

Bottom-up Management of Muroto Global Geopark

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One of the responsibilities for GGN and JGN members is to use local resources in order to construct a sustainable society, and it is absolutely necessary local people's independent activities in order to make this happen. We can find a word 'local' many times in the GGN guideline. The section titled 'Management and local involvement' in the Guideline says that 'The establishment of a Geopark should be based on strong community support and local involvement, developed through a 'bottom-up' process. It should demonstrate strong support from local political and community leaders, including in relation to the provision of necessary financial resources. The Geopark should have effective and professional management structures, deliver policy and action for sustainable regional socio-economic and cultural development across the territory where it is located. Success can only be achieved through strong local involvement. The initiative to create a Geopark must therefore come from local communities/authorities with a strong commitment to developing and implementing a management plan that meets the community and economic needs of the local population whilst protecting the landscape in which they live.' The 3rd JGN Conference, held in Muroto Global Geopark in November 2012, also discussed on local involvement into geopark project. It is contained on the Muroto Declaration.

However there is no definite way how local people relate to Geopark. All of geoparks in the world has problems to promote local involvement into geopark project. There are slight differences between Geoparks in Europe and Japan. In Europe, geopark is mainly managed by NPOs and local groups; in Japan it is mainly controlled by local government.

In Muroto Global Geopark, new projects based on bottom-up management by local people have been introduced; 1) Preparation project of Geopark off-site center, 2) Developing a new action plan for next three years (2013~2015 fiscal year) of Muroto Geopark Promotion Committee (MGPC, hereafter).

1) Muroto Geopark off-site center will be established by using a closed school in the city. MGPC has held workshops discusses about effective and ideal image of off-site center with local people. In the workshop, participants have shared aim that Geopark off-site center is not only for tourists/ travelers but also for local people. Among the participants, following ideas were shared that Geopark off-site center should be the place where makes visitors actually visit to geo-sites around Muroto city, local people can study, and many people can communicate with each other. An idea of geo-tour which off-site center plays an effective role was also emerged.

2) MGPC introduced workshop style for developing a new action plan. Participants talk about strong and weak points of Muroto Global Geopark. In the workshop, participants are not just discussing. They read the GGN guideline and consider on 'assignment' for Muroto Global Geopark from GGN judges. MGPC try to share such problems with local people through the workshop.

Workshop style has some sort of influences on involved groups in MGPC. For example, a guide group, managed in top-down system so far, has started to develop a program for the year, plan a schedule of guide training program, discover a new geo-sites, and make a new geo-tour program independently.

This presentation/ poster will show you bottom-up management of Muroto Geopark with examples of workshop-style introduced into preparation project of Geopark off-site center and developing a new action plan.

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