

## **Enlightenment and education for disaster mitigation through the Geopark activities**

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### **Abstract**

A Geopark is a single and unified geographical area where people conserve important geological heritage and landscapes, as well as utilize this Earth heritage for education, disaster mitigation activities and geotourism, all with the aim of sustainable development for local communities. As of September 2018, 9 UNESCO Global Geoparks and 35 National Geoparks are authorized in Japan. Further, 16 areas aim to become the official Geopark at present. Of those, two Geoparks are located in the Kumamoto region; one is the Aso UNESCO Global Geopark, which consists of Aso Volcano and Caldera and related cultural heritage, and another is the Amakusa National Geopark, which is famous for abundant fossils, a rich ecosystem and beautiful scenery due to complex coastline and steep topography. Both are popular domestically and overseas, and many tourists are coming to those area. On the other hand, those areas have often suffered a various kinds of serious natural disasters derived from specific topography and geology by heavy rainfalls, typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

One of the important Geopark activities is disaster mitigation. In some Geoparks in Japan, a lot of knowledges on natural disasters linking to geological and topographic features in each Geopark have been accumulated through the Geopark activity. Consequently, the Geopark members, particularly well-educated geoguides, have become actively involved in enlightenment and education on disaster mitigation for local residents and communities, eg. Toya Caldera and Usu Volcano UNESCO Global Geopark. Recently, the Aso and Amakusa Geoparks also give high priority to disaster mitigation activities in response to the 2012 Kyushu heavy rainfall and the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake.

In our presentation, outline and activities for disaster mitigation of the Aso and Amakusa Geoparks will be introduced.