Mission Statement

The Mountain Institute’s mission is to advance mountain cultures and preserve mountain environments. The Mountain Institute works with local people to meet the unique needs of conservation and equitable development in mountain communities throughout the world.

Impact Areas

The Mountain Institute is the only organization in the world devoted exclusively to addressing the unique needs of conservation and equitable development in mountain communities throughout the world. We measure ourselves by the impact we have in three areas:

▲ conserving high priority mountain ecosystems,
▲ improving environmentally and culturally sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities, and
▲ increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach.

The Mountain Institute’s community-based conservation and development approach empowers communities living in some of the world’s most remote and rugged regions to protect their living environment while enhancing their own livelihoods.

Get Involved!

Mountains of the world are important sources of fresh water, biodiversity, scenic beauty, recreation, and inspiration. You can help conserve globally significant mountain areas in Appalachia, the Andes, and the Himalaya and help mountain communities to achieve a better future for themselves and their children. Here’s how!

▲ Become a supporter of The Mountain Institute

▲ Visit The Mountain Institute’s website, and learn more about TMI and the International Year of Mountains in 2002 at www.mountain.org

▲ Join people and organizations around the world that are working on behalf of mountain communities and environments. Sign up for Mountain Forum Membership today at www.mtnforum.org!

▲ Contact local museums or host an essay or art competition about mountains, or celebrate a special mountain day at your school!

▲ Volunteer or contribute financially to parks and protected areas programs in mountain areas you live in or visit.

▲ Organize a mountain-related session, panel discussion, or workshop at your next meeting or event. TMI and the Mountain Forum can help you find materials and speakers.

On the Cover: Annapurna; photo by Alton Byers

“In overstepping our limitations, in touching the extreme boundaries of man’s world, we have come to know something of its true splendor. In my worst moments of anguish, I seemed to discover the deep significance of existence of which till then I had been unaware. I saw that it was better to be true than to be strong. The marks of the ordeal are apparent on my body. I was saved and I had won my freedom.”

— Maurice Herzog, on Climbing Annapurna
Letter from the President and Chairman of the Board

Mountains are water towers for humanity, the source of some 60 to 80 percent of the world’s fresh surface water resources. Mountains shelter nearly half of the world’s biodiversity “hot spots.” Mountains provide valuable economic resources too, producing major supplies of minerals, timber, and hydropower. And mountains are home to rich cultures that are storehouses of traditional knowledge. For people everywhere, mountains are a source of recreation and inspiration—perhaps the most widely used symbol of human achievement, as well as greatness beyond our human capabilities.

Yet in most countries, there is a vertical gradient to poverty. Mountain people are among the poorest anywhere. Harsh climates and altitudinal zonation in many ranges make caloric requirements higher than anywhere else on Earth; yet these same conditions make for lower agricultural productivity and higher risk. Mountain communities typically have 40 to 50 percent or more of their inhabitants living below national poverty levels. In many of the places we work, people are in food deficit for nearly five months each year.

Mountain people living in their remote and rugged environments are hard to reach. And thus they have been too often ignored by their governments, by traditional development agencies, and by most of the non-profit community. It is a sad irony that the “poorest of the poor” are also the most neglected. They have the lowest education, least health care, and poorest services. Agricultural extension workers, so helpful to improved productivity in lower elevations, just don’t make it to the mountains.

People of place, living in close connection with the natural resources they depend on, mountain people are proud, resilient and independent. Learning from them the lessons of sustainable natural resource management can help all of us to understand what it takes to live sustainably on the Earth. By helping mountain people address the twin crises of attacks on the land and unsustainable development, The Mountain Institute works to improve their chances of achieving a more equitable future for themselves and their children, and to conserve the natural resources on which all of our futures depend.

The Mountain Institute is actively looking for friends who share our love for mountains and our commitment to mountain communities. Please consider how you can help us to address the critical issues of conservation and equitable development for mountain people by visiting the “Get Involved!” section of our web page (www.mountain.org), or by becoming a supporter of The Mountain Institute.

D. Jane Pratt, President and CEO  Robert H. Whitby, Chairman
The Mountain Institute’s Andean Program builds on the foundations of local cultures and livelihoods. The high Andes is associated in the public imagination with cultural treasures of ancient civilizations. Modern travelers come to this part of the world to visit remains of past mountain civilizations, and they often wonder about the contrasts between the glories of the past and poverty and underdevelopment in the present. In spite of hardships, Andean culture, technical knowledge, and social organization are alive and vibrant.

One of the key approaches of the Andean Program is building bridges to link community assets, the private sector, government entities, and non-profits to achieve common conservation and sustainable development objectives.

