

Reopening futures of remote, depopulating Alpine areas – the pilot project ALPJOBS

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Anticipate Future Jobs on Alpine Remote Areas

Question 1: What are concrete opportunities and challenges in teaching and learning about mountains and sustainable mountain development (SMD)?

In SMD needs of integrative approach and synergies in formal, informal and not-formal education, the project has proposed and tested novel approaches (futures-oriented).

Challenges to that in Alpine remote areas are due to lacking resources, fewer students and not innovative contexts (respect to urban areas)

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Question 1: What are concrete opportunities and challenges in teaching and learning about mountains and sustainable mountain development?

Market demands are rapidly transforming also for traditional value chains of remote/marginal mountains areas. Policymakers, employers, and institutions as formal, informal and not-formal Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems must keep up with them. Simultaneously, not all of them are yet prepared to interpret/anticipate future major changes within the socio-economic and skills gaps in the workforce.

Lifelong, -wide and -deep learning are considered a necessity for young individuals needing to update their competences long after leaving formal education.

In SMD there is space and **opportunities** as a test-bed of novel approaches in a smaller context.

Introduction of Future literacy within the VET system is a key **challenge** to be coped by SMD as a contribute to tackle depopulation and “brain drain”.

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Question 2: What experiences from the development and organization of SMD education programs can be generalized beyond their specific contexts? What coordination mechanisms exist or could be developed?

An approach based on systemic thinking has been shown to help understand the challenges mentioned and manage the related problems, which are expected to increase in the future (depopulation).

Networking between educational institutions and actors can facilitate and accelerate the modernization of curricula and educational contexts.

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Question 2: What experiences from the development and organization of SMD education programs can be generalized beyond their specific contexts? What coordination mechanisms exist or could be developed?

Mountain remote areas have a sizable working-age population that lacks the fundamental skills required to ensure meaningful labor market participation. Projects that seek to help them to achieve economic convergence should also include a Futures literacy convergence agenda (as example see 8 UNESCO chairs have been initiated in Finland, Greece, Italy, Malaysia, Netherlands, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay).

While regional VET programs are rather common in many countries, information on it that specifically target workforce skills is relatively scarce (see Future Lab Schools). There is a need to survey and map them across a continuum ranging from the present to the possible future in order to identify viable entry points for emerging skills development programming, a crucial task is mapping that requires convening various stakeholders, including VET system, local government, employers, and workers.

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Question 3: How can outputs and knowledge from SMD practice be incorporated into SMD curricula and leaning opportunities?

To guarantee job opportunities in mountain communities in the future it is useful to develop long-term continuous learning projects inspired by back-casting exercises. Future literacy and active involvement of participants in exercises of system design are the major elements to be included.

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Question 3: How can outputs and knowledge from SMD practice be incorporated into SMD curricula and learning opportunities?

Future literacy and active involvement of participants in exercises of system design including environmental, economic and social issues are the major elements to be included.

Use of the future and anticipation can help to develop the capability to implement outputs and knowledge originated by SMD avoiding possible short-termism perspective.

In order to incorporate them VET system need to be reformed focusing on its strengths and meet the challenges of a rapidly changing and complex SMD. Its purpose of education should be the promote life-long, -wide and –deep learning, holistic development and well-being of all learners, as well as to improve their skills for living in a sustainable way.

VET system will benefit from a newkind of teaching supported by dedicated training.

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