

# RESTORATION TELEM

A photograph showing several ancient, cylindrical stone pillars of varying heights and thicknesses. They are situated under a large, overhanging rock formation with a textured, layered surface. The pillars appear to be made of reddish-brown earth or stone. The scene is set in a natural, rocky environment with some scattered stones on the ground. The lighting is bright, suggesting daylight.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE RENOVATION PROJECT OF YOUNGO  
DECEMBER 2013

# RESTORATION TELEM

## INTRODUCTION HERITAGE

Yougodougourou, or simply Yougo, is the main village for the rituals of the animist Dogon culture. It is the center of the culture of the masks and the center where the big celebration of the Sigi begins: a feast once every 60 years that from there spread throughout the Dogon. Yougo is 200 feet above the plain, nestled in an inaccessible rocky area.

The living conditions are particularly difficult: there is not much water, no electricity, no fields around the village and no work except tourism. Only because the village occupies such a central place in the animistic culture of the Dogon, the village will never be abandoned. Yougodougourou is in the center of the Unesco 's heritage area of the Dogon.

This application relates specifically to the restoration of a group of about 10 granaries in central Yougodougourou. It is an old group built on a high rock with

stones, wood and clay and in a form that is applied since the 11th century. There are many granaries in the Dogon and the vast majority are still used. These sacred granaries are not in use anymore but are an icon of Yougodougourou and the Dogon.

The restoration of the granaries are part of a much larger project to restore the village of Yougo with about 25 family homes. The main goal is to preserve the special architectural and cultural and historical value of the Unesco heritage of the Dogon. The project will offer facilities (such as water) and employment for the residents of the village that will increase the quality of life in the village.

The brochure "Restoration Yougodougourou, project proposal for a unique village in Mali" includes a list of relevant documentation.



*Cartier Dion Nogou, family Taboye groupe Telem*

## CULTURAL VALUE

The Dogon is known for its special clay architecture. Yougo is within the Dogon a unique village and a highlight of Dogon architecture.

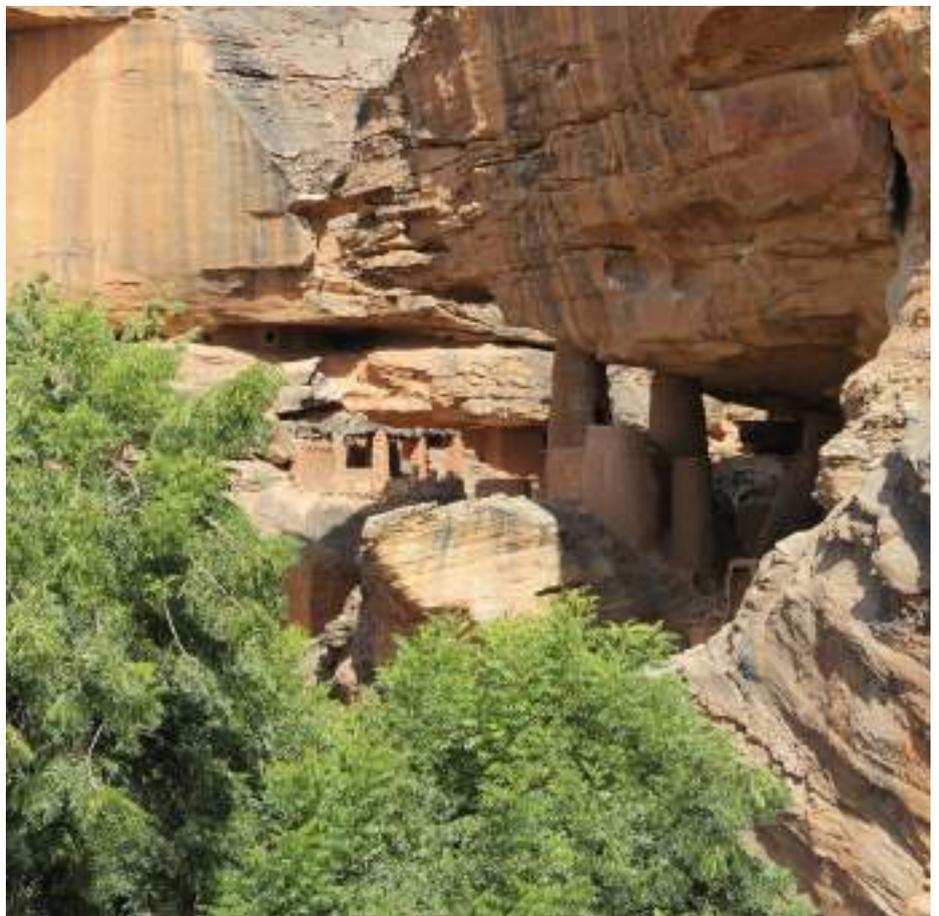
Yougo is in the center of the Dogon area that is UNESCO world heritage.

