



Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan
FY2025 UNESCO Future Co-Creation Platform Project

UNESCO WEEK 2025 International Symposium
Geoparks x Education: Co-creating Learning with the Earth
Concept Note and Programme

1. Background

Geoparks provide unique opportunities for discovering the connections and values linking a region's geological heritage, landscapes, culture, flora and fauna, and the lives of its people, offering enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. In recent years, educators and Geopark practitioners have increasingly collaborated to design innovative learning programmes that integrate earth sciences, environmental education, disaster risk reduction, cultural heritage, and community engagement. These initiatives embody “living learning” by cultivating learners' curiosity, fostering their ability to think about a sustainable society, and deepening their understanding and appreciation of the places they live in.

As societies confront complex global challenges—from climate change and biodiversity loss to the need for community resilience—Geoparks are increasingly recognised as powerful platforms for experiential and transformative learning. By integrating scientific knowledge with local wisdom and learning together, Geoparks can inspire future generations to cherish the Earth and contribute to envisioning and shaping the future of their communities.

In 2020, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched the UNESCO Future Co-creation Platform project, aimed at promoting multi-dimensional sustainability across generational, regional, and organizational levels through UNESCO-related activities.

This year's symposium, organized as part of the UNESCO WEEK 2025, aims to bring together Geopark professionals, educators, researchers and policy makers to explore these collaborative practices and envision new forms of learning rooted in the Earth and communities.

2. Objectives

This symposium aims to share innovative learning programmes co-created by Geopark practitioners and educators, and to highlight effective models of collaboration. It seeks to clarify the educational value of Geoparks as living classrooms that nurture inquiry, curiosity, and sustainability-oriented thinking. The symposium will also explore approaches for co-creation among educational institutions, Geopark management bodies, local governments, researchers, and community members. In addition, it aims to identify both challenges and opportunities in integrating Geopark resources into formal and non-formal education, while discussing strategies to expand and strengthen these practices. Ultimately, the symposium intends to enhance networks in Japan and around the world, thereby fostering future exchanges and joint initiatives, as well as the accumulation, sharing, and expansion of good practices.

3. Date, Time and Venue:

Thursday, 11 December 2025 18:00-20:00 JST (UCT+9)

Zoom link to be sent to registrants.

4. Target Audience

This international symposium is open to participants from diverse personal and professional backgrounds. Individuals of varying ages and nationalities based in different parts of the world are welcome to join, including individuals that

- are involved in UNESCO-related activities on a professional and/or private basis,
- have an interest in, or are passionate about UNESCO or activities related to UNESCO's sectors of education, science, culture, etc.
- have an interest in or are passionate about the development of sustainable societies or activities and efforts related to the development of sustainable societies.

In particular, we welcome the participation of representatives from local governments interested in applying for new Geopark status, as well as educators and institutions seeking to collaborate with Geoparks.

5. Languages

English and Japanese (Simultaneous interpretation)

6. Details regarding registration and participation

Participation fee: Free


Registration deadline: Sunday, 7 December 2025

How to register: Please submit your registration via the following URL:

<https://forms.office.com/r/CGvLBHUSLU>



7. Programme

Time	Details
17:50-18:00	Zoom link to open
18:00-18:05	<p><u>Opening Remarks</u></p> <p>Mr. Iwasa Takaaki Senior Analyst for Cooperation Policy, Office of the Director-General for International Affairs, MEXT (Vice-Secretary-General, Japanese National Commission for UNESCO)</p>
18:05-18:20	<p><u>Introduction</u> <i>Geoparks and Education: Building Capacity for a Sustainable Future</i></p> <p>Prof. Artur Sa President, Global Geoparks Network</p> <div>  <p>Artur Abreu Sá is the President of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) and an Associate Professor with tenure in the Department of Geology at the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (Portugal). He is also the Chair Holder of the UNESCO Chair on "Geoparks, Sustainable Regional Development and Healthy Lifestyles," reflecting his long-standing commitment to linking geosciences with community well-being and sustainable development.</p> <p>Dr. Sá has taken part in a substantial number of evaluation and revalidation missions for UNESCO Global Geoparks worldwide. He additionally serves as President of the Portuguese National Committee for the International Geosciences Programme of UNESCO.</p> </div>
18:20-18:35	<p><u>Case Study Presentation: JAPAN</u> <i>From "Nothing" to "Learning": Nurturing Local Pride at Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark</i></p> <p>Ms. Sugio Tomoko Coordinator for International Relations, Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan</p>
18:35-18:50	<p><u>Case Study Presentation: ROMANIA</u> <i>UNESCO Program Synergy: Geoparks as Lived Landscapes of Learning</i></p> <p>Ms. Irina Tirdea Executive Director, Buzău Land UNESCO Global Geopark, Romania</p>
18:50-19:05	<p><u>Case Study Presentation: REPUBLIC OF KOREA</u> <i>School and Community Partnerships for Geo-Education in Cheongsong UNESCO Global Geopark</i></p> <p>Ms. Seong-ok Ju Geopark Manager, Cheongsong UNESCO Global Geopark, Republic of Korea</p>
19:05-19:20	<p><u>Case Study Presentation: GREECE</u> <i>Educational Best Practices for Learning with the Earth and Building a Sustainable Future in the Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark</i></p> <p>Ms. Konstantina Bentana Head of Educational Sector, Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece</p>
19:20-19:55	<u>Roundtable Discussion</u>

	<p>Moderator: Ms. Furusawa Kana (Secretary-General, Japanese Geoparks Network)</p> <p>Panellists (in alphabetical order):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Irina Tirdea (Buzău Land UNESCO Global Geopark, Romania) • Ms. Konstantina Bentana (Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece) • Mr. Nagata Koki (Director, Aso UNESCO Global Geopark) • Mr. Oyasu Kiichi (Director, Education Cooperation Department, Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)) • Ms. Seong-ok Ju (Cheongsong UNESCO Global Geopark, Republic of Korea) • Ms. Sugio Tomoko (Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark, Japan)
19:55-20:00	<p><u>Closing remarks</u></p> <p>Mr. Oyasu Kiichi (ACCU)</p>

8. Event Organisers

【Main Organisers】

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO (JNCU)

Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)



文部科学省



【Co-organiser】

Japanese Geoparks Network



9. For inquiries, please contact:

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