

Geoparks and University Partnerships for Achieving Post-Disaster Community Development Using Volcanic Wreckage

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This study aims to clarify how disaster wreckage can be preserved and used to attract tourists, as well as to form geopark promotion councils and partnerships with universities and local communities after recovering from a volcanic disaster. The study covers geopark promotion councils of the Unzen Volcanic Area and the Toya Caldera and Usu Volcano in Japan. The promotion councils comprise local governments, universities, citizens' groups, and private companies. The study involved a review of relevant literature followed by interviews with local government officers, researchers, and representatives of citizen groups from 2010.

The study concluded that: 1) the efforts to conserve and manage disaster wreckage of the Unzen Volcanic area were led by local governments. Experts from universities offered technical support for the conduct of research demonstrating the importance of the disaster wreckage and for preserving that wreckage. However, local residents could not participate in the development of the preservation plan. In contrast, local residents of the Usu Volcanic area were able to participate in the planning process thanks to the involvement of experts from universities; 2) in the Unzen Volcanic area, a partnership was forged based on a middle-up-down management model led by the geopark promotion council, while universities participated in the executive meetings.

Meanwhile, a bottom-up approach was adopted to forge a similar partnership led by a proactive joint committee in the geopark promotion council of Usu Volcanic area.

Universities should therefore conclude comprehensive partnership agreements with geopark promotion councils to participate in local efforts as their members