These granaries are under an overhanging rock and provide a spectacular sight on the route to the top.

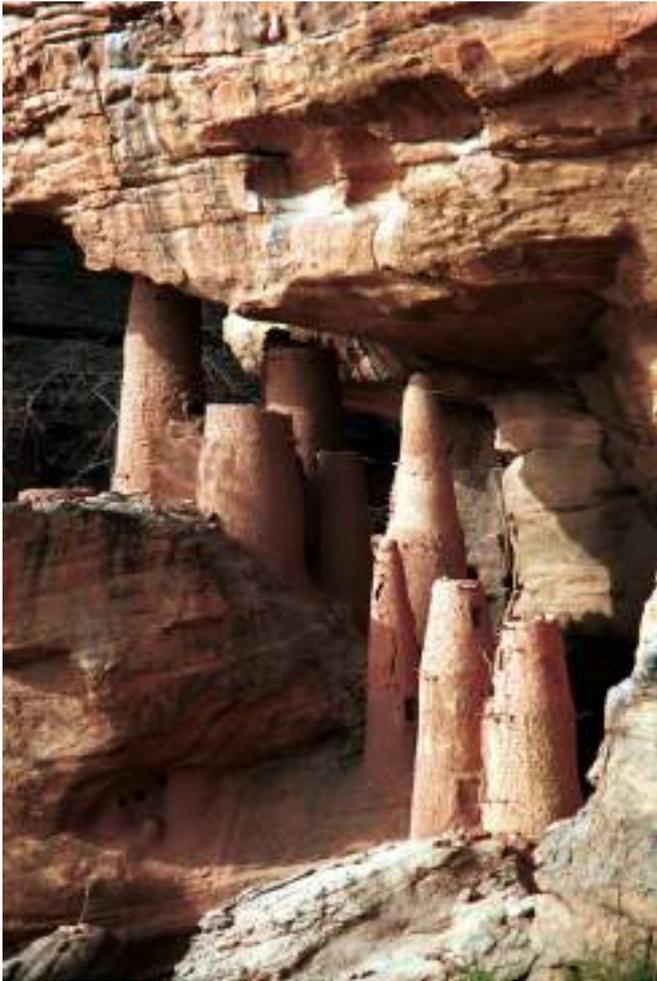
They are a part of the place where the preparations are being made of the important traditional events such as Sigi.



