

Mountain & Wild Nature for All: An Inclusive and Intercultural Project

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Abstract

Hegemonic media show mountaineering as an elite pursuit, accessible only for high-performance athletes or people with high economic status. Around the world, however, countless inclusion initiatives operate far from the spotlight. These projects are deeply rooted in local communities, run on modest budgets, and are fundamentally accessible. A prime example is the Ibilki Mountain Club, a cultural association built on a powerful conviction: that the mountains belong to everyone. Their work brings together an incredibly diverse community—people with disabilities, immigrant and refugee, racialized immigrant women, individuals experiencing homelessness, and people of all the ages. They connect all these groups through intercultural, multigenerational hiking and mountaineering, made possible by volunteering and a culture of mutual support. Ibilki's founders draw on their experience in Guatemala during the 90s, a period marked by civil war. They would go to the mountains with friends who were injured or with people seeking to escape the terrible reality of the conflict. For Ibilki, the summit is not a final goal but a meeting point, a great equalizer where everyone has valuable experiences to share. This philosophy creates a beautiful reciprocity. In this club, everyone is both: a guide and a companion, people with disabilities can be powerful guides for others facing different challenges. In fact, people with intellectual, physical and sensory disabilities are full members of the Board of Directors. The club ensures financial barriers don't exclude anyone; they cover costs for those living in poverty or homelessness through collaborations and their own funds. Their vision extends globally through reciprocal international cooperation with disability associations in Guatemala, Armenia, Morocco, Honduras and Argentina. This is not a one-way exchange, but partnership based on mutual respect. Together, they share techniques and organize joint expeditions, building connections free from colonial mindset.

