

Einladung zum Kolloquium

Mountain tourism at the highest elevations: The case of Karakoram, Pakistan

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World's highest mountain areas are exposed to rapid environmental changes and increased visitation. The human presence is causing negative environmental impacts particularly related to increasing amounts of waste; therefore waste management is one of the priority measures that need to be implemented in order to assure the future healthy environment and overall sustainable development of these areas. Parallel mountaineering community needs to broaden its knowledge on how to behave and act in order to follow the "leave no trace" rule.

Karakoram – Hindukush Himalaya, particularly the Central Karakoram National Park, is experiencing changes in visitation both in numbers of visitors as well as in visitors motives, expectations and behavior. Mountain tourism is one of the primary opportunities for the local communities in the area but due to high vulnerability of the environment its development should be planned carefully, especially focusing on assuring good state of the environment. Currently negative human impacts related to mountain tourism can be observed in most visited locations, predominantly in the wider area of Baltoro Glacier where common and sustainable waste management is needed in order to improve the situation.

Men from Karakoram and Hindukush villages for more than a century work as porters, porter sirdars, cooks, high altitude porters, recently also as guides and staff of tourism agencies, bringing an important financial contribution to their families. For future well being of these mountain communities, good environmental state in the region should be priority and has to be the responsibility of all the stakeholders involved in mountain tourism. Only preserved environment can assure future welfare of local communities and positive experience of visitors.