

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2020

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Unzen Volcanic Area, Japan, APGN

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2009 / 2017



On-site practical session of the Universal Tourism Seminar for the geopark guides

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 22 staff members including 6 specialists in scientific fields

Number of visitors: 65,158 (the number of visitors to Mt. Unzen Volcano Museum, a core facility of the geopark, decreased by 65% from 188,093 visitors in 2019)

Number of Geopark events: 8 Geopark Seminars for local residents

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 64 classes (28 for elementary school, 10 for junior high school, and 26 for high school. Increased by 16% from 55 classes in 2019.)

Number of Geopark press release: 168 (total number released on local newspapers, including 97 on the Shimabara Press, 46 on the Nagasaki Shimbun, and 25 on others. Increased by 57% from 107 articles in 2019.)

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2020

- Managed to conduct a larger number of school classes (+16%) and to increase the media coverage (+57%) from the previous year, despite difficult circumstances under the COVID-19 pandemic.

- As a new event making better use of local geoparks network and digital tools, we conducted the “Universal Tourism Seminar” for geopark guides with the Nagasaki Wesleyan University and the Kirishima Aspiring UGGp. The seminar included some sessions delivered via Internet from the Kirishima AUGGp and active discussions among geopark guides and partners.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participated in the 1st GGN Digital Forum.
- Participated in the monthly APGN online meetings and the APGN CC meeting.
- Held an interactive session with Hong Kong UGGp (China), one of our Sister Geoparks, in the English Day Camp organized for elementary and junior high school students in Shimabara City.
- Cooperated in responding to interviews for a research project on the roles of geoparks on environmental education in Japan, conducted by a Master-course student of LAB University of Applied Sciences, Finland.

Management and Financial Status

- The Council of Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark consists of 35 stakeholders, including municipal governments, national agencies such as the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and the Forestry Agency, conservation organizations, tourism associations, universities, guide organizations, and the private companies.
- Funding for our regular activities is provided mainly by contributions from the 3 municipalities (Shimabara City, Unzen City, and Minamishimabara City) in the territory of our geopark. The total amount of contributions has remained fairly constant at around 26 million yen each year since 2017.
- In addition to the above funding, we obtained subsidies from the Nagasaki Prefectural government, Ministry of the Environment, and the Japan Tourism Agency for renovating gateway signs, road signs, information panels and interpretive panels at geopark sites, as well as for updating and reprinting the English version of our geopark’s leaflet.

Geoconservation

- “Geopark Sites Cleaning Activities” have been constantly carried out by local residents, geopark guides, and volunteers from municipalities and local partner organizations.
- Monthly patrolling of trails around Mt. Unzen-Fugendake, an important site of our geopark and also a National Park, has been conducted in rotation by officials and rangers of Ministry of the Environment, Nagasaki Prefectural government, municipalities, and community groups. The latest information on the conditions of trails has been always shared with all the relevant parties.
- On the renovated information panels and interpretive panels at geopark sites, we added the pictograms and messages informing about prohibited acts and conservation of the sites.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Walking geo-tours for local residents were conducted regularly.
- The “Kyushu Olle Shimabara Course”, a walking course in the Shimabara City, was certified by the Olle branding committee in Jeju, Korea, in January 2020. This is the second Olle course in our geopark and is particularly designed to highlight the geological and natural sites of our

geopark for promoting eco-friendly geo-tourism.

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- No new educational program was developed in 2020.

Strategic partnership

- We provided technical support to the official geopark guides in preparing the guidelines for establishing the “Unzen Volcanic Area UNESCO Global Geopark Guides Association”, in cooperation with the Shimabara Tourism Board.
- With the support from “Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp Academic Research Grant Program”, the researchers of 2 universities in the Nagasaki Prefecture have conducted 3 research projects on the themes related to roles of bumblebees, promotion of universal tourism, and depletion mechanism of spring water in our geopark. The research outcomes have been shared with local residents via YouTube.
- In our “Geopark Supporters System”, 111 individual supporter and 29 corporate supporters are now registered, including 3 individuals and 3 corporates newly joined in 2020.

Promotional activities

- The official website of our geopark has been redesigned and updated in 4 languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, and Korean) to be newly launched in early 2021.
- We started providing the geopark news on our Facebook page in English, in addition to Japanese.
- We produced a new short film introducing a cultural site with “sukui (traditional fishing weir)” and uploaded on our YouTube channel.
- A TV station in Germany produced a program featuring the people living together with volcanoes in our geopark in October 2020.
- The NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai or Japan Broadcasting Corporation), Japan’s public broadcaster, introduced our geopark in a popular travel program in March 2020.
- The Himawari Television, a local cable TV station broadcasting in Unzen City and Minamishimabara City, started a new regular program to introduce the linkage between local foods and geoscientific features in the region since May 2020.
- The Cabocha Television, a local cable TV station in Shimabara City, has been running a 1-minute quiz program on the geopark every day.
- The FM Shimabara, a local radio station, has been broadcasting a feature program on the geopark every month.

4. CONTACTS

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