

Social learning tools for mountain communities' resilience building: Reflecting on their potential integration in higher education for sustainable mountain development

Sarah-Lan Mathez-Stiefel, Anne B. Zimmermann, Karl Herweg (CDE)

International Mountain Conference, Innsbruck, Austria, 8-12 September 2019

Workshop 3.4: Education for Sustainable Mountain Development

Moderators: Kenichi Ueno (Chair), Martin Price



Social learning tools for mountain communities' resilience building

In the Andes, social learning tools have been applied to foster communities' resilience and adaptation planning:

- Bring together knowledge from different sources and governance levels to develop innovative options and adaptation strategies

Can social learning tools be integrated in higher education to foster students' capacities to contribute to more sustainable development pathways in mountains?

“Promoting Local Innovations” (PLI) module in Masters curriculum

Module in AGRUCO’s Master’s program on “Agroecology, Culture and Sustainable Endogenous Development” (2007-2009):

- 6-day workshop carried out in the context of a rural community
- 20-30 participants including students, community members, traditional authorities, government representatives, rural extension workers, and NGOs
- Interactive pedagogy and peer-to-peer learning
- On-the-job training in social learning facilitation skills

Learning outcomes for the participants

Masters students...

- ...are able to explain mountain communities' context and dynamics from an interdisciplinary perspective (**systems knowledge**)
- ...perceive local stakeholders' perceptions and contribute with them to developing visions for the future (**target knowledge**)
- ...apply participatory planning tools and facilitation skills (**transformation knowledge**)

Challenges and opportunities

Community-based social learning modules can lead to significant learning outcomes in higher education for sustainable mountain development

- participants achieve multiple learning outcomes in a relatively short time
- training module also contributes to local development initiatives

Challenges:

- Requires important preparation and collaboration with local partners
- Very intensive course that requires highly skilled facilitators
- Minimum of 5-6 days needed to develop social learning process

Thank you for your attention

Contact: sarah-lan.stiefel@cde.unibe.ch

