

Hong Kong Global Geopark: Enhancing Local Engagement and Sustainable Economic Development

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The Global Network of National Geoparks (GGN) stipulates one of the main strategic objectives of a Geopark is to stimulate economic activity within the framework of sustainable development. The philosophy and vision of geoparks provide a balance between conservation of geoheritages, local socio-economic development and local community empowerment. Geopark will not have its soul if the local communities are not involved. Empowering them will increase their sense of ownership to conserve local resources whilst improving the quality of life. The importance of sustainable regional economic development and geotourism is being reflected from the 25% weightings attached amongst the six criteria in geopark assessment. Though GGN has set up guidelines, sustainable economic development is a very broad and elusive concept that is not easy to concretely put into practice. It is specific to local context. The Hong Kong Geopark, officially opened in 2009, was accepted as a member of the GGN in 2011. Situated in a cosmopolitan city with advanced economy, the operation of Hong Kong Global Geopark is very different from those geoparks in rural areas where economy is less developed. This presentation discusses how Hong Kong Global Geopark helps to enhance local engagement and sustainable economic development in an advanced economy. It also identifies areas for improvement to make geopark an even more effective approach to make Hong Kong one of the most livable cities in the world.

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