

School Networking and Education for Promoting Matsu Geopark, Taiwan

Jiun-Chuan LIN, Kuang-Tsung HSU, Chung-Ming WANG, Jahn-Chang LIN
Taiwan Geoparks Network instead of TGN, Matsu National Scenic Area Administration
< E-mail: 20.matsu@tbroc.gov.tw;jclin@ntu.edu.tw >

The four core values of geopark are landscape conservation, geo-tour, environmental education and community participation, but all are centered on the factor of human agency. The population of the entire Matsu Archipelago is slightly more than 10,000. With such limited population and great diversity in social organization, it is quite unlikely to form a new society or social group that could focus on geopark and its promotion. Thus, the promotion of geopark has to find alternatives socially.

This research ascertains that Matsu's primary schools and middle schools are in fact the focal point for social interaction and social learning. Schools also possess certain facilities and human resources that are useful and significant for promoting local natural and human assets, including natural landscapes and landscape created in the local natural setting but with human and cultural significance. Thus, we develop a strategy in promoting geopark through primary and middle schools.

We comply geological and geographical knowledge suitable for understanding local natural environment and human socio-cultural development to advance a series of environmental education for geopark. The educational materials are used as material to train student interpreters for geopark. Students' interpretation skills and competence are improved through various practicing and hosting visitors of school age from the main island of Taiwan and Hong Kong. With time and practice, the student interpreter's skill and competence are enhanced. But more importantly, with the students' participation in geopark promotion, their parents become involved in geopark or become more understanding of geopark. It is hoped that the educational materials for geopark promotion could be mainstreamed into the archipelago's school curriculum and geopark activities could become activities of the villages and schools as well. Such development will become important for the archipelago both in landscape conservation and in its vital economy of tourism.

Keywords: school networking, school curriculum, interpretation skill and competence, geopark promotion, Matsu Geopark.