Conserving high priority mountain ecosystems

▲ Developed participatory grassland (paramo) land use plans with 12 communities in Ecuador for the protection of water resources and alpine grasslands.

▲ Increased the productivity of livestock systems in lower areas outside Huascarán National Park in Peru, which resulted in cattle owners moving their animals to these lower zones outside the park, and developing a grasslands management program with two communities and 85 families.

▲ Promoted the use of native tree species in land restoration and community development programs with Antamina mining project, one of Peru’s largest mining operations.

▲ Supported development of an ecotourism and conservation plan by a network of three provincial municipal governments and four communities, providing a policy framework for partners interested in cooperative development in the Cordillera Huayhuash in Peru. This plan was the result of eight regional workshops and one national event.

Huayhuash Cordillera community members work on a participatory landscape diagnostic.
Improving environmentally and culturally sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities

▲ Established lodges and developed tourism products with 17 family projects in Huascarán National Park, resulting in a cooperative business program with private tourism companies. The original families have partnered with 35 other families in their villages to provide services to tourists, and to expand the impact area and number of beneficiaries.

▲ Established a self-financing breeding service and "barefoot veterinary" service network providing services to 720 families that live in the vicinity of Huascarán National Park and belong to the alpaca producers association (APROCA), a grassroots organization devoted to reintroduction of these native species into the region.

▲ Provided training to a traditional weaving association that includes more than 30 families in two areas of Huascarán Park who worked to recover local textile designs and natural plant dyes, and forged a market niche in this specialty area.

Increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach.

▲ Actively participated in the establishment of the National Task Force for Peru’s Mountain Agenda and International Year of Mountains 2002 Network. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Relations, 20 organizations from the private and public sectors joined together and created a ten-year strategic plan to place mountain issues at the forefront of national priorities.

▲ Established an association of mountain municipalities, including six provincial municipalities and 17 district municipalities of the Santa River watershed, on the western escarpments of Huascarán National Park. The association produced a five-year strategic plan to promote sustainable mountain development.

▲ Supported development and expansion of the Huascarán Mining and Conservation Working Group that now includes three major mines, two small mines operating in the area of the park, park authorities, representatives of municipal governments, and conservation NGOs. The Huascarán Group is working to reduce mining threats to the environment and to the integrity of the park.

▲ Sponsored a regional children’s drawing contest to celebrate topics relevant to the conservation of Huascarán Biosphere Reserve.

▲ Published three issues of Jallqa, TMI Andes quarterly mountain conservation bulletin; four technical papers on Huascarán National Park, covering issues on mountain tourism and conservation, landscape change, ecology of native high-altitude Polylepis spp. forests, and biosphere reserve management and educational concepts; and “Landscape Change in the Cordillera Blanca, Huascarán National Park, Huaraz, Peru” in Mountain Research and Development Journal.

Bottom, left to right: Nationally renowned weaver Maestro Alfonso Sulca helps women from the Huaripampa recover lost textile designs through a cooperative project with TMI; Vicos community women exchange potato and other Andean crop seeds among themselves; Farmers with rights of access to Huascarán National Park pastures are improving pasture quality and productivity; Traditional dance performed by Cordillera Blanca women, Ancash Department, Peru.
Reaching from the mountains to the surrounding lowlands, The Mountain Institute celebrates Appalachian communities and culture and promotes the sustainable use of mountain resources through its Appalachian Program. The Appalachian Program hosts school programs, teacher training workshops, summer adventure programs, conservation projects, and scientific research initiatives. Through these activities, the Appalachian Program seeks to increase our capacity to appreciate and conserve ecosystems in the one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world.

Conserving high priority mountain ecosystems

- Collaborated with 18 different local conservation groups, non-profit organizations, and federal agencies to develop a strategic plan to protect and restore the Shavers Fork, the headwaters of the Cheat River watershed in West Virginia, USA.

- Completed a vegetation inventory of TMI’s 400-acre Spruce Knob Mountain Center located in West Virginia, USA; established a data storage and retrieval system for the center’s stream and weather stations; and conducted a survey of sustainable forest use in West Virginia with local lumber companies, conservation organizations, government agencies, and private landowners through the Spruce Knob Mountain Center summer internship program.

- Protected more than 40 acres of unique and rare wetlands in West Virginia, USA through an innovative partnership between TMI, a private landowner, local conservation groups, and volunteers. The project was awarded the EPA’s Five Star Restoration Program Award and The Nature Conservancy’s Annual Conservation Award for Outstanding Ecological Stewardship.
Improving environmentally and culturally sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities

▲ Collaborated with the Lightstone Foundation to form the Rural Mountain Community Asset-Building Program to build the entrepreneurial capacities of non-profit organizations and communities in West Virginia while also developing a community-to-community Internet program, thereby increasing rural community access to information and economic potential in a four-county area.

