

Developing Sustainability Decisions of an Abandoned Historic Rural Settlement: The Case of Basayas Village

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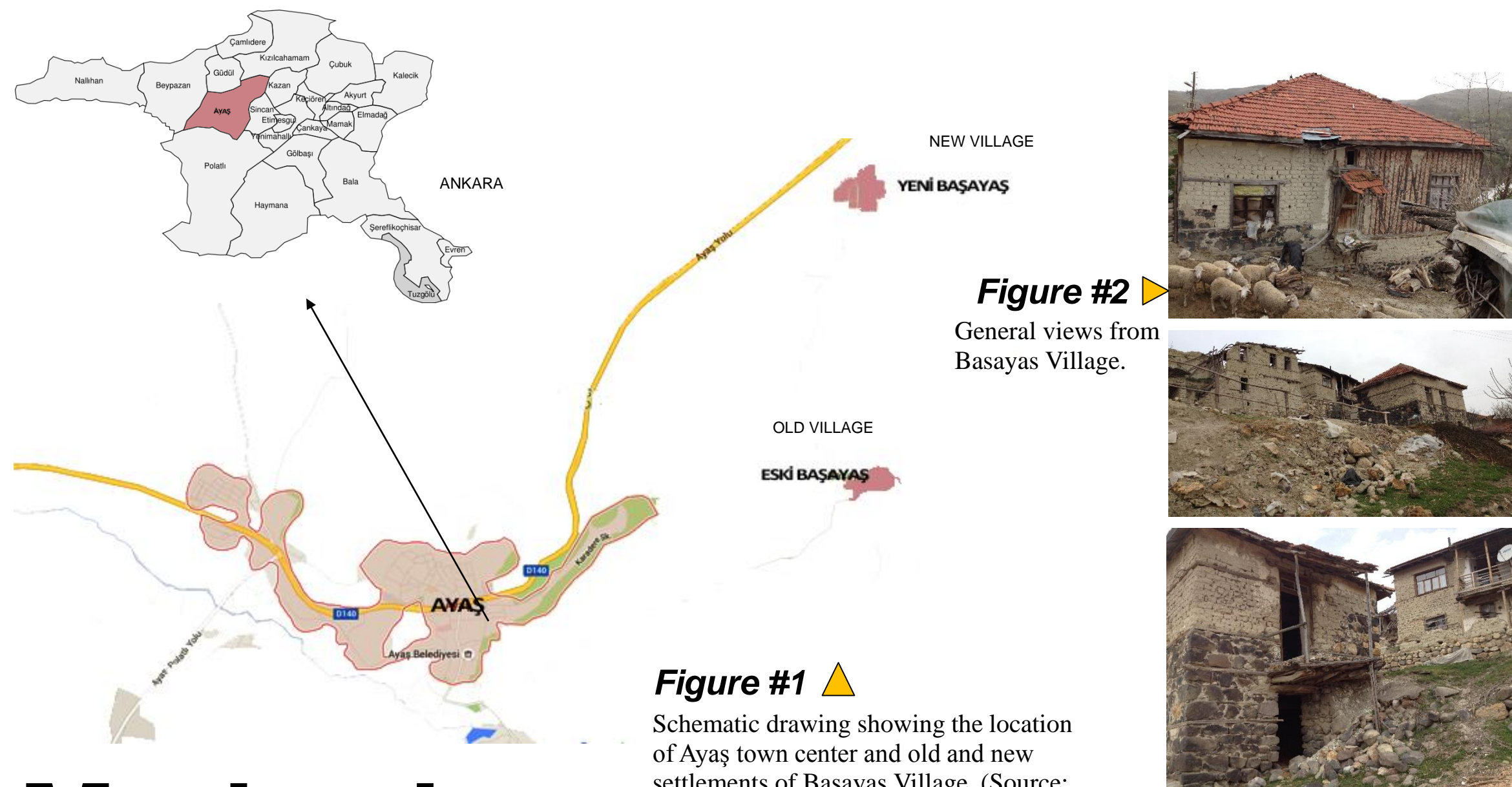


Introduction

Başayaş Village, in Ayaş, Ankara, known as an old Turkmen settlement in the past, still preserves its natural and historic texture containing rural heritage areas, historic houses, mosque, and fountains. The village is located on the historic Silk Road, but today it is abandoned because of the establishment of a new village. Aim of this study is to reveal original values and to evaluate the current conditions and needs analysis of the old village in order to develop rural tourism in the area, and thus to enable revival of the historic village within the context of sustainability. Condition assessment of the village has been done by means of observations and oral history and then SWOT analysis have been carried out in order to evaluate the sustainability potentials of rural tourism and preservation of cultural heritage in the village. Sustainability decisions and recommendations presented with this study in order to develop rural tourism of the village were aimed to serve as a model for similar historic rural settlements.

