«Adapting educational and research activities to the needs of mountain communities: how is the University of Milano (UNIMONT) taking up this challenge?»
Mountains as «marginal areas»

Mountains are peripheric areas, generally characterized by:

- Socio-economic disadvantages
- Depopulation
- Development delay
Mountains as «marginal areas»

Models of urban and metropolitan development

Have been inappropriately applied to develop and empower mountain areas

With lack of attention for mountain specificities and vocation

Consequences:

• No sustainable development
• Loss of competitiveness of mountain areas
• Impoverishment
• Emigration and brain drain
• Marginalisation
Mountains as «marginal areas»

Uneven competition: Urban vs. Mountain Areas
Mountains as «marginal areas»

Economic compensation: mainly money to compensate disadvantages

But without a vision based on mountain uniqueness can turn into a catastrophe
How to invert the trend?

- Design and implement site specific and resource-aware development models

- Specific and unique mountain resources as strategic development assets
The strategic potential of INNOVATION

- **Specific resources** can become key-elements for the economic development of mountain areas by means of innovative approaches
- **Innovative approaches** are generated by Research and Education activities
To produce **relevant and useful results**, it is important to:

- **Live and work** in the place you want to analyse and understand
- **Know that place quite well**
- **Be aware about its specificities** (geographic, territorial, socio-economic, etc.)
UNIMONT IS BASED ON THESE PILLARS

a branch campus of a big university in a little village in the central Italian Alps:

Edolo

"In Italy 5,498 municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants and make up 70% of the municipalities of the Country.

Most of these are located in the mountains, where depopulation and socio-economic conditions are the usual problems."
A unique pole in the heart of the central alps.

Ge.S.Di.Mont. Research Centre
- Research and Innovation
- Permanent Training & Dissemination of Knowledge
- Services & Networking

Bachelor Degree
- Conservation and Sustainable Development of Mountain Areas

«in a small village a «bridge» connecting mountains and cities»
"Conservation and Sustainable Development of Mountain areas»

Established in 2006
Bachelor Degree

81% from Lombardy
of which:
19% Province of Brescia
17% Valcamonica
45% Other provinces
19%
OTHER REGIONS

Employed
Master's Degree/ P.H.D.
Unemployed
Not Known

Farm/Agricultural Consortium Tourism Public Institutions Forestry Sector Self Employed/Consultancy Category Associations Other
CrC Ge.S.Di.Mont.
Centre of Applied Studies for the Sustainable Management and Protection of Mountain Areas

*Funded in 2006*
Applied research on strategic topics for the socio-economic development of mountain areas.

Based on the necessity to promote sustainable development, the use of resources without over-consumption.
Ge.S.Di.Mont. Research Centre

76 Scientific Publications

57 On international papers

56 Participation in conferences

8 European projects

19 On National papers

57 Regional projects

37 National projects

52 Research Projects
«Research to innovate and make mountains competitive»

A centre able to attract funding from a Local, Regional, National and International level

- Territorial development
- Youth entrepreneurship
- European Projects
- EUSALP
Projects in collaboration with local institutions and small mountain communities to draw up strategic programs to promote sustainable development processes.
Young Entrepreneurs in the Mountains

The mountains are “full of energy” and offer space for innovation and available markets; however adequate business services are lacking, bureaucracy is excessive.
Research projects at EUROPEAN level

**RESEARCH ALPS**
An online platform with an algorithm for the automatic collection of data about public and private Research and Innovation centres active in 7 European Countries.

**SMART ALTITUDE**
Development of policy and governance tools for the reduction of the impact of ski areas.

**A-RING**
To promote dialogue among the worlds of Research, Public Administration and Businesses to define common and strategic objectives for research in the Macro-Regional Alpine area.

**IMPULS 4ACTION**
An alliance among 4 Alpine countries for soil conservation and sustainable development.
Action Group 1: to develop an effective Research and Innovation ecosystem
Blended learning and eLearning courses

➢ to overcome limits due to distances (orographic barriers) between different mountain areas and to reach the largest number of users in a time and money saving way.
"The Virtual Classroom as a real meeting place for mountain communities"
"In constant dialogue with the territory and mountain stakeholders"
Win 2 Win Networking: Working tables

Working tables for sharing ideas between different stakeholders of mountain areas

STATI GENERALI

MONTAGNA

verso un'agenda strategica condivisa

DARA

Ministero delle politiche agricole alimentari e forestali

mipaaf

UNIMONT

EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES AND NEW EU PLANNING

TABLE COORDINATION

TECHNICAL TABLE ON OFFICINAL PLANTS

TABLE PARTICIPATION

3 VIRTUAL WORKING TABLES

689 ACTIVE MEMBERS

SAFFRON

AGRO BIODIVERSITY OF THE LOMBARDO MOUNTAINS

25 ACTIVE MEMBERS

BEE-KEEPING
Win 2 Win Networking

Creation of a «virtual community» in addition to the on-campus one (students, researchers, experts and enthusiasts share a common interest and interact)

Connecting the academic world dealing with mountain topics with institutions and business players

Quadruple helix model

Business

Government

Academia

Community

Interconnected

- Holistic Model
- Lifestyle Approach

A vehicle to promote excellence and knowledge exchange across 4 key sectors
➢ Support young entrepreneurs and young innovators (think tank, virtual desk, etc.)
➢ Collaborate and share good/best practices
➢ Facilitate interaction and dialogue with local, regional, national and EU institutions

UNIMONT promotes an extensive, well-organized dynamic networking
Intense networking activity to create and implement national and international networks for research and development of mountain areas.

UNIMONT participates in and coordinates different networks.
Communication & Interaction with the communities

UNIMONT PORTAL:
OVER 205,189 VISITS PER YEAR,
OVER 47,000 VISITORS PER YEAR

25,000 CONTACTS ANIMATED THROUGH:
- EMAIL MARKETING,
- SCIENTIFIC DISSEMINATION,
- SOCIAL NETWORKS AND NETWORKING
The Mountain University is a living lab where Research Activities, results and derived Innovation Tools are transferred on the territory to promote socio-economic development.

«Humans» are an essential key factor to trigger the development of these territories!
It wasn’t easy....

- To establish the relation with the local dimension
- Everything to be adapted or invented
- A new model to be developed:
  - In teaching
  - In defining the priorities for research activities
  - In interacting with «the rest of the world» overcoming the distances, following the formula:

- 1. TO DO USEFUL THINGS
- 2. TO DO THINGS WELL
- 3. TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE ALL AROUND, LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU’RE DOING
It was quite easy....

- To define the list of «PRIORITIES»

To stay in a mountain little village is an effective way to realize which are the main things to do based on the day life needs!

a very pragmatic approach:

- Specific methods to be used
- How to overcome distances
- Connection with «outside»
- Bring in modernity
- Need of technological solutions and innovation
- Innovate methods and tools
Which are the key success factors? LESSON LEARNT

- Be integrated with the local dimension and connected with the «global» one
- Empower young people
- New vision for mountain development based on specificities
- Capitalisation
- Knowledge sharing
- Innovation
- Technology
- Networking

New vision for mountain development based on specificities
UNIMONT as a living lab: young entrepreneurs
ONE MORNING WHILE I WAS DRIVING THE SNOWMOBILE AND CONSIDERING MY COOKING CAREER I DECIDED TO MERGE THE TWO THINGS IN ORDER TO FEEL FREE AGAIN
Subscribe to our newsletter & visit our portal
Unimontagna.it/en
“THE MOUNTAINS ARE OF THOSE WHO LOVE THEM CHOOSE THEM LIVE IN THEM”