on a hot and sunny day. Kpalimé also houses the country’s most important artisanal centre, where a large number of artists and craftsmen can be found.
Please make sure to send us your flight details (airline and timetable) in order for us to be able to welcome you at the airport.

**Welcoming at the airport**
At anytime you will be arriving, an ASTOVOT member will be there to welcome you. In case you have some troubles finding them or if there are some last minute changes regarding the flight, please contact us through the below indicated numbers:

**Airport welcoming**
- Eric ADABEY: +228 90 06 03 60
- Jean KOUDITE: +228 90 20 47 37

**For any urgencies**
- Félix Kodzo Edem EKPEKO, Programme coordinator: +228 90 73 03 39
- Alid ADOM, Coordinator Assistant: +228 90 82 04 52 / 00228 99 16 91 73
- ASTOVOT Office: +228 24 41 07 15

Depending on your arrival time, the ASTOVOT member will either bring you to a taxi station in Lomé or find you a “taxi-brousse” (shared taxi) that will bring you directly to Kpalimé or will escort you to your hotel where you will spend the night before going to Kpalimé the morning after.

**Transfer to Kpalimé**

**From Lomé to Kpalimé:**
Kpalimé is located about 120 km from the capital city Lomé. You can take a “taxibrousse” or a minibus from the “gare routière” of Lomé, which is not really an actual station (it is a kind of parking place for taxi awaiting the customers), but everyone knows it.

The trip is approximately 2 hours (depending on how many stops the driver will do) and costs about 2000 FCFA (circa 3 Euro). Luggage is several times taxed, between 500 and 1000 FCFA (more or less 0,75 / 1,5€). Consider that usually in the shared taxi two people are squeezed in the front seat along with the driver, while four adults are in the back seat (plus, eventually, some kids). There is always place for the baggage in the boot.

In case you want to travel more comfortably you can offer to pay the double price in order to have more room for you.

The cost of the taxi from the airport to the taxi station or to the hotel is usually between 3000 and 5000 FCFA (more or less 4,5 / 7,6€) depending on the distance and the time.

**From the center of Kpalimé to Astovot:**

**On foot:** Kpalimé can be easily discovered by walking. From the town centre to Astovot headquarters it will take you less than half an hour.
By moto-taxi: If you are getting hot or tired you can also take a moto from anywhere on the street, the bikers will horn at you and you can stop them just with a simple wave. From the centre of Kpalimé to Astovot it will take you about 7 min.

**KPALIME TO ASTOVOT**

![Map of Kpalimé to Astovot](image)

**KEEPING IN TOUCH**

**Mobile Phone:** Togo has two main mobile phone companies: Moov and Togocel. You can subscribe by buying one of their sim cards which costs about 1000 CFA. National phone calls will cost you about 100 CFA /minute*.

**Internet:** Internet points are common in Togo. Prices vary between 250 and 500 CFA / hour*. Nevertheless, the connection can be slow and often you need some patience.

To have **Internet on your mobile device** (3G) you can choose between 1 GB (with Togocel: 5000 CFA) and 3 GB (with Togocel: 10000 CFA); both are for one month long. There is also a weekly option (with Togocel: 1500 CFA). The connection is usually well working.

At **Astovot:** at the headquarters there is a WI-FI connection to which the volunteers can connect.

**Note:** Internet connection only works in major cities; it will not work in villages or in remote areas in Togo.

* Prices are based on the fix exchange rate 655,957 CFA F = 1€
USEFUL TIPS
Please take note of the following important information:

VISA: It is highly recommended to request the visa before arriving in Togo. Actually, some airlines could even refuse the boarding to people without visa. Moreover, asking for a visa directly in Togo would mean to stay some days in the capital city or returning there, as it usually takes 2-3 days.

HEALTH: It is highly recommended to see a doctor a few weeks before your departure for Togo. This way, you can be advised about the medicines you need to bring with you and all the preventative measures to follow (before, during and after your stay).

You might be given the prophylaxis for malaria. For the same purpose we recommend to bring with you repellent sprays against mosquitoes (recommending the ones with Picaridine 20%), long sleeve shirts and long trousers to wear after the sunset. The mosquito net, also an important tool to be protected against malaria, can be bought in the pharmacies of Kpalimé, as it is much cheaper than in Europe (it could cost 3500 – 4500 CFA).

In case you decide not to do the prophylaxis, be informed that malaria is well treated in the many hospitals of Kpalimé, as it is a common disease in Togo. Usually, after being confirmed by a quick test, the malaria is cured within 3-5 days with a pill treatment. In this case you do not need to bring any medication with you as it can be bought at the hospital for a few euro.

The Togolese Government requires the yellow fever vaccine to enter the country. Your doctor can advise you about other vaccinations (cholera, rabies, etc.) but they are not compulsory.

Be also equipped with a basic pharmacy kit for eventual small injuries and other possible diseases.

ELECTRICITY: Power outage happen pretty often in Kpalimé, sometimes in the whole town, sometimes just in a neighbourhood (Zomayi, the ASTOVOT’s neighbourhood, is pretty unlucky in this sense). Be provided with a portable power supply to recharge your mobile phone, tablet, camera, etc. and a torch for the evening (even more practical if it is a frontal lamp) will help you often.

SAFETY: Usually Togo is a safe country, but of course you have to pay attention to your belongings, especially in Lomé in the market area. Nevertheless, no particular precaution has to be taken (no more than anywhere else).

OTHERS: Comfy clothes are suggested. There is a lot of dust in the whole town, so you will do your laundry very often (and it has to be done by hand). Thus, consider this before packing your luggage.

Personal care products can be found at the market or in small shops. However, the quality is usually not very high, so if you have some peculiar needs, it is better to bring along your own products.

CREDIT CARDS
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PUBLICS OFFICES AND USEFUL NUMBERS
Usual office hours: Monday to Friday 7.30 AM until 12.00 PM and 2.30 PM until 5.00 PM

Police station: (+228) 24 41 00 53
Post Office: (+228) 24 41 01 07
Hospital (+228) 24 41 04 15 / 24 41 10 20

ASTOVOT
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CONTACTS
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ASTOVOT Partners: