



Reaching the Nations International Church Growth Almanac

Country reports on the LDS Church around the world from a landmark almanac. Includes detailed analysis of history, context, culture, needs, challenges and opportunities for church growth.



Togo

Population: 7.35 millions (#100 out of countries)

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Geography

Area: 56,875 square km. Located in West Africa and occupying a small strip of land between Benin and Ghana, Togo stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the south to Burkina Faso on the north. Togo is one of the smaller countries in Africa in geographical size but experiences a wide range of climate as the tropical south gradually transitions to the semi-arid savannahs of the north in the Sahel. Terrain consists of low elevation plains and flatlands with marshes and lagoons along the coast. Reduced visibility caused by harmattan winds and occasional droughts are natural hazards. Environmental issues include deforestation and pollution. Togo is divided into five administrative regions.

Peoples

Adja-Ewe/Mina 42.4%

Kabye/Tem 25.9%

Para-Gourma/Akan 17.1%

Akposso/Akebu 4.1%

Ana-Ife 3.2%

Other Togolese 1.7%

Foreigners 5.2%

No response 0.4%

There are over twenty indigenous ethnic groups with most of the population concentrated along the Atlantic Coast and the

north-south highway. The largest of these are the Ewe, Mina, and Kabye. The Ewe and Mina are most prevalent in the south, whereas the Kabye reside in northern areas. The Ewe account for many of Togo's professionals, merchants, and civil servants due to greater European influence in the south during the colonial period.[\[1\]](#)

Population: 8,283,189 (July 2021)

Annual Growth Rate: 2.51% (2021)

Fertility Rate: 4.28 children born per woman (2021)

Life Expectancy: male: 68.37 years female: 73.69 years (2021)

Languages: Ewe (20%), Kabiyè (12%), Gbe dialects (11%), Gen (6%), Moba (4%), Tem (3%), Ikposo (3%), Aja (2%), Nawdm (2%), Gourmanchema (2%), Lama (2%), Ife (2%), Ntcham (2%), Fulani (1%), other or unknown (28%). French is the official language and language of commerce. English is commonly spoken in the south and along the Ghanaian border.[\[2\]](#) Ewe is the only indigenous language spoken by more than one million people (1.6 million).

Literacy: 63.7% (2015)

History

Many of the African ethnic groups that populate Togo today migrated to the area from neighboring areas, such as the Ewe from the Niger River valley between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to explore coastal areas in the fifteenth century, and various European powers raided native populations to supply the slave trade for the next two centuries, naming the area "The Slave Coast." Germany established the protectorate of Togoland in present-day Togo in 1884 and maintained rule until 1914 when British and French forces invaded and captured the colony. Following World War I, France and the United Kingdom shared a League of Nations mandate over Togoland until after World War II when the United Nations appointed both nations to administer Togoland as a UN trust territory. In 1957, British Togoland united with the Gold Coast to form the nation of Ghana, and French Togoland became the independent nation of Togo in 1960 after several years of increasing autonomy. Political instability followed shortly thereafter, resulting in a coup in 1967 that overthrew the government and culminated in the establishment of a military-led government under Etienne Eyadema that endured until 2005. General Eyadema granted some democratic freedoms in the early 1990s when multi-party elections were first held. A poor human rights record isolated Togo for much of the remainder of the twentieth century. Greater democratic reforms have been instituted following the death of General Eyadema although government leaders face serious challenges revitalizing the economy and confronting accusations of electoral fraud.[\[3\]](#) General Eyadema's son, Faure Gnassingbé, has been Togo's president since he was elected in 2005.

Culture

Wood carvings used for worship and trophies, tribalism, and indigenous religion are traditional cultural practices and beliefs that continue to influence contemporary Togolese culture. Christianity and Islam have gained many converts in recent years among animists, although many retain customs and practices from traditional religions. French is the most spoken language and is utilized for interethnic communication. Cigarette and alcohol consumption rates are low compared to the world average. Polygamy is common and most prevalent in rural areas. Half of illiterate women are joined to a polygamous marriage compared to one-third of literate women.[\[4\]](#)

Economy

GDP per capita: \$1,597 (2019) [2.55% of U.S.]

Human Development Index: 0.515 (2019)

Corruption Index: 29 (2020)

The economy is based on subsistence and commercial agriculture. Like neighboring Benin, Togo's largest cash crop is cotton. Coffee and cocoa are also major exports. Togo is the world's fourth largest producer of phosphate. Difficulties attracting foreign investment have been ongoing. Agriculture employs 65% of the labor force and generates 29% of the GDP. Coffee, cocoa, cotton, yams, cassava, vegetables, sorghum, rice, livestock, and fish are common agricultural products. Services employ 30% of the labor force and generate 50% of the GDP, whereas industry employs 5% of the labor force and generates nearly one-quarter of the GDP. Phosphate mining, food processing, cement, handicrafts, beverages, and clothing are major industries. Primary trade partners include India, China, Benin, South Korea, and Belgium. Corruption is perceived as widespread. Togo is a transshipment point for heroin and cocaine.

Faiths

Christian: 43.7%

Indigenous beliefs: 35.6%

Muslim: 14%

Other: 0.5%

None: 6.2%

Christians

Denominations – Members - Congregations

Catholic 1,896,158

Jehovah's Witnesses – 22,120 – 327

Seventh Day Adventists – 9,688 – 196

Latter-day Saints – 5,320 – 22

Religion

A university study in 2009 found that Christians constitute approximately half of the population and generally reside in southern areas. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of Togolese are Catholic, whereas 10% are Protestant and 10% identify with other Christian denominations. Muslims comprise 14% of the population and generally reside in northern areas. Indigenous beliefs and practices are often incorporated into Islam and Christianity. Those practicing indigenous beliefs account for one-third of the population.[\[5\]](#) Members of differing religious groups frequently intermarry.[\[6\]](#)

Religious Freedom

The constitution protects religious freedom, which is upheld by the government. Political parties are not permitted to be based

on religion, ethnic group, or region. Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam are state religions. Religious groups are required to register as associations and are entitled to the same rights as state religions, including duty-free status for importing materials for humanitarian and development projects. To register, a religious group must submit a summary of its finances, a site map and site use agreement, names and addresses of administrative leaders, the group leader's diploma, and a statement on its doctrines and statutes. There have been no instances of rejected applications in recent years. Religious instruction is not provided in public schools, but Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic schools are common. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom. However, the government has refused to approve applications for additional religious groups in recent years.[\[7\]](#)

Largest Cities

Urban: 42.8% (2020)

Lomé, **Kara**, **Sokodé**, Kpalimé, **Atakpamé**, **Dapaong**, Tsévié, **Anié**, **Notsé**, **Cinkassé**.

Cities listed in **bold** do not have congregations of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Three of the ten most populous cities has a Latter-day Saint congregation. Forty percent (40%) of the national population resides in the ten most populous cities.

Latter-day Saint History

In July 1997, the Church established its first member group in Lomé with twenty-five members. Most members appeared to have joined the Church abroad or were introduced locally by friends and family. In 1999, Togo came under the jurisdiction of the Ivory Coast Abidjan Mission, a senior missionary couple was assigned to begin missionary work, and the first branch was organized.[\[8\]](#) Seminary and institute commenced that same year. Togo was assigned to the Ghana Cape Coast Mission in 2005 [\[9\]](#) and reassigned to the Ghana Accra Mission in 2007.[\[10\]](#) In 2008, Togo was reassigned to the Cote d'Ivoire Abidjan Mission and in 2011 was included in the newly organized Benin Cotonou Mission.[\[11\]](#) In 2009, the first district was organized in Lomé. In 2013, the first stake in the country was organized—the Lomé Togo Stake. A second stake was organized in Lomé in 2017.

Membership Growth

Church Membership: 5,320 (2019)

There were 117 Latter-day Saints in 2000, increasing to 361 in 2002, 504 in 2004, 575 in 2006, and 793 in 2008. Annual membership growth rates during the 2000s ranged from a high of 90% in 2002 to a low of 6% in 2005. Membership increased 30% in 2009. Growth rates in the 2010s were above 15% besides 2017 when it was 8.7%—the lowest it had been since 2008. Church membership totaled 1,246 in 2010, 2,307 in 2013, 3,804 in 2016, and 5,320 in 2019. In 2019, one in 1,578 was a Latter-day Saint on Church records.

Congregational Growth

Wards: 14 Branches: 8 (May 2021)

A second branch was organized in 2006 (Tokoin), followed by a third branch in 2008 (Hedzranawoe), a fourth branch in late 2009 (Be-Kpota), a fifth branch in 2010 (Ablogame), and a sixth branch in 2011 (Doumassesse). In 2010, the Lomé Branch was renamed the Souzanetime Branch. The Lomé Togo District was organized in late 2009. In late 2012 and early 2013, five new branches were organized (Adidogome, Akodessewa, Anfane, Attiegou, and Wuiti). The first stake was created in December 2013 in Lomé. The Lomé Togo Tokoin Stake was organized in October 2017 from a division of the original Lomé Togo Stake

(renamed the Lomé Togo Be Stake. The Church organized its first branches outside of Lomé in 2018 in the cities of Kpalimé and Tsévié. There were reports in the late 2010s and early 2020s of missionary efforts in villages on the outskirts of Tsévié such as The number of congregations in Togo totaled 11 in 2012, 12 in 2013, 14 in 2014, 16 in 2015, 17 in 2016, 19 in 2018, 21 in 2019, and 22 in May 2021.

Activity and Retention

One hundred seventy-three were enrolled in seminary and institute during the 2009–2010 school year. During the spring of 2009, missionaries reported that the smallest branch was the Hedzranawoe Branch, with sacrament attendance of between fifty and sixty people a week. Most branches had 50-100 members and investigators attending church in early 2013. Sacrament attendance for the Anfame Ward averaged 90 in 2014 and the Be-Kpota Ward averaged 75 in the same time period. Eight hundred members of the Church, missionaries, investigators, and members of the media attended the creation of the Lomé stake in 2013. The average number of members per congregation has steadily increased since 2012 from 169 to 253 in 2019. Nationwide active membership is estimated at no greater than 2,400, or 45% of total church membership.

Language Materials

Languages with Latter-day Saint Scripture: French.

All Latter-day Saint scriptures and most church materials are available in French. The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith is available in Ewe and Fulani. Gospel Principles is available in Ewe and Fulani.

Meetinghouses

Branches meet in renovated building and rented spaces. In 2013, the first church-built meetinghouse was completed to operate as the district center.

Health and Safety

The risk for infectious diseases is very high. Common diseases include typhoid fever, hepatitis A, bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, malaria, yellow fever, schistosomiasis, meningococcal meningitis, rabies, and influenza. HIV/AIDS infects 2.3% of the population.

Humanitarian and Development Work

The Church conducted twenty-five humanitarian and development projects in Togo between 1985 and 2019 which included community projects, vaccination initiatives, newborn and prenatal care, and wheelchair donations.[\[12\]](#) Church humanitarian and development work has been limited to a single measles vaccination initiative project.[\[13\]](#)

Opportunities, Challenges, and Prospects

Religious Freedom

The Church benefits from full religious freedom and experiences no restrictions regarding proselytism, worship, or assembly. There have been no reported instances of societal abuse of religious freedom targeting Latter-day Saints. Foreign missionaries serve without restrictions.

Cultural Issues

Mediocre literacy rates and poverty are challenges that limit local member self-sufficiency in leadership and economic self-reliance but also provide opportunities for Church humanitarian and development projects that can meet these needs in the general population and also raise public awareness of the Church, provide finding opportunities for full-time missionaries, and offer opportunities for local members to introduce friends and family in need to services provided by the Church. Clean water projects, education assistance, employment workshops, and additional types of medical care are potential development and humanitarian activities that have yet to be explored by the Church in Togo. Returned missionaries report that couples cohabitating and not marrying due to expensive dowry costs is a barrier for many to join the Church. The common practice of polygamy in rural areas and in some cities outside of Lomé creates a major barrier for Latter-day Saint mission outreach, as those engaged in a polygamous relationship who desire to join the Church must first end these relations in divorce, or permanent separation if not legally married, and then be interviewed by a member of the mission presidency to be considered for baptism.

National Outreach

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the national population resides in a city with a Latter-day Saint presence. However, the Lomé metropolitan area comprises 26% of the national population which indicates Latter-day Saint congregations in Kpalimé, and Tsévié, which have only had full-time missionaries assigned since 2017, only reach an additional two percent of the population. The Togolese population residing outside of Lomé, Kpalimé, and Tsévié is unreached by Latter-day Saint mission efforts with the exception of some villages near Tsévié which receive some outreach. Many areas of Lomé are less reached due to distance from church meetinghouses and outreach commencing in some communities only within the past decade. The average ward or branch in Lomé has approximately 109,000 people within its geographical boundaries. Nearly one-third of Togolese reside in administrative regions in Togo where there are no Latter-day Saint congregations. Central and northern Togo have no branches or wards.

With widespread religious freedom and a highly receptive population to Latter-day Saint mission efforts, Togo presents excellent opportunities for expanding national outreach in currently unreached locations. Delays in opening additional congregations in Lomé and the continued lack of outreach outside elsewhere in Togo is largely attributed to limited Latter-day Saint mission resources dedicated to the region, the plateauing of Latter-day Saint missionary manpower worldwide, and the several changes since 2000 with mission boundaries involving Togo and Benin. Past missions that administered Togo have included three or more nations within their boundaries, and most mission resources were dedicated to the nation in which the mission was based. Togo's geographic separation from missions it has pertained to over the years has likely resulted in inadequate training and emphasis placed on the retention of converts. When Togo was under the jurisdiction of missions in Ghana, missionaries had to learn French and local African languages if transferred to the country. This complicated the efforts of mission presidency members traveling to Togo to provide training and assistance if they did not know French or African languages spoken in the Lomé area. Although mission outreach extended to Togo has markedly increased since the creation of the Benin Cotonou Mission in 2011, the Church in Togo nonetheless continues to have to share the mission's missionary manpower and resources between two countries with a combined population of approximately twenty million.

Member Activity and Convert Retention

Overall, Togo experiences moderate rates of member activity and convert retention largely due to commensurate increases in congregations and full-time missionaries assigned and high receptivity by the indigenous population in Lomé. Historically, inactivity issues have largely been attributed to distance from church meetinghouses and language barriers. The Lomé Branch had over 500 members on its records in 2005, and many of these members likely did not attend church meetings regularly or at all. Significant improvement was made between 2005 and 2010 as the number of congregations increased to five and the average number of members per congregation fell from over 500 to 249. Missionaries report that efforts to address inactivity challenges during this period primarily focused on opening additional congregations closer to the homes of members, but no English-language congregations have been established for English-speaking Nigerians who primary originate from Abia State.

Consequently, English-speakers' comprehension of church meetings is limited, and language barriers frustrate opportunities to fellowship with French-speaking members, which have reduced nationwide member activity rates. There may be additional challenges maintaining member activity rates for youth and young adults, as evidenced by the number of members enrolled in seminary and institute declining between the 2007–2008 and 2009–2010 school years from 259 to 173. Steady increases in the average number of members per congregation in Togo during much of the 2010s signals worsening member activity rates which appears largely due to rushed prebaptismal preparation. The opening of additional congregations staffed by local members, maintaining high standards for convert baptisms, emphasizing seminary and institute attendance, and enlisting local members in reactivation efforts may facilitate the continuation of the trend of congregational increase since 2006.

Ethnic Issues and Integration

Ethnic conflict in Togo has been concentrated between the Ewe and other ethnic groups. Latter-day Saint missionaries have not reported that ethnic integration issues have carried over the Latter-day Saint congregations, likely due to geography separating many of these ethnic groups. Potential for ethnic integration challenges exists and deserves careful observation by church leaders and stress by local and mission leaders to emphasize the unity of local members, notwithstanding ethnic rivalries or historical incompatibilities.

Language Issues

Modest literacy rates create serious challenges for developing self-sustaining local leadership but provide the opportunity of extending Latter-day Saint literacy classes designed to meet illiteracy needs among members and nonmembers. Literacy programs can be an effective finding and retention approach. The Church is currently unprepared to meet the needs demanded by the high degree of linguistic diversity as most local languages have no Latter-day Saint materials available and the few languages with translations of materials have only one or two Latter-day Saint resources. Church meetings and missionary work are usually conducted in French and English due to these challenges, which provide unity among differing ethnic groups within the same congregations. Language-specific congregations may be organized if the number of active members speaking differing languages warrants it and if qualified leadership is available. An English-speaking congregation to meet the needs of Nigerian members in Lomé appears likely if there are enough retained converts to help staff leadership needs. Languages in the greatest need of Latter-day Saint scriptures and a wide selection of basic proselytism materials include Ewe, Kabye, and Gbe.