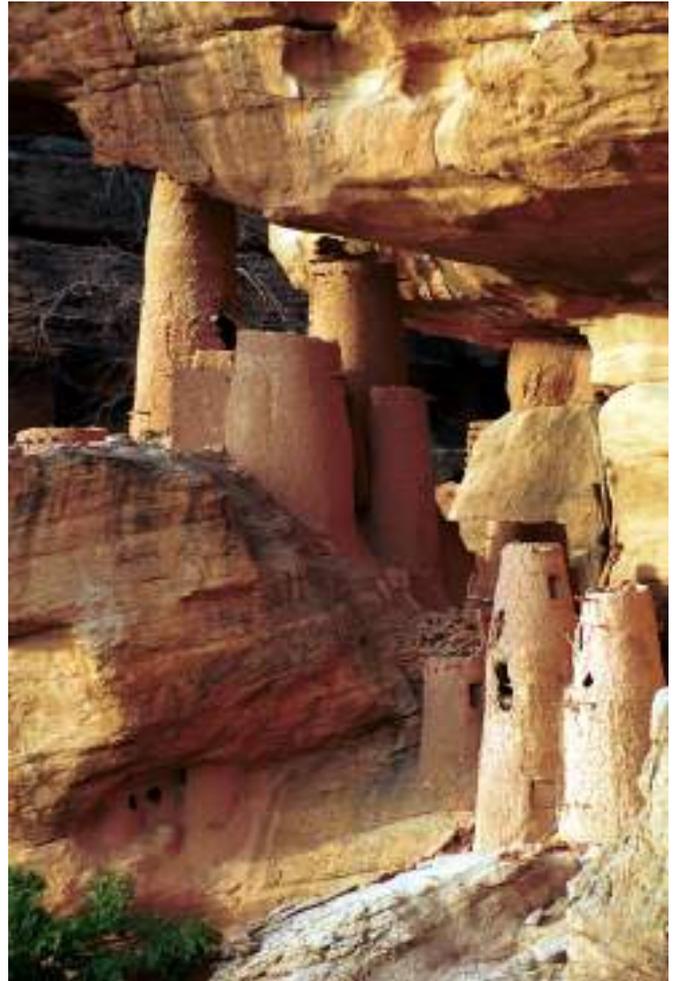
1981



*It's clear that already 3 towers have collapsed during the last years, 2012*



1986



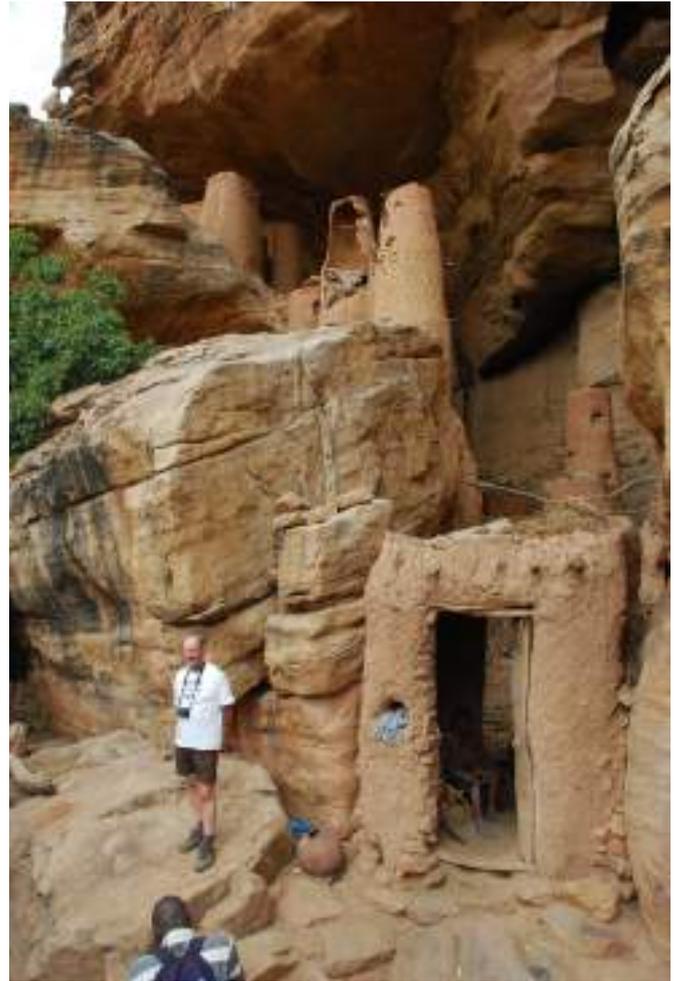
2007

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE TO THE AFFECTED COMMUNITY**

Yougodougourou is a 'living' village. Most of the houses and public buildings have a function in the social and economic context of the village. The family has the duty to maintain the family house. The first importance of the heritage is the survival of the village culture and thus the village community. The last 10 to 20 years the heritage is also important to attract tourists. Tourism has grown because of the great cultural values in the Dogon and especially in villages like Yougodougourou. Tourism provides income that Yougo and the Dogon desperately need to survive in the difficult conditions on the edge of the desert. Without a support for the village economy the village will sooner or later be abandoned.



1983



2012

### **DISASTER OR CONFLICT THAT CAUSED DAMAGE TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Clay architecture is vulnerable, in particular when use is discontinued. Regular maintenance is essential.

The last two years the houses and granaries of Yougo are much more damaged than normal because of several actual and negative developments:

- 1 Fierce rains (due to the climate change?).
- 2 The economy of the Dogon is severely affected by the turmoil of the rebellion in the North of the country. Prices of construction materials have risen and revenues of tourism are gone.
- 3 Part of the population, mainly the young people moves to the plain or to the city because the local economy offers no future. People and knowledge are disappearing.
- 4 There is not enough water for the restoration of the buildings.

## DAMAGE TO THE HERITAGE



2009

For the stability of the heritage:

The disaster is creeping and has no sudden impact. The need for repair and restoration is acutely. If recovery is delayed this special heritage is possibly irreparably damaged.

- 1) Mud architecture decays fast as there is no maintenance;
- 2) Expertise can still be transferred by some elderly people in the region.
- 3) Additives for the top clay layer make the layer more sustainable but are too costly for the village.

For the continuity of its function and role within the community:

- 4) Tourism will not return to Yougo when the heritage is neglected or has disappeared.
- 5) Young people will move away if there is no employment in the villages and the quality of life in the vil-lages will decline. Eventually the village will be deserted.
- 6) Assistance in the restoration of the village will have a positive impact on the community feeling and the desire to continue living in the village



1981





*crush in the main construction*



*handmade work of mudbricks, old traditional methode*



*speciale mixture and scapped stone make the building special*

## ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FOR SAFE-GUARDING THE HERITAGE

- 1) In the first place a new well should be ensured so that there is enough water for households and the restoration
- 2) The missing granaries and the missing parts of the other granaries will be rebuilt
- 3) All the walls have to be covered with a top clay plaster that is enriched with traditional additives that make the layer more sustainable.

For a sustainable top clay layer costly supplements are needed as Beurre the Carite, Raisins sauvage and nut oil,.

Much materials as the additives, banco, manure, vegetable fibers, wood and stones, should be transported from far over difficult roads and carried up the steep path to the village.

Do you foresee any problems in the execution and management of these activities (if yes, please explain)?

ADI has a solid organization in Mali. ADI runs the project together with the village community. There is a great willingness in the village to do the work. The Dutch organization FDE facilitates the project and does the research together with the 'Mission Cultural de Bandiagara'. Once the problem of additional and essential watersupply is resolved, ADI foresees no problems with the restoration except the lack of money.

## DAMAGES TO THE HERITAGE

- 1) The toplayer has disappeared
- 2) The granaries burst and parts of the walls are broken off
- 3) At least 3 granaries have allready largely collapsed



*Workshop in Yougo for producing the traditional form for the mud bricks necesseary for the restoration*

## EXPECTED TIME-FRAME

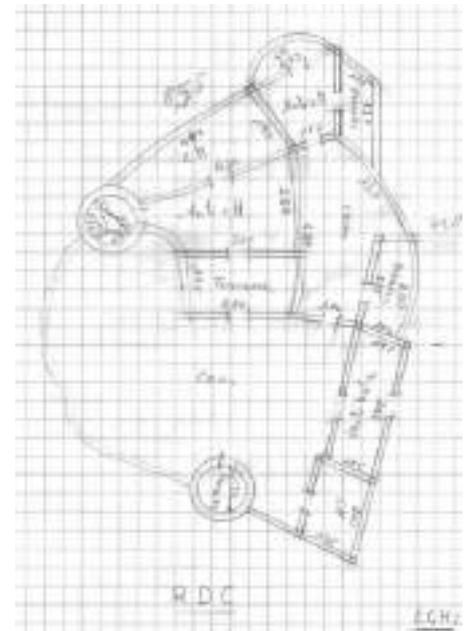
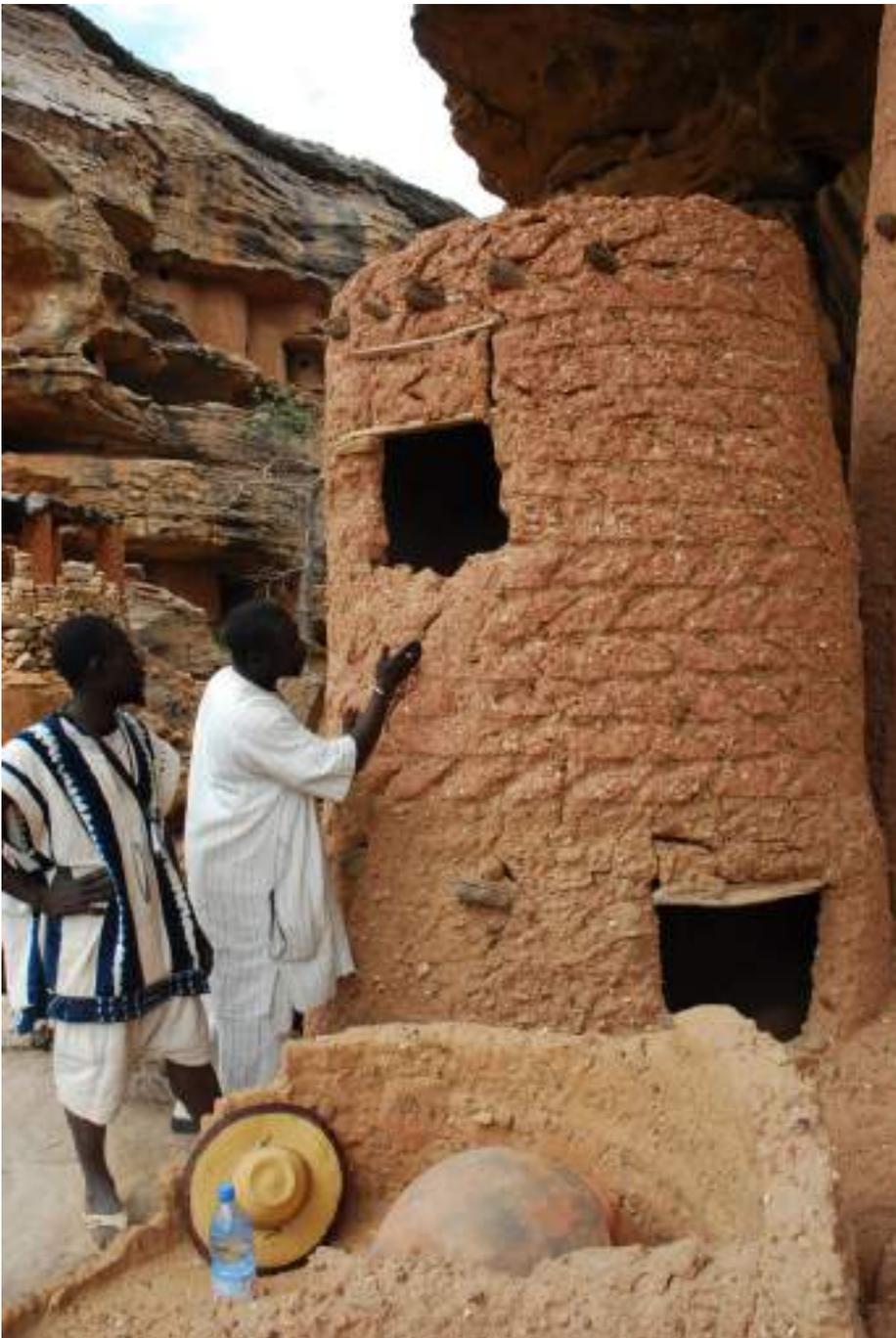
In total: The whole restoration project of Yougo will take 4 years. The project of this request will take 12 months: January-December 2014. The period of time in which the work can be done is dependent of work on the land. Most of the work will be done in the dry season from January to June.

Per activity:

- 1) February-March: preparing of the work, structure of the project organization, collecting and transport of materials and equipment, transport. Removing old Layers of Banco and damaged parts of the walls.
- 2) March-may: new water supply as close to the village. Applying new wooden constructions and new layers of banco.

- 3) May-June: Applying the finishing layers of banco.
- 4) July- October: control of the work
- 5) November – December: preparing of the final illustrated report and the financial reporting.

The local partners as Unesco Mali and Mission Culturelle Bandiagara will make their own reports



*First drawings made by local technicians*

*Inspection of the several building types and methodes of the Tellem group of housing*



## FOLLOW-UP OF COMPLETE RESTORATION

The restoration of the granaries marks the beginning of the restoration of the whole village. The project is important to develop confidence that recovery is possible and to gain experience.

With this pilot project we will train young people in specific and traditional knowledge needed for restoration of clay architecture. The specific knowledge can be disseminated to other villages and thus ensures employment.



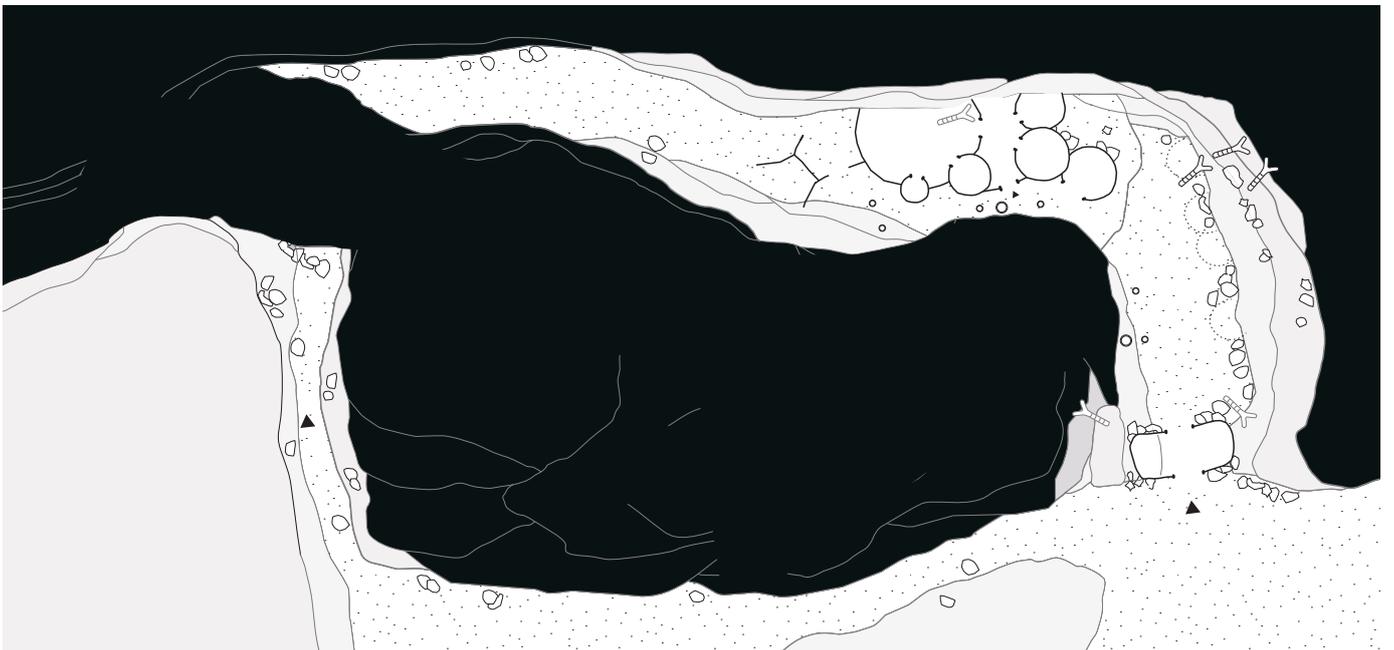
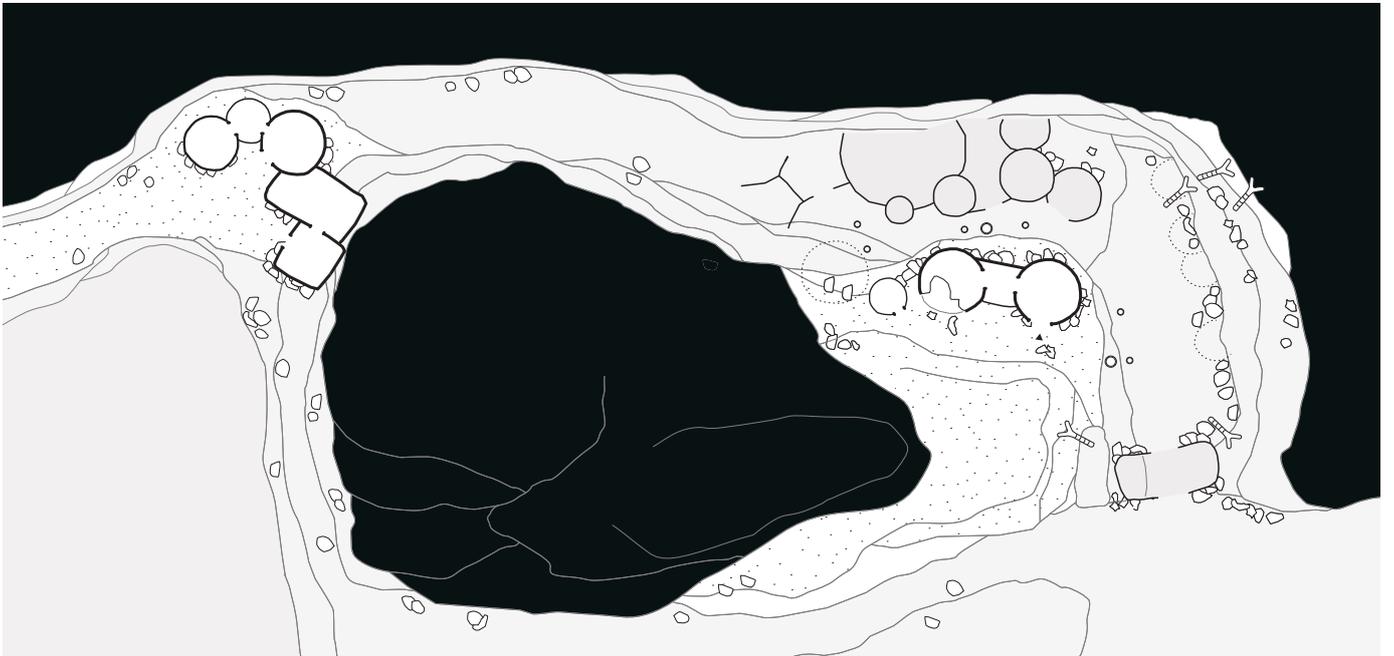
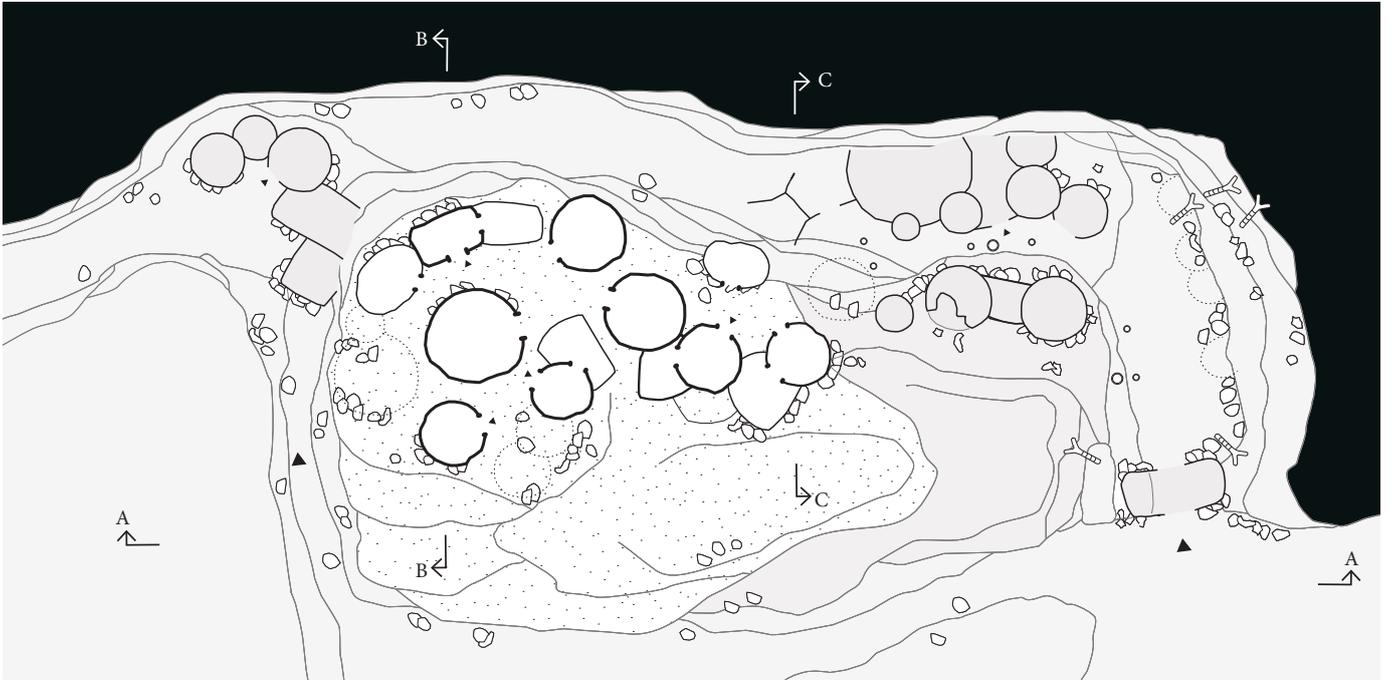
*Image of the Tellem group and vanished graineries*