LOCATION

Başayaş Village, located on the historic Silk Road, is an important settlement some five kilometers distant from Ayaş town center connected to the city of Ankara (Figure 1). Ayaş is an historic settlement which was ruled by Hittites, the Phrygians, Gallates, Romans, Seljuks, and Ottomans at different times of history [1] (Figure 2).



Methods

This study was carried out as part of an architectural education. Field works have been conducted together with third and fourth year architecture students. Condition assessment and needs analysis, analysis of rural tourism potentials of Basayas Village, and SWOT analysis regarding to sustainability of its rural tourism potentials and conservation of its cultural heritage have been the basic methods used during research. Literature survey, archival, and historic research as well as field works and oral history were the other methods applied.

Results

Condition Assessment

Basayas Village, established by nomad Turkmans, have rich endemic vegetation with forests suitable for ovine breeding. Agriculture and animal husbandry are the primary economic potentials of the village. Tomato, melon, water melon, carrot, pepper, bean, sweet cherry, mulberry, apple, pear, and grape are basic agricultural products of the area. Cultivation of grapevines is highly developed in the village [2]. In the village there is no health clinic, school, and public training center. Because of the establishment of a new village in 1990s, this historic village encountered the problem of abandonment, and as a result, the old mosque of the village dated 15th century and old houses lost their function, mostly destroyed and today life continues just in ten dwellings. Infrastructure problems of the village could be solved only in 2011.

Rural Tourism Potentials and Analysis of Basayas Village

In order to reveal the authenticity and original values to develop the rural tourism in the village and to explore the area, field works, literature survey and student projects have been applied. Components of rural tourism have been determined as; environmental beauty, agricultural tourism, traditional festive, small town atmosphere, nature view, open air activities, and national parks [3]. All those components have been classified in four groups as; rural areas, rural life, rural heritage, and rural [4] (Diagram 1) (Figure 3). According to those criteria, rural tourism potentials of the village have been summarized in Table 1, and shown in schematic drawings as photographs in Figure 4 and Figure 5.



Figure #3 General views from Basayas Village showing its rural tourism potentials.

