

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Unzen Volcanic Area UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan, Asia Pacific Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: Inscription 2009 / Last Revalidation 2021-2022*
(*UNESCO's field mission was delayed for 1 year from originally scheduled 2021 to September 2022 and the revalidation was approved by the UGGp Council in December 2022)



Observing Geosites from the Sea by Riding SUPs (stand-up paddleboards) in the 62th Geopark Class, 26 Aug. 2023

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staff: 21 staff members including 5 geoscientists (of which, 5 staff members including 1 geoscientist are engaged exclusively in Geopark management).

Number of visitors: 100,785 visitors to the paid zone of the Gamadas Dome (Mt. Unzen Volcano Museum), increased by 30.4% from 77,276 in 2022.

Number of Geopark events: 6 events held directly by the Secretariat of the Council of Unzen Volcanic Area Geopark. 30 events held by the Gamadas Dome. As of 29 March 2024, the number of events held by other member organizations of the Council in 2023 is not available yet, since their activity reports for the Japanese fiscal year 2023 (April 2023 – March 2024) will be submitted to the Secretariat in April 2024.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 82 classes for 37 schools (53 classes for 24 elementary schools, 17 classes for 10 junior high schools, 12 classes for 3 senior high schools).

Number of Geopark press releases: 8 press releases, 16 news on the official website, 39 Facebook posts, and 147 articles in newspapers (56 in the Shimabara Press; 60 in the Nagasaki Shimbun; 31 in other newspapers).

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

- Due to the gradually improving situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to conduct more Geopark-related events, learning sessions, and tours than in previous years.
- As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact, the exchange activities between sister Geoparks, which had been halted for the past few years, have resumed.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participated in the International Marine Debris Symposium in Oki (11-12 Mar.).
- Participated in the APGN Let's-Do-It online meetings (18 May, 17 Aug. and 16 Nov.).
- Participated in the GGN Welcome Digital Event (6 Jun.)
- Received a visit from Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark and True Light Middle School during their school trip (29 Jun. - 3 Jul.).
- Participated in the UNESCO International Conference in Morocco (4-14 Sep.).
- Participated in the APGN CC (Coordination Committee) meeting (6 Sep.).
- Participated in the GGN Ordinary General Assembly (8 Sep.).
- Posted promotional articles for International Geological Diversity Day on Facebook (30 Sep. - 6 Oct.).
- Received a visit from the Lions Nature Education Foundation, a key partner of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (9-11 Oct.).
- Received a visit from educators and guides from Hong Kong UGGp Volcano Discovery Center, the main facility of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (23 Oct.)

Management and Financial Status

- No changes to the overall operation structure of the council.
- Financial status has been stable, with regular budgets allocated by the 3 cities constituting the Geopark territory.
- Total income was 24 million JPY and total expenditure was 19 million JPY for FY2023.

Geoconservation

- Monthly patrolling of trails at Mt. Unzen-Fugendake was conducted in rotation by the member organizations of the Council.
- Participation in the Mount Unzen Conservation and Utilization Plan meetings.
- Cleanup and weeding events were carried out by various local organizations at geo-sites.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Educational tours for 22 schools (5 elementary schools, 11 junior high schools, 6 senior high school) from outside the region, with a total of 2,310 students, were arranged by the Shimabara

Peninsula Tourism Bureau, and 14 of them were guided by the geo-guides.

- The Shimabara Peninsula Tourism Bureau, supported by Nagasaki Prefecture, initiated the Shimabara Peninsula Cycling Tourism Project. It involved joint rental bike campaigns by the tourism departments of 3 cities. Events were held, supported by experts who provided guidance and explanations on geological sites along the cycling routes.
- Walking events at 2 Olle trail courses were organized by the tourism departments of 2 cities.
- Two directional signs for geo-sites along the roads were renewed.

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

- Organized the 12th Exhibition of Elementary and Junior High School Students' Independent Research Works on the Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp, and a total of 37 research works were displayed (18 by elementary school students and 19 by junior high school students).
- Held the 12th Contest of High School Students' Research Presentations on the Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp, and a total of 56 students of 9 teams from 4 high schools participated.
- Under the Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp Academic Research Grant Program, grants were awarded to 4 teams of researchers from 2 universities and 1 research institution. Specifically, research was conducted on the following 4 topics:
 1. Themed on the origin of water resources in the eastern Shimabara Peninsula;
 2. Themed on the endemism of Miyama Kirishima in the Unzen region;
 3. Themed on the restoration of the mountain body of Mt.Unzen;
 4. Themed on the petrological studies related to Unzen volcanic eruptions.
- The "Disaster and Reconstruction Fieldwork" program of the Gamadas Dome was conducted for 9 groups (3 local governments, 2 universities, 4 private companies and other organizations) of 92 participants.
- 3 kinds of travelling exhibitions were organized by the Gamadas Dome:
 1. Reflecting on the 1991 Unzen Fugendake Eruption Disaster;
 2. Gathering of Japanese Geopark Polo Shirts;
 3. Reconstruction Path Exhibition.
- Gamadasu Dome implemented disaster prevention projects:
 1. Online course "Understanding Volcanoes Nationwide";
 2. Volcano Junior Master School.
- Conducted special sessions to introduce the concept of Geopark and various UGGp areas in the world at the English-Day-Camp event for 43 local students of the 5th-8th grades to enhance their interest in international issues and stimulate the motivation to learn English.

Strategic partnership

- Signed an official collaboration agreement with a local high school (the Shimabara Industrial High School) for the 2023 academic year (April 2023 – March 2024) to provide support in the research class on local tourism for the final-year students as well as educational inputs for all

the students.

- Provided year-round cooperation to a local high school (the Koka High School) in the 1st and 2nd year students' group research projects on local issues for the 2023 academic year.
- 27 corporates and 109 individuals are registered as Geopark Supporters.
- Participated in the regular meetings of Working Groups for Tourism Strategies of the Unzen City, particularly the WG on bicycle tourism.
- Attended meetings for drafting the mid-term plan of the Japanese Geoparks Network as a core member of its Mid-Term Planning Committee.

Promotional activities

- Updated the content of the Japanese leaflet and printed 30,000 copies. The existing leaflet is available in 5 languages (Japanese, English, Korean, Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese).
- A regular TV program exploring various geo-sites in our region was broadcasted 2-3 times per month on a local cable TV station (Himawari Television).
- A 1-minute quiz program on the Geopark is run by a local radio (FM Shimabara) and a cable TV station (Cabochoa Television) every day.
- An article on topics related to the Geopark is regularly published in the monthly bulletins issued by 3 cities in our region.
- A local geoscientific story of the Geopark is regularly published in the monthly newsletter issued by the Heisei-Shinzan Nature Center.

4. CONTACTS

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