



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks

# UNESCO Global Geoparks

contributing to the  
Sustainable  
Development  
Goals



Celebrating Earth Heritage,  
Sustaining local Communities



© Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark,  
Spain / Javier Carballo

## SDG 17

All UNESCO Global Geoparks are about cooperation with local people and local stakeholders within the area, but also internationally through regional and global networks. By working together, across borders, different communities share expertise, knowledge and best practices, and increase mutual understanding. This nurtures a global process to build peace in the hearts of men and women.



© Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal

## SDG 12

Children in the Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark in Portugal learn how to make bread by hand. The children, who turn the flour to dough to a warm bread with a crunchy crust, experience a lifestyle in harmony with nature and value local products and sustainable living.



© Araripe UNESCO Global Geopark, Brazil

## SDG 11

Araripe UNESCO Global Geopark is known as a "cultural melting pot" that protects, keeps alive and celebrates the colourful traditions of its ancestors. The isolated region with a mix of various peoples (indigenous, European and African) shaped a distinct cultural identity with particular folkloric dances, songs, religious and artistic expressions.



## Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This United Nations' Agenda is a **plan of action for people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership**. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. The Goals and targets will stimulate action in the following areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet: to **end poverty and hunger** and ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment; to **protect the planet from degradation**, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing

its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change; to ensure that all human beings can **enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives** and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature; to foster **peaceful, just and inclusive societies** which are free from fear and violence; to strengthen **global solidarity**, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.



## SDG 4

Geopark and sustainable lifestyle education are integrated into the daily activities of the local Dong Van Karst Plateau UNESCO Global Geopark schