

# What’s the key to triggering and supporting new forms of development in mountain areas? A matter of scale.

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## ABSTRACT

Mountain societies and economies have faced complex challenges in the last decades and some of them neglected their productive role within the national societies. Nowadays they are experiencing novel approaches of development which aim to reverse these negative trends. The new framework is characterized by economic models organised along multi-level sharing networks rather than the individual endeavours. A cohort of young entrepreneurs, operating in various economic sectors, are generating a series of innovative business, some of them never thought beforehand to be fit for mountains. This poster presents the evidence from specific research activities carried out in Lombardy, Trentino and other regions of the Alps.

## KEYWORDS

Youth Entrepreneurs, Innovation, Mountain, Network, Sharing, Rebirth

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## RESULTS

Results produced both at the regional or European level agree on the necessary for more openmindness, high flexibility and unconventional thinking in order to allow young entrepreneurs to identify growth opportunities for their activities in the Alps and policy makers to understand and accompany the new socio-economic trend in mountain areas.

## DISCUSSION

### How Youth Make Economy Different through the Economic Sectors



Traditional Identity - Innovative Sectors  
Contaminated Sectors and Multifunctionality  
High-tech, Low-Tech, Non-Tech Enterprises

### Peer-to-Peer Strategic Models



Short and Long Value Chains  
Collaborative Starting-up and Scaling-up  
Collaborative Networks and Market Partnerships  
W2W Models

### Innovation in Mountain Areas



High-tech, low tech and no-tech Innovation  
Social Innovation  
Network Innovation

## KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE STATE OF THE ART

### The Ongoing Projects on Young Entrepreneurs in the Alps

1

Map and know about **Young Entrepreneurs and Innovative Enterprises in Mountain Areas**: it is a project run by Unimont, Centre of Excellence of the University of Milan - Edolo (BS) in 2018, considering Lombardy region as a pilot area.

2

**Demographic Dynamics and New Farming in the Alps**: within the activities of the «Demographic change in the Alps» Research Group, at the Department of Geography at the University of Innsbruck, a particular attention is dedicated to the socio-economic effects of multi-level dwelling.

3

**Anticipate Future Jobs on Alpine Remote Areas: AlpJobs** is an Alpine Region Preparatory Action Funds (ARPAF) funded project which aims at identifying attractive job profiles which have the potential to induce young people to stay in or to return to Alpine rural areas.

4

**Next Generation - Alpine Farming 2030** is a trans-regional project financed by ARGE-ALP which aims to bring farmers' children and young people who live in mountain areas to open a dialogue on the future of the Alpine agriculture; figure out the biggest challenges and possible solutions to tackle them; develop new approaches to improve next future agriculture in mountain areas.

1

## MOUNTAIN ECONOMY AND YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

- Mountain is a context for sustainable growth characterized by quality of life, economic and cultural attractiveness, innovative and evolutionary capacity.
  - Redesign of mountain territories is ongoing by young entrepreneurs who choose to stay or to return, live and work in those places.
  - In spite of the positive trend, strategic, economic and governance tools to support and enhance the phenomenon are still lacking.
  - Multifunctionality, uniqueness and high quality resulted to be keys for the most of enterprises and these call for a more effective participation in process and creation networks, economic webs, local business ecosystems, university and research partnership.
  - To support W2W processes, innovative educational approaches have started to appear
- Women play a relevant role in mountain enterprises and they emerge because of the passion for their work, high-skills and will to improve constantly by learning.

2

## INNOVATION

- Innovation in mountain areas is expressed by the technological, social and environmental components which often coexist in the companies. It is strictly connected with a direct producer-consumer dialogue, a generated peer-to-peer exchange (both in the short and long chains) and the identity-story-properties of products and services.
- Novelty is often due to outsiders who approach mountains with "fresh eyes".

3

## INVESTMENTS

- The majority of entrepreneurs self-financed the start-up of their own business, often thanks to their family support.
- A number of them made use of bank loans, but only few obtained private financing.
- New tools and knowledge are needed to stimulate more private funding (venture capitalists, investors, etc) and access to alternative funding tools (e.g. crowdfunding models, blockchain, etc).