

ESD for Geoparks in Japan

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Relationships between ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) and Geoparks are examined in this paper. Geoparks have a marked affinity for ESD because education and sustainable development are highlighted in the concepts of geoparks, and both have strong associations with UNESCO. However, small number of papers have been written about the relationships between ESD and geoparks, and few schools in geoparks are the members of the ASPnet (UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network). Therefore, the author tries two methods to examine possibilities of our society led by multiplying ESD and geoparks. Firstly, the description contents of the Global Action Programme (GAP) on ESD were considered about cases of geoparks. GAP is intended to make a substantial contribution to the post-2015 agenda, and the follow up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). From the "Priority Action Areas" of the GAP, many points related with organizational operations were found as areas which should be improved. Increasing member schools of the ASPnet in geoparks as hubs for practicing ESD, and setting out policies and agendas to integrate ESD into the various processes and structures of stakeholders in geoparks are the examples.

Regarding learning contents, placing great emphasis on efforts to build a sustainable society mentioned in course of study in Japan is important in geoparks, as well as having viewpoints of international cooperation, giving participatory skills to youth, and so on.

Secondly, learning contents for geoparks are examined from the viewpoints of Earth Sciences and community development. From the former, nature of familiar territory as the first stage, and understanding of the mechanism of Earth activity as the second stage have been found. From the latter, relationships between our life and nature as the first stage, and development of social skills for reaching an understanding with other stakeholders as the second stage have been found. Additionally, international understanding and cooperation through geopark would be the third stage. From the above, geoparks could be places for inspiring learners to act for realizing sustainable society if we transform organizational operations and maximize learning contents given by Earth Sciences and community development.

Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development, Geopark, UNESCO Associated Schools