

Submitted Abstract

ID IMC22-FSAbstr- 567

First Author First Name Last Name	Irena Mrak
Submitting Author First Name Last Name	Irena Mrak
Correspondence	irena.mrak@siol.net
Co-Authors >> E-Mails will be not listed	
Organisations	Faculty of Environmental Protection
Country	Slovenia
Region	Eastern Europe
Title	Aspects Of Mountaineering And Mountain Tourism At High Altitudes: The Case Of Gilgit Baltistan.
Keywords	Mountaineering, Environmental Impacts, Mountain Communities, Sustainable Mountain Tourism, Gilgit Baltistan, Pakistan
Type	List Of Focus Session
Focus Session ID	22

Abstract

High mountain regions are subject to rapid changes caused mainly by climate, but also by increasing tourism. The increasing presence of humans in vulnerable high mountain regions has negative impacts resulting from the increasing amount of waste and the prolonged presence of humans not only during the usual mountaineering seasons, but in recent years often also during the "low season". Mountain tourism represents an important economic source for local communities. Especially in the areas with the highest peaks (8000 m and above), the environmental condition is deteriorating due to mountaineering activities. Therefore, especially waste management is one of the measures that must be taken to ensure the future sustainable development of tourism in these areas. In parallel, soft measures should be introduced, mainly targeting the international mountaineering community to equip them with the knowledge on how to behave and act in line with the Leave No Trace principle.

Gilgit Baltistan is a part of Pakistan and meets mountain ranges like Krakorum, Himalayas and Hindu Kush. The area has always been a popular destination as it is home to five 8000m peaks, including the second highest mountain on earth - K2. In recent years, mountain sports have developed, focusing on so-called commercial expeditions to the highest peaks, but there are more and more expeditions to unexplored areas.

The Baltoro glacier is one of the most visited areas as the entrance to four eight-thousanders (K2, Broad Peak, Gasherbrum I and II) and has therefore been exposed to human presence for many decades. The negative impacts of humans can be observed in the broader Baltoro Glacier environment (on the glacier itself as well as on the slopes of surrounding mountains). A collaborative and sustainable waste management approach is needed to improve the situation and sustain it into the future. The same approach is needed in other areas of Gilgit Baltistan, especially in areas where mountain tourism is beginning.

The mountain communities in Gilgit Baltistan are (or want to be) closely linked to mountain tourism. Men from local settlements have been working as porters, sirdars, cooks, high porters, and more recently as guides and tourism agency workers for more than a century, making an important financial contribution to their families.