The knowledge that is generated in this project will have a great impact on the quality and sustainability of restoration of the private houses that are not part of this request.

We have invited Valerie Schuyt en and Marjoleine Boonstra of View Point Productions, to make a documentary of the whole process of the restoration. They visited Yougo and Nando in november/ december 2013 to explore the possibil-

ities for a documentary. They will visit Nando and Yougo every year during the 4 years of the restoration. For this documentary other funds will be accessed by SDO and View Point Productions.





Sections, plans on several levels wich show the protected area of the Tellem

## HOW THE FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF THE SITE IS SECURED

ADI aims for a general and integrated approach.

Combined with the restoration project, we will stimulate different aspects of the village economy:

1 A project will be launched for the recovering of sustainable tourism in the Dogon that allows to form funds for the restoration of Dogon architecture.

2 Association Femmes Dogon will set up women groups to start small enterprises.

3 ADI is setting up projects to improve and broaden agricultural techniques and marketing.

4) The new to build practical lyceum in Sangha will provide education in building, restoration, agriculture and tourism to support the activities in the villages.

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

For the community:

1) The start of the restoration of the village gives the village more vitality and future

For the social-economic situation of the area in which the heritage is situated:

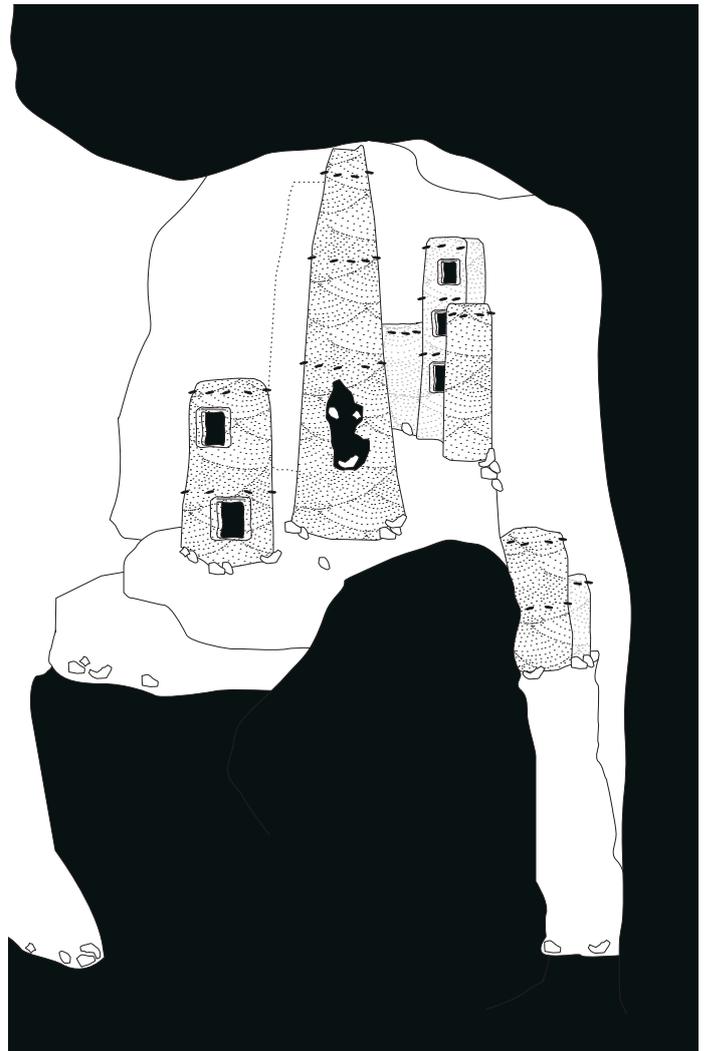
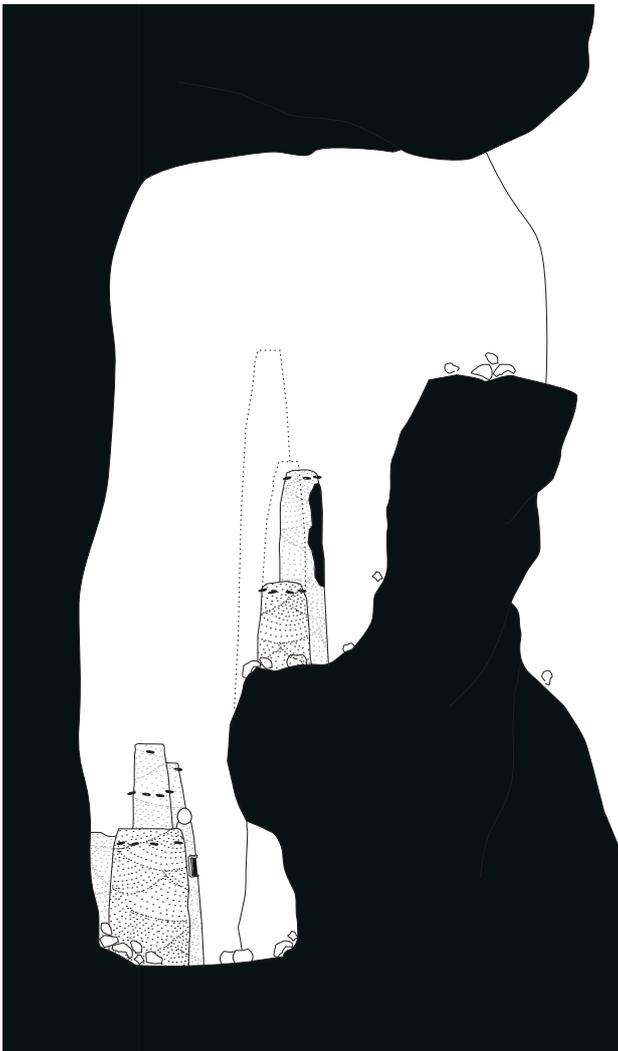
2) A support of the local economy that makes the village livable and offers employment to young people

For the appreciation of the heritage:

3) A restored village will attract tourists who will bring in money.

For the capacity building:

4) Trained young people may use there knowledge in the Dogon region



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This booklet and project proposal has been closely made in collaboration with Association Dogon Initiative (ADI) and Mission Culturelle de Bandiagara (MCB) during two investigation tours in May 2013 and December 2013.

### **Special thanks to**

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Boubacar Kouramane, Master chief masonry Djenne  
Seydou Quattra, Mission Culturelle de Bandiagara

Valerie Schuyt, ViewPoint productions and Marjoleine Boonstra, film director who will make a short documentary on the project and who joined us on our trip in December 2013.

For updated and additional information visit  
[www.dogononderwijs.nl](http://www.dogononderwijs.nl)

Occasionally there are pictures used which are made by people who have joined on one of the many trips. SDO manages an archive of nearly 50.000 pictures from the period 1972 to present.

Sponsored by LEVS architects Amsterdam.

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