

## Fred Koehler, Peace Corps Volunteer, Togo (2002–2004)

### Biography

Hello. This is Fred Koehler. Actually, when I was born my parents named me Timothy Allen Koehler. After thinking it over, my dad, Fred, decided he wanted a "junior," so they re-named me Frederick John Koehler II. That was in Charleston, South Carolina, where I lived till I was five or so with my older brother Kenny (he got named for my grandfather). As a child I was called Freddie; by high school in Florida it changed to Fred. In my graphic design classes at Florida Southern College the professors referred to me as Mr. Koehler. At the advertising agency and newspaper where I worked afterward it was always just plain Fred. Fred for my friends, Fred for most of my family (except Mom, who still uses "Freddie"). Now in West Africa it can be Koffi or Habalo, but usually Monsieur Frederic. You can call me Fred. Good to meet you.



Peace Corps Volunteer Fred Koehler (right) with his training host family in a village in Togo, West Africa

### Site Assignment

My job in the Peace Corps is being a health worker. The official title is "Community Development/AIDS Prevention Extension Agent." Basically I'm a health worker, though. I work a bit with the hospital and a lot with social services on education and health development in the community.

My host country is called Togo. It's in West Africa, right between Ghana and Benin. They speak French here, along with about a hundred other tribal languages. The people of my village face many problems, including an AIDS epidemic and scarce supplies of clean water. In addition, there are few jobs here, other than farming or selling what the farmers have grown at the market. It is with these problems in mind that I work.



Fred Koehler after a long, dusty bush-taxi ride