

Sustainability of monasteries, monastery complexes, landscape and local community

Considering the role monasteries have had during the course of history and the role they hold nowadays, their inner changes are something we can take an active part in and make a constructive contribution.

From the beginnings of monasteries, they were financially dependent on their trustees, who were their main and sufficient source of funding, regardless of the ever-present donations from peasants. At the same time, monasteries were the only centers of education and culture. And today, with the changes in social strata, which resulted in the disappearance of trustees, the donations from people do not pose a sufficient enough source of funding. And with the development of humanism and social politics, centers of education and culture have moved to the cities.

As a result, monasteries as institutions, even though they are still holding their spiritual role in society, have lost some other features, which enabled a more direct contact with the local community. On top of that, they are also left with insufficient funding.

Taking all these into consideration, there are several goals that should be achieved in order for monasteries to become self-sufficient structures, but not detached from society:

- economical sustainability of the monastery complex
- ecological sustainability of the monastery complex
- retaining the image of landscape
- preventing the dying out of villages.

Apart from self production of food, there could be an organized production of marketable goods, such as wine, handicraft etc., making them exclusive through branding.

Means of achieving ecological **sustainability** could be putting an accent on preservation of traditional land cultivation, and meeting any other exceeding needs for resources using renewable energy.

In order to retain the image of landscape, the local community needs to use the same traditional and eco-friendly ways of land cultivation as the monasteries, which would create **integrated cultural landscape**.

As far as the social impact of monasteries is concerned, some of the integrating activities between monasteries and the people could have an educational character, which would provide **local community** with the knowledge and skills to adequately organize their lives without the need to leave their homes.

Creating an ecological **model** of a sustainable monastery complex, that could be widely applicable, is a possible method of planning monastery complexes in a wider context.