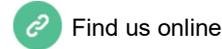


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20 Years of Our Changing Mountains



Dear MRI Community,

The future of Guttannen, a small village in the Swiss Alps, hangs in the balance. Population decline, ever decreasing numbers of schoolchildren, and, due to climate change, an increase in dangerous natural processes such as debris flows threaten the village, which has existed for centuries. But Guttannen is facing up to these challenges. The municipal council has founded a [working group](#). Its mandate is clear and unambiguous: to plan and implement measures that will strengthen the village's resilience and thus make it fit for the future.

After my resignation as MRI Chair, I joined Guttannen's working group by a stroke of luck. This engagement rewards me richly, as it allows exclusive insights into the 'soul' of a mountain village and enables me to contribute to creative solutions for the future. And it is precisely this local level, the 'ground truth', that I missed or – somewhat more self-critically – neglected at the MRI.

Over the years, the MRI has been able to strengthen the global level, promote networking among researchers, and successfully lobby for the Earth's mountains. The about-to-be-published Cross-Chapter Paper on Mountains in the WGII contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report is testament to the enhanced profile of mountains in research, policy, and the public consciousness. But the MRI's motto should really be: continue to successfully cultivate or even expand at the global level, and do not (any longer) neglect the regional to local level. I therefore urge you to look for your 'Guttannen' in your mountain region, to discuss problems and challenges locally, to jointly develop practical research projects, and to include the implementation of the results locally. Your research will gain in quality, sustainability, and practical relevance... and it will be even more fun!

During my time at the MRI, we often thought about the acronym MRI – and about the ‘I’ in particular. ‘I’ stands, it is clear to all of us, for initiative. But can you spend years, or even decades, just initiating things? Hardly. ‘I’ becomes integration. Bringing research results together leads to added value for everyone (see the IPCC Report). But only when it comes to ‘implementation’ of research results are we ultimately successful. Your ‘Guttannen’ is waiting for you!

With best regards,

Rolf Weingartner

MRI Chair 2007-2019

A feature article on Guttannen and the activities of the village’s working group will be published in next month’s MRI newsletter.



The original German language version of this editorial text is available to read on the MRI website.

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