Scaling heights: Mountain grain cultivation in the Swiss Alps in 2050

The rural areas in the Grison Alps are facing increasing challenges such as an ageing population, emigration of young people and the lack of skilled labour. Also, the increasing occurrence of extreme weather events like heavy rains and droughts, driven by climate change, are especially challenging for mountain crop cultivation, leading to yield loss, and decreasing quality of the products.

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However, the increasing demand of consumers for local traditional, sustainable, and innovative products presents an important opportunity for the future of Grisons mountains and its farming system.

During the MOVING project, observations were shared that provide opportunities for transformation, including success stories of pioneers, changes in the support system, collaborations and research that foster innovation, but also the opportunity to build on local traditions. Expanding arable farming in the mountains holds a potential for diversification, increasing resilience and to meet consumer demands. However, it has been stressed, that traditional livestock farming will still play an important role in mountain agriculture making use of the abundant grassland resources. Within the participatory foresight exercise of MOVING, the stakeholders expressed their visions for the future that is build on a responsible society and an Agricultural Policy that supports the conservation of resources. In this scenario, communities work together towards sustainable farming and economy that connects people with nature. To enable this desired transformation, innovations are needed, especially on farm and processing level. By intertwining innovation with education, a dynamic environment with sustainable development can be created.

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