

# GGN/EGN - Geopark Annual Report 2019

## 1. Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland, European Geopark Network

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2011 / 2017



*Figure 1 : Opening of our first visitor and information center by the infamous volcano, Eyjafjallajökull. Press release.*

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 2 staff until June, then hiring of additional staff related to opening of visitor center (and also from February hiring of additional 1 part-time in international project). Of this staff we have 3 geoscientists.

**Number of visitors:** Approximately 1,5-1,7 million annual visitors.

**Number of Geopark events:** 10-15

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 3 schools

**Number of Geopark press release:** Opening of our visitor center in June, national/regional press.

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2019

- Preparing and opening of our first visitor center (geocenter) by the volcano Eyjafjallajökull in June 2019.
- International project Ruritage and launching of the Rural Heritage hub and related events.
- Implementation of a weekly class in one of our schools that our educational experts taught.

### Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Ruritage, Rural Heritage as a driver for sustainable growth (Horizon2020)
- Visitor from Greece, the University of Crete, Mr. Manolis, he worked with photography of our sites for website that we and our partners assisted with.
- (EGN newsletter and one of our local partners took part in the FITUR brochure)

### Management and Financial Status

- Managed by the board of Katla Geopark which holds five seats including mayors of our three municipalities, as well as two representatives, one educational from the University of South Iceland and one local representative from the local companies (also chairman of the marketing body of South Iceland.)
- Funded by the municipalities and receive temporary funding from government until 2021.

## **Geoconservation**

- Strong cooperation with governmental institutions that oversee protected areas/sites (Environmental Agency, Cultural Heritage Agency and National park). Planning authority of other geo-sites in the hands of municipalities which we work alongside.)
- Ongoing work with putting up nature signs and other information panels, including geopark maps with tourism structures and facilities. Designing two new danger/geohazard signs for further use in risk areas. Cooperation with partners in their signage and usage of logos with our partners in various projects.
- Cooperation with marketing body and municipalities with updating of maps and brochures.
- The Destination Management Plan from Katla Geopark being translated and revised in Icelandic version for further use to assist in work ahead (updating of Municipalities Planning strategy, for years 2020-2032).
- Through education and information in our visitor center to our daily visitors.

## **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- Promotion of geotourism through cooperation in various ways but mainly with agreements (contracts) signed with local initiatives and increasing visibility of this partnership and their commitment through certifications, all with the aims of encouraging companies to work sustainably. Offering educational speeches for tour guides (free) about the Geopark in a few events, both at our visitor center and our local partner's. Starting preparations for more extensive "Geo Guide" and "Local ambassador" courses in 2020.

## **New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction**

- Weekly course in Hvolsskóli school where the SDG goals are introduced to students and the fundamentals and roles of UNESCO Global Geoparks, connecting the students to their near environment and heritage, increasing their knowledge of geology, etc.
- Starting to plan extensive courses about the Geopark to be held in 2020 for GeoGuides.

## **Promotional activities**

- Geopark week: annual trail run, educational event in our visitor center, also events held by our partners such as Zipline tour, and guided tours in special exhibitions (Skógasafn and Lava Center) and talks (Lava Center), day-long hikes, etc. The Geopark also took part in the IDDR (geohazard day) by arranging special talks with national and regional specialists. Hosted the Ruritage launch event. Introduced Katla Geopark in the ministry for Education for other UNESCO projects in Iceland. Took part in the annual Icelandic national tourism fair, Mannamót.

## **4. CONTACTS**

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