

What does GlacierAlive actually do with the donations?

Details of the individual projects can be found on the Homepage www.galciersalice.ch

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Project extract

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1 MortAlive Project 2017 to 2019

Basic research into glacier retreat, using the Morteratsch Glacier as a case study. At the same time, the project is investigating efficient and environmentally friendly methods of snowmaking on glaciers.

This project was supported by Graubündner Kantonalbank and has now been completed.

2 Student exchange between Graubünden and Ladakh – Knowledge has been bringing mountain regions together since 2016

Thanks to the support of our foundation and project partners, a unique exchange programme between Graubünden and the Indian Himalayan region of Ladakh was established between 2016 and 2022 and successfully carried out over four winters. **The aim was to promote the transfer of knowledge between two high-alpine regions which**, despite their geographical distance, face similar challenges relating to climate change and sustainable development.

During four exchange programmes, students from Ladakh were able to gain first-hand experience of winter tourism at the Graubünden Higher Vocational School for Tourism in Samedan. In addition to gaining specialist insights into tourism, the hospitality industry and sustainable destination development, they played an active role in our projects. They helped build ice stupas, shared their experiences from the Himalayas with the local community and enriched the cultural exchange with cookery classes, during which they prepared traditional momos.

A particular highlight was a joint educational project involving around 300 schoolchildren from the Upper Engadine. The students from Ladakh inspired the children and young people with the idea of ice stupas and vividly demonstrated how innovative solutions from high-altitude mountain regions can help tackle water scarcity worldwide.

The exchange was deliberately designed to be a two-way process. A tourism student from Samedan undertook her work placement at a women-led travel organisation in Leh, gaining valuable insights into sustainable tourism and the social structures of Ladakh. In addition, a student from ETH Zurich was able to study and academically document the education system in Ladakh as part of his Bachelor's thesis in the didactics of environmental education.

Another milestone was our involvement with the newly founded Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HIAL). There, our glaciologist, Dr sc. nat ETH Felix Keller, was invited to teach a module on glaciology, thereby helping to establish a forward-looking programme of study. The direct exchange between science, education and practice has strengthened cooperation between the Alpine and Himalayan regions in the long term.

This educational programme exemplifies how the Foundation's grants can have an impact far beyond individual projects: they enable long-term international partnerships, promote intercultural understanding, foster scientific collaboration and empower young people to work together to develop solutions to the challenges of climate change in mountain regions.

Future exchange projects are open-ended and can be launched at any time.

The projects mentioned were supported by the foundation and its project partners.

Further exchange programmes in the future are still to be confirmed and can be actively supported at any time through donations.

3 Development of a ground-independent snowmaking system called 'Schneiseil' 2020 to 2023

The 'Ground-Independent Snowmaking System' project grew out of the MortAlive project. The aim of this snowmaking system is to produce snow on the glacier using meltwater from ice and snow, without the need for electrical energy, as snow acts as a very good insulator for the glacier ice. This helps to slow down the melting of the glaciers.

This project was supported by Innosuisse and the industry partners Bächler & Bartholet, as well as by the Universities of Applied Sciences of Graubünden, Lucerne, OST and North-Western Switzerland, and has now been completed.

4 Construction of the first ice stupa on the Diavolezza since 2021 and up to the present day

In 2021, an initial ice stupa was constructed at the valley station of the Diavolezza cable car and the RHB stop to gain practical experience. The construction of ice stupas serves to secure water supplies in high-alpine regions, such as in India and Nepal. The project in Switzerland aims to carry out tests that are as close to real-world conditions as possible, in order to provide direct support to the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU) in its development work.

The impressive ice stupa at Diavolezza, standing approximately 15 to 18 metres tall, has since become a tourist attraction in its own right, alongside the VR Glacier Experience, thanks to the annual reconstruction. **The VR Glacier Experience is an interactive virtual reality exhibition at the Diavolezza valley station in Pontresina**, which immerses visitors in the high-alpine world of the Morteratsch Glacier.

For the St. Moritz region and the Engadin, this magnificent ice cone is becoming a cultural asset.

For this reason, it has become important to ensure that this Ice Stupa can continue to be built every year. In addition, the legendary Ice Stupa Festival, for young and old alike, takes place around Easter. These activities tie up significant human and financial resources every year.

This recurring ice stupa construction project is supported by the GlacierAlive Foundation and the GlaciersAlive Association.

We rely on generous donations to carry out the project each year.

5 Development of the Ice-Stupa Water Management Project 2023 to 2024

The construction of ice stupas to secure a water supply in spring and summer for agricultural irrigation in high-altitude areas, such as in India and Nepal, has to date been carried out using a simple water channelling system. **The project aims to achieve significant ice formation by further developing water management, with an efficiency of over 50 per cent of the water used.** The Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU) has developed a modern yet simple water flow control system. This product is made available to specific users, such as our partner in Ladakh, India, Acres of Ice.

The project received financial support from the GlacierAlive Foundation and technical support from the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU), and has now been completed.

6 Development of microplastic-free non-woven fabric, 2022 to 2025

Glaciers are partially covered with fleece to protect them from direct sunlight. Mountain ropeway operators also stockpile winter snow to preserve it over the summer – a practice known as ‘snow farming’. Until now, polypropylene (PP) fleece has primarily been used. Recent reports and studies have shown that microplastic particles remain in the snow or ice, posing a serious threat to the environment.

This sparked our interest in developing a microplastic-free, environmentally friendly and biodegradable fleece. The MasterCard project enabled our foundation to tackle this issue and find a solution with the help of industry and universities.

After three years of testing various materials, a solution has emerged in the form of PLA fleece, which is sustainable and industrially biodegradable.