▲ Conducted the 19th year of the West Virginia Scholars Academy. The Scholars Academy students explore their personal experiences growing up as West Virginians and look forward to how they might contribute towards a brighter future for the mountain state. This year students produced a multi-media presentation depicting the scholars’ meeting with poultry farmers, small businesses, and a local resort management team in Pocahontas County.

Increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach

▲ Added a collection of more than 500 volumes about mountains to the library of the Spruce Knob Mountain Center.

▲ Conducted a week-long workshop in hands-on science activities for West Virginia science teachers. Training program topics included repeat photography, forest plot sampling, invasive species, wetland studies, hydrology of streams, and archaeology.

▲ Conducted the Wilderness and American Society course in conjunction with West Virginia University.

▲ Expanded the Summer Adventure programs to include the West Virginia Odyssey. The Odyssey travels throughout the state linking culture, natural resources, and adventure activities.

▲ Hosted more than 900 students in school courses and summer programs.

▲ Launched new programs that included the Wild & Wonderful Weekends Program held at Spruce Knob Mountain Center, two new school courses, in-school programming, and scholarships for summer adventure programs.


▲ Shared TMI’s experiences in international community development and sustainable resource use with students through the School for Mountain Studies. Fourteen students trekked through the Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park, Nepal between May and June, studying cultural and landscape change in the region. Special lectures in Nepalese culture, natural resources, and development challenges were presented by TMI field staff, government officials, and Nepalese specialists.
The Himalayan Program is focused on the biologically rich eastern Himalayan mountain region, which spans China, India, and Nepal. The program includes new national parks—the Qomolangma Nature Preserve and the Makalu-Barun—established through partnerships and initiatives around Mount Everest. It encompasses six of the world’s highest mountains and several of the Himalaya mountain range’s last forested valleys. People in the project areas developed entrepreneurial skills linked to conservation, expanded their ecotourism opportunities, learned to live better with wildlife, and increased their understanding of conservation and its impacts across borders in the eastern Himalaya. As a result, local institutions’ capacity to take the lead in these activities has been improved.

**Conserve high priority mountain ecosystems**

▲ **Conducted 14 training programs on participatory natural resource management in Nepal** for 326 people, mostly subsistence farmers, that helped achieve dual objectives of conserving one of the most threatened ecosystems in the eastern Nepal and managing more than 10,000 hectares of forests by local communities.

▲ **Conducted a rammed earth field workshop with 40 villagers and local construction workers in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China** that demonstrated viability of environmentally friendly building technology in this high plateau region of the Himalayas.

▲ **Conducted a start-up workshop for local partners joining TMI in its Qomolangma Conservation Program**, a five-year project in the Tibet Autonomous Region to strengthen management, improve livelihoods, and conserve culture in the 34,480 km² Qomolangma Nature Preserve.

▲ **Established eight forest nurseries owned and operated by local farmers in the Makalu-Barun area of Nepal** that produced and distributed 59,000 saplings of various species for reforestation programs covering 37 hectares of degraded community and private lands.
Promoted transboundary conservation cooperation between Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, and held participatory meetings in border villages that addressed controlling cross-border hunting and poaching, minimizing livestock disease transfer, controlling spread of forest fires, and livelihood improvement options such as cross-border tourism and trade.

Improve environmentally and culturally sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities

- Completed 62 community investment projects in Nepal in cooperation with community governments and local beneficiaries that provided safe water to 17 villages, built or repaired five bridges, improved 31 km of trails, provided improved grain mills for nine villages, renovated five cultural sites and monuments, and electrified one village. Seventy-five percent of households (4800 households, or 23,800 people) in the Makalu-Barun area of eastern Nepal directly benefited from these projects.

- Conducted 75 different livelihood improvement training programs in Nepal for 1557 people, more than half of whom were women, that helped to improve 43 village lodges, increase vegetable production in 38 villages, create technical-level jobs, and generate supplementary incomes from sales of bamboo and siru grass crafts for 48 households.

- Contributed $100,000 for investments and loans to new and growing sustainable and environmentally sensitive private enterprises in Tibet through the Peak Enterprise Program.

- Developed a livestock and crop fencing program that increased the crop and fodder production and protected domestic animals in Ngora and Khoryak villages at the base of Shishapangma Mountain in Tibet, as a result of participatory wildlife-people conflict resolution meetings in association with Dr. Rodney Jackson and the International Snow Leopard Trust.

- Established 10 village trust funds in eastern Nepal with matching funds from communities and TMI’s Makalu-Barun project to support locally initiated conservation and village development projects.

- Reduced livestock losses due to predation in villages in Hemis National Park (4400 km²), India’s prime snow leopard habitat in the high arid mountains of Ladakh, through TMI’s APPA planning process in collaboration with Dr. Rodney Jackson.

- Supported a business survey of 1000 Tibetan business enterprises and trained more than 65 people in ecotourism practices and other environmentally friendly business practices and private enterprise approaches in Tibet through the Peak Enterprise Program.

- Supported farmers in three rural Tibetan communities through the Peak Enterprise Program in a pilot dairy sector development project that improved livestock herds, doubled dairy production, and initiated milk sales.

Bottom, left to right: Bhotia woman welcomes visitors; The Himalaya range; Buildings near an entrance to the Makalu-Barun area of Nepal; Woman weaving allo cloth.
Increase understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach

▲ Conducted study tours in the U.S. with 24 protected area specialists, county leaders, and local entrepreneurs from the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Tibet Exchange Program participants studied banking, finance, dairy industry, and conservation and protected area management practices.

▲ Coordinated the Nepal Trust Fund for Biodiversity Design Working Group (a consortium of government agencies and NGOs) that developed a stakeholder consultation methodology to be used in developing Nepal’s national biodiversity action plan.

▲ Organized a conservation program to increase awareness of the endangered black-necked cranes with 50 school children in Tibet. The children also had the opportunity to contribute to a locally produced book on the significance of cranes in Tibet and Tibetan mythology.

▲ Supported the building of a training center in the Qomolangma Nature Preserve that hosted a series of training programs by different agencies and served more than 100 local people.

▲ Trained more than 100 professionals in eight countries to implement community-based tourism programs using APPA, an approach piloted, developed, and taught by TMI in the Himalaya region.
Global Programs

Mountain Forum

The Mountain Institute connects isolated mountain people worldwide through the Mountain Forum. The Mountain Forum promotes mountain issues and supports a worldwide network of people working for mountain communities and environments. Through the Mountain Forum, grassroots organizations are linked directly with each other and with the international policy, development, and research communities. The Mountain Institute provides the network’s central Internet services, training, and technical support to mountain networks around the world. The Mountain Forum is accessible on the web at www.mtnforum.org.

Increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach

▲ Collaborated with the Swiss and Kyrgyz delegations to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development to effect policy change at the global level. As a result of outreach to UN delegates, the commission adopted new language that includes the specific policy needs of mountain regions during its 2000 session.

▲ Distributed new publications to members, partners, and the United Nations in support of critical mountain issues. These included two global e-conference reports—“Mountain People, Forests, and Trees” and “Mountain Laws and Peoples”—and two Mountain Forum Bulletins.

▲ Expanded outreach by way of membership and email discussion lists. Global membership grew 53 percent to 2001 individuals from 99 countries, and a new membership category for organizations was added, with 51 new registrants. The Mountain Forum’s email lists increased by 68 percent to 6700 subscribers.

▲ Expanded the web site to more than 6500 web pages, including interactive membership services, calendar, online library, and expanded searches.

▲ Organized a donation program for back issues of the journal “Mountain Research and Development” to be sent to developing country institutions.

▲ Provided training and technical support to mountain networks around the world, helping them set up their own email lists, create web pages, and moderate thematic electronic conferences.

▲ Promoted awareness of critical mountain issues through popular media articles on the Mountain Forum’s work in Atlantic Unbound (the online version of Atlantic Monthly) and Americas magazine.
Sacred Mountains

The Mountain Institute encourages respect for values and traditions of cultures that revere and cherish mountains through the Sacred Mountains Program. The Sacred Mountains Program works to promote the inclusion of spiritual and cultural significance of mountains in educational and research programs and environmental and sustainable use policies.

The Mountain Institute is working with the U.S. National Park Service to develop interpretive and educational materials and activities based on the cultural and spiritual significance of mountains in mainstream American, Native American, and other cultures around the world. The purpose of this project is to enrich visitor’s experience of parks and to encourage people to develop their own reasons for valuing mountain regions and protecting the environment.

Increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach

▲ Collaborated with park staff to develop “Experience Your America,” a permanent photographic exhibit combining inspirational quotes and photographs that highlight the spiritual significance of mountains of 22 national parks, located at main visitor center in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

▲ Collaborated with park staff to develop “Mountain Views,” a traveling exhibit that relates Mount Rainier, an icon for residents of the Northwest, to other mountains of evocative importance.