Missionary Service

There were nearly twenty Latter-day Saint missionaries assigned to Togo in March 2011, including a senior missionary couple. Togolese members have served full-time missions in increasing numbers, but they appear unable to staff their local missionary needs. Continued emphasis on seminary and institute attendance and mission preparation may lead to greater numbers of local members serving missions and over the medium term generate a body of experienced, returned missionaries to provide additional leadership manpower to expand national outreach.

Leadership

Sustainable local leadership in sufficient numbers to justify the organization of multiple congregations and a district did not occur until the late 2000s, notwithstanding that the Church in Togo had over 500 members in the mid-2000s meeting in one congregation. The organization of four additional branches by 2010 indicated advancements in meeting local leadership development issues and increasing convert retention rates notwithstanding past member activity and local leadership challenges. Even more impressive, the rapid advancement of the district into a stake by 2013 and the division of the original stake into two stakes in 2017 indicates significant strides in local leadership development and the augmentation of active membership. Increasing the number of full-time missionaries assigned commensurate to increases in the number of active members and congregations has safeguarded against full-time missionaries undertaking local administrative and leadership responsibilities. The reassignment of non-Ivorian missionaries serving in Cote d'Ivoire to Benin and Togo in late 2010 and early 2011, and the organization of the Benin Cotonou Mission in 2011 increased the number of full-time missionaries assigned to Togo and appeared an important catalyst for accelerated growth.

Temple

Togo is assigned to the Accra Ghana Temple district. Crossing the international boundary is a challenge for many to travel to the temple, although members in Togo benefit from closer proximity to a temple than most members in Africa. Temple trips appear to be held irregularly and in small groups. Togo appears a likely candidate for a small temple in the foreseeable future given that there are two stakes in Lomé and steady growth in the number of congregations and active members.

Comparative Growth

The Church in Togo experienced some of the most rapid membership and congregational growth in Africa during the 2000s among countries with fewer than 2,000 members as membership increased tenfold and the number of branches increased from one to five. This trend was sustained in the 2010s as annual membership growth rates exceeded 10% every year except for 2017, the number of congregations increased from five to twenty-one, and the organization of the first two stakes occurred. The percentage of the population reached by the Church, member activity rates, and the percentage of members enrolled in seminary or institute during the 2009–2010 school year in Togo (17%) was comparable to most West African nations in 2010. In 2021, the Church in Togo remained significantly smaller than most West African nations with a Church presence for at least 15 years. Only Benin reported a smaller percentage of Latter-day Saints in the population among countries with at least 1,000 members. Member activity and convert retention rates in Togo appear average for the Church in West Africa. The Church in Togo is comparable to the Church in Benin in terms of the extent of national outreach and membership growth rates in the past 15 years, albeit the percentage of Latter-day Saints in Togo is approximately twice that of the Church in Benin. Moreover, the Church in Benin has experienced significant difficulties with convert retention and member inactivity in recent years as the member activity rate in Benin may be as much as half the member activity rate in Togo (25% versus 45%).

Missionary-minded Christian groups report moderate to rapid church growth in Togo. Adventist membership more than doubled during the 2000s, although the number of Adventist congregations increased only by 30% during this time.^[14] Adventist membership nearly doubled in the 2010s to almost 10,000 in 2019. Jehovah's Witnesses reported significant growth in the 2010s as the number of active members and congregations doubled. Many Christian groups have operated in Togo longer than Latter-day Saints, have relied on local members to perform proselytism activities to increase membership, and have a presence in many areas throughout the country, whereas Latter-day Saints highly rely on full-time missionaries to proselyte and limit missionary activity to only a few select locations.

Future Prospects

The outlook for future Church growth in Togo is favorable due to fair convert retention rates in recent years, increasing numbers of local priesthood leaders, high rates of receptivity, consistent congregational growth, and good prospects for a separate mission to be organized and headquartered in Togo within the foreseeable future. Additional congregations in the Lomé area will likely be organized soon due to steady increases in membership and well-functioning local leadership in most areas. The Church may begin to translate materials into Ewe given this language is likely spoken as a first language by many, if not most, Latter-day Saints in Togo, and the Church has several Ewe-designated branches in Ghana primarily in the Volta Region. Additional unreached cities may open to missionary work over the medium term, especially those within close proximity to Lomé where there are multiple members. However, greater national outreach expansion, such as into central and northern areas of Togo, appears unlikely until a separate mission is organized in Togo.

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