PLA fleeces are textile products made from polylactides (PLA), a bio-based polyester derived from renewable raw materials such as maize starch or sugar cane.

The project received financial support from MasterCard and technical support from the industry partner Schöllkopf. Various rail operators have tested the product in a pilot project and found it satisfactory. The project has been completed.

Our foundation is open to supporting further product developments by industrial partners that are geared towards sustainability.

New projects can be actively supported at any time through donations.

7 Production of the Schneiseil video 2026

The 'ground-independent snowmaking system' – in other words, the snow cable – has already been developed and tested from a technical perspective and is now set to be put into practice. To aid understanding and to encourage the implementation of future snow cable projects, our foundation is producing an explanatory video.

This project is funded by the GlaciersAlive Foundation.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

8 Implementation and further development of ground-independent cableway projects by 2027

The 'ground-independent snowmaking system' – in other words, Schneiseil (see point 3) – is moving into the next phase. We are now entering the implementation phase for individual Schneiseil projects. These individual projects will highlight which further developments need to be carried out, depending on the location and environment.

We are open to supporting new Schneiseil projects, which can be submitted to us.

Future projects will receive financial support from the GlaciersAlive Foundation.

We provide guidance and support for eligible projects. You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

9 Support for the construction of new ice stupas and their maintenance, 2026–2027

Our Ice Stupa partner, 'Acres of Ice', based in Leh, Ladakh, is committed to building freshwater reserves in the form of ice – that is, icebergs – over the winter in India, Nepal and the STAN countries. Specifically, this project involves the maintenance and servicing of twelve automated Ice Stupa structures. Local organisations are first trained in the construction and technical set-up of the water management systems, so that the flowing glacier water can be converted into ice as efficiently as possible. Thereafter, during the first season, it is of paramount importance that experts from Acres of Ice visit the sites and operators periodically throughout the winter to provide training and maintain the facilities.

These projects receive financial support from the GlaciersAlive Foundation.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

10 Development of new Ice-Stupa spray nozzles, 2026 to 2027

Our Ice Stupa partner, Acres of Ice in Leh, Ladakh, is committed to building freshwater reserves in the form of ice – that is, icebergs – over the winter in Nepal, India and the STAN countries. The meltwater from the icebergs is used for agricultural irrigation. Following initial pilot projects, Acres of Ice concluded that efficiency needed to be improved by **optimising the spray nozzle**.

A request from 'Acres of Ice' in spring 2026 led to the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts carrying out a project to improve and simplify the local production of suitable spray nozzles.

This project receives technical and financial support primarily from Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. GlaciersAlive provides all the support between the two partners.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

11 Support for the film project 'The Drought of Water' 2026–2028

Target audience: Local residents, young and old; a national audience via SRF and an international audience via Netflix; screenings of the film in various cinemas across Switzerland; presentation of creative projects, particularly for young audiences, including in schools.

Aim of the film: **To give water a voice** by exploring various aspects: pollution, groundwater, **glaciers** and things one doesn't usually associate with water. Frozen freshwater reservoirs play a very important role in this. The primary aim is to raise awareness of water as a precious resource and to promote a sense of international responsibility.

The project is produced by TEENERGY in Montreux, and our GlaciersAlive FOUNDATION supports the project.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

12 Construction of the Ice Stupa in Ftan, 2027 to 2028

In Ftan, the plan is to build a new ice stupa in Switzerland during the winter of 27/28. Weather conditions have already been monitored for over a year using a weather station set up by the Academia Engiadina. The data is currently being analysed to assess the construction project.

The project received support from Academia Engiadina.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

13 Public relations and knowledge dissemination from 2017 to the present day and continuing

A key aim of GlaciersAlive is to communicate scientific findings in an accessible way and to raise awareness amongst as many people as possible of the importance of glaciers as water reservoirs. Thanks to the support of our funding partners, we have been able to organise numerous educational and information initiatives in recent years.

As part of around ten excursions each year, we guide school classes, students, clubs and corporate groups through the foreland of the Morteratsch Glacier. Participants gain first-hand insight into the dynamics of glacier retreat, the consequences of climate change, and our research and conservation projects. The excursions combine scientific content with impressive experiences of nature and foster dialogue between the research community and society.

In addition, we were regularly invited to present our work to a wider audience through a series of talks. Presentations at Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, ambassadors' meetings, universities for the elderly and other organisations provided an opportunity to introduce current developments in glaciology, innovative solutions for the protection of freshwater reservoirs and the activities of GlaciersAlive to an interested audience.

In addition, we organised glaciological excursions to the Diavolezza. These combined observations of the Alpine glacial landscape with a visit to the **interactive VR Glacier Experience**, which vividly visualises the evolution of glaciers and provides a lasting insight into the impacts of climate change.

These activities are primarily organised and funded by GlaciersAlive. GlaciersAlive provides all the support required for field trips and talks.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.

14 New exhibition planned for 2026–2027

A new exhibition called the **Bernina Glaciers Experience** is to be created **in place of the VR Glacier Experience exhibition** at the valley station of the Diavolezza cable car. The Bernina Glaciers Experience invites visitors to step into this fascinating mountain world and experience it anew. Yet this cycle, which once seemed unchanging, is now undergoing transformation. Temperatures are rising, **the glaciers are retreating**, and the structure of these delicate systems is shifting. What used to take centuries is now happening in a matter of decades – with far-reaching consequences for the landscape and for people. Through an exploration of historical traces, the latest scientific findings and sensory experiences, it becomes clear how climate change is affecting the Alpine landscape.

This exhibition is intended as an invitation to marvel, to interact and to reflect. It will be staged in 2026 and 2027.

This project is funded by regional and national organisations, businesses and GlaciersAlive.

You can actively support us at any time by making a donation.