▲ Collaborated with park staff to develop waysides planned for a footpath next to the Alpine Visitor Center at Rocky Mountain National Park on the theme of how mountains inspire people around the world.

“I was uplifted above a world of love, hate, and storms of passion, for I was calm amidst the eternal silences, bathing in the living blue. For peace rested that one bright day on the mountaintop.”

—Isabella Bird, referring to Long’s Peak summit, Rocky Mountain National Park
Sustainable Living Systems

The Mountain Institute develops, demonstrates, and promotes environmentally friendly and energy-efficient construction approaches for mountain communities through the Sustainable Living System Program (SLS). SLS is part of a long TMI history in alternative building systems and energy use. Development of a hydraulic-based earth block ramming machine has led to a successful two years of field testing of the machine and its associated tongue-and-groove block building system through the Peak Enterprise Program in Tibet. Improvements in living systems associated with the home (such as cooking, heating, sanitation, and production aspects) remain essential to the program’s mission.

Conserving high priority mountain ecosystems

▲ Promoted the use of fewer local resources (and fewer non-local resources) in energy efficient-housing and living systems; thus, there is less demand on local environmental systems by local populations.

▲ Trained local people in energy and environmental awareness in household living systems that involved conversations about the stewardship of the local natural resource base and the future of their children.

Improve environmentally and culturally sustainable livelihoods for mountain communities

▲ Demonstrated the field effectiveness of the ramming machine and the associated building process in very remote field conditions 400 km north of Lhasa, Tibet during two months at Nima Village.

▲ Fielded serious inquiries about use of the machine and the technology from several developing countries.

Increasing understanding and support for mountain conservation, community, and culture through education, advocacy, and outreach

▲ Promoted the need, with local partners, for implementing sustainable living programs in housing and associated living systems—especially the importance of working directly with native peoples in business and training.
The Mountain Institute’s 2000 financial report reflects increased focus on monitoring program services for impact in alignment with the institutional strategic plan and increased cost-effectiveness evidenced by the reduced administrative support costs.

**Key financial accomplishments in 2000 include:**

▲ **Decreased general and administrative costs** by 55 percent, primarily due to improved cost-effectiveness.

▲ **Disposed of under-utilized real estate** in Franklin, West Virginia realizing a gain of $84,000 and a $25,000 permanent reduction in overhead costs.

▲ **Increased diversification of support and revenue** with new private foundation support from the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Eisenhower Foundation, and the AVINA Foundation.

▲ **Increased unrestricted donations** by 60 percent, primarily from the Board of Trustees donations.

▲ **Negotiated repeat funding agreements** from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

▲ **Revised financial reporting** relative to our strategic plan and impact areas.

The financial information in this report is derived from the audited financial report for the year ended December 31, 2000. A complete copy of the audited financial report is available upon request.

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**Statement of Financial Position**

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<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td>$2,246,215</td>
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Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31, 2000

Support and Revenue

Grants and contracts:
- Government of the Netherlands $ 1,258,315
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation 196,118
- US Agency for International Development 35,404
- US Department of State 174,817
- Ford Foundation 156,992
- Nathan Cummings Foundation 76,942
- Khadoorie Foundation 42,653
- John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation 16,521
- Eisenhower Foundation 15,282
- Avina Foundation 11,181
- Others 159,101

Subtotal—Grants and contracts $ 2,143,326

Donations:
- Peak Enterprise General Funds $ 138,755
- Others 117,376

Subtotal—Donations 256,131

Other Income
- Tuition and fees 177,566
- Interest and investment income (realized and unrealized) ( 55,124)
- Gain on sale of building 83,948
- Sales and exempt purpose earned income 39,954

Subtotal—Other Income 246,344

Total Support and Revenue $ 2,645,801

Expenses

Program Services:
- Conservation of Natural Resources $ 884,569
- Community Capacity Building 602,503
- Education & Advocacy 493,110
- Community Economic Development 418,545
- Cultural Heritage Preservation 73,549

Subtotal—Program Services $ 2,472,276

Supporting Services:
- Organizational Support $ 321,377
- Fundraising 40,153

Subtotal—Supporting Services 361,530

Total Expenses $ 2,833,806

Total increase (decrease) in net assets $ (188,005)

Net assets beginning of the year 1,043,191

Net assets end of the year $ 855,186
Trustees
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The Mountain Institute follows a policy of uniform nondiscrimination with regard to sex, age, race, religion, and country of origin. The Mountain Institute is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit conservation and education organization, qualifying for charitable contributions.

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