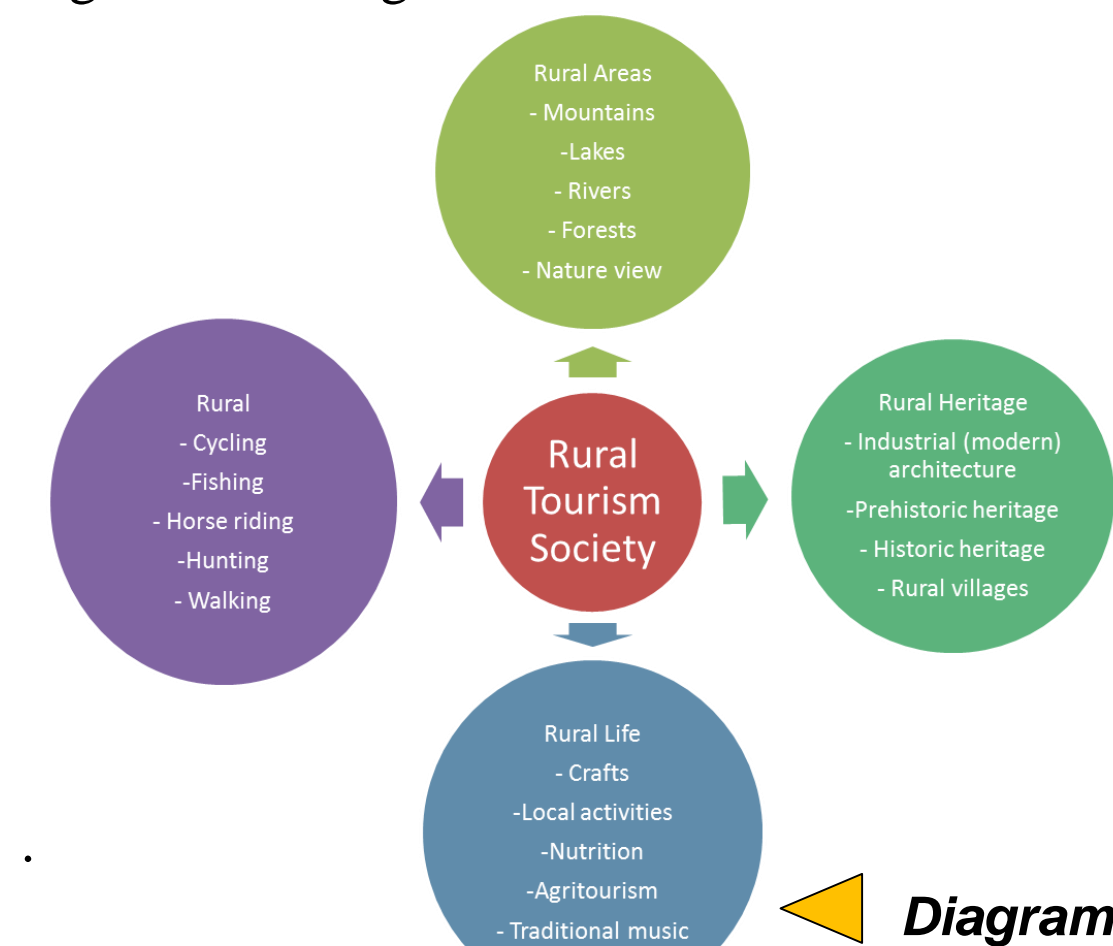


Diagram #1 Diagram showing rural tourism components (Source: Soykan 2006, p. 73)

Table #1 Rural tourism analysis of Basayas Village

Rural tourism analysis of Basayas Village	
Rural areas	Ayaş mountains, Başayaş pond, Çakmacık, Varaka, Başkarağaç, Kavakdere and Çalı Pınarı plateaus, Ayaş stream, Çatak stream, Başayaş stream, pasture and grassland possibilities, Ayaş valley, cultivated fields and gardens-Terzin Kavağı, Buynuçça, Ağabağı, Kanlı Bahçe, Çukur Çayır, Obruk, Besimtedere [5].
Rural heritage	Roman period old settlement called "Bahçe arası", historic houses, historic Başayaş Village mosque, historic Silk Road [5].
Rural life	Agritourist: organic agriculture, dry land farming (wheat, barley and chickpea), beekeeping, hobby gardens Local activities: Turkmen traditions, traditional wedding ceremonies and entertainments, picnic organizations, ovine breeding nutrition/local cuisine: tarhana soup, Ayaş kapaması, Ayaş stew, Ayaş sarması, baklava, hoşmerim, local bread Fruit growing- mulberry, cherry, sweat cherry, apple, pear Thermal tourism- hot spring Tableland tourism Crafts- socks and gloves weaved with Ayaş wool
Rural tourism society	Nature walk, cycling, atv tour Local community, overnight tourists

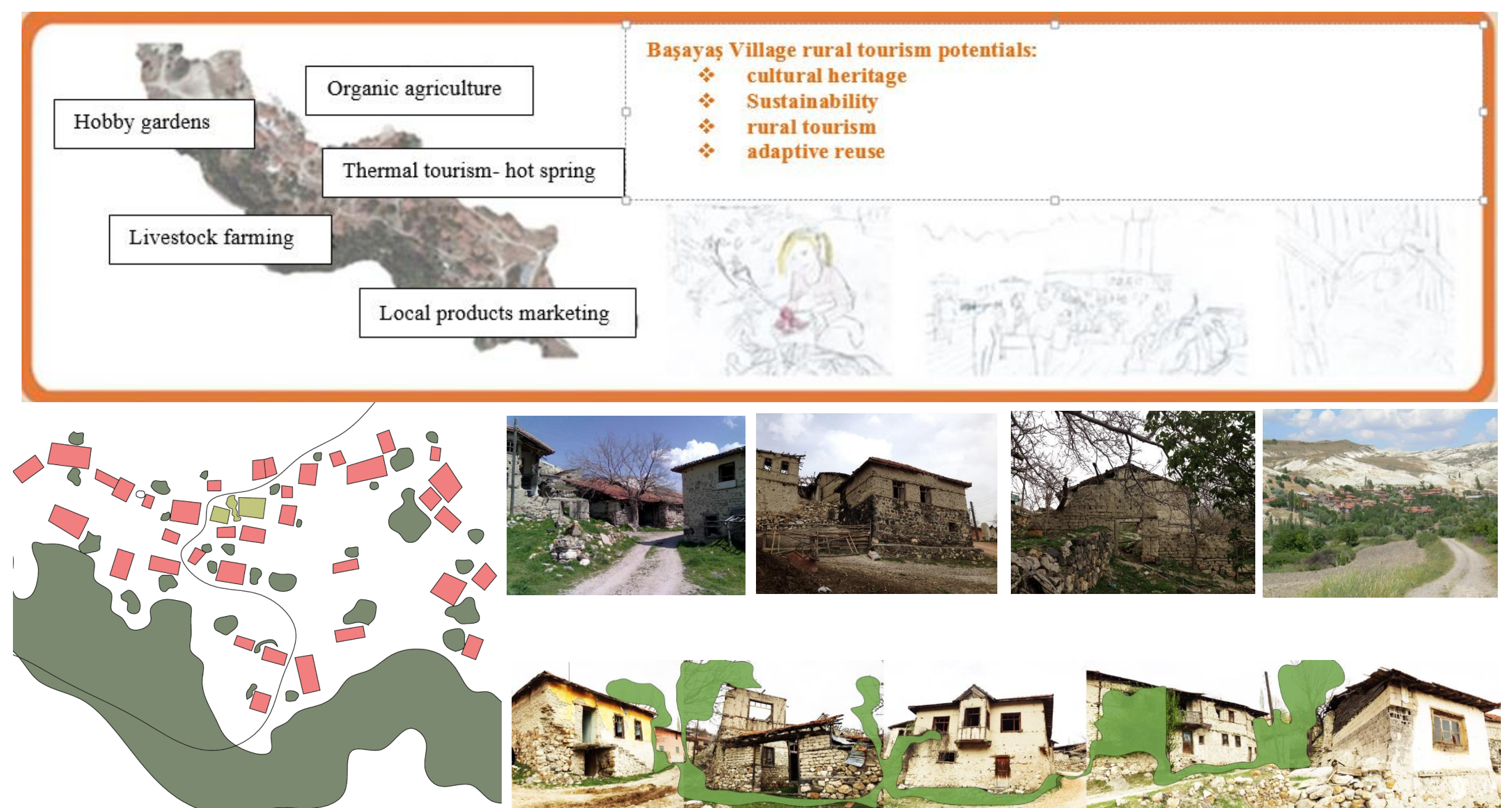


Figure #4 Basayas Village rural tourism potentials (Source: Schematic drawings: Aysenur Nazlı, Amir Muhammet Efendiler).

Table #2 SWOT analysis of Başayaş Village regarding to sustainability of its rural tourism potentials and conservation of its cultural heritage

Başayaş Village			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threads
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revival of service industry by means of possible rural tourism activities - Protection of destroyed, dysfunctional historic buildings by means of their rehabilitation and refunctioning suitable for the needs of inhabitants - Enabling of this refunctioning for the development of promotion of the village - Rich rural and natural areas of the village and its rich cultural heritage opportunities - Rich traditional crafts and local products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need for efficient promotional and ownership activities - Need for correct programming activities for the sustainability of ecological tourism, cultural tourism, and pasture tourism - Need for correct identification of production and marketing trends and correct planning of need analysis of the village - Need for experienced educators in order to teach the activities designed for the rural development of the village to the local society and entrepreneur - Need for quality provision and effective production and marketing for agricultural, local, and traditional products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protection of culture and cultural heritage of the village by means of restoration activities - Awareness raising in environmental and traditional values - Creating employment opportunities for the local society, especially for the women and youths - Development of infrastructure and upperstructure opportunities in order to be able to realize the recommended rural tourism activities - Possibility of increase in cultural interaction - Having suitable climatic conditions for agricultural production - Having an irrigation pond completed in 2013 - Being located on historic Silk Road and thus suitability for cultural routes programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility of increase in environmental pollution, auto park and traffic problems as a result of possible population growth because of increase in rural tourism activities - Inadequate financial resource in order to realize possible rural tourism activities - Risk for unqualified restoration activities of historic buildings because of fast development ambition and risk for decreasing environmental quality because of possible over capacity usage - Risk for effective organizing among local administration, civil society organizations, public, and local inhabitants.

Conclusions

Primary outputs of the research were;

- Registering the historic mosque in the village and thus providing its legal protection,
- Conducting condition assessment of the village and documenting some of the historic building with traditional techniques
- Increasing conservation awareness for the architectural students
- Determining cultural and natural values of the village
- Developing possible suggestions for the sustainable rural tourism potentials of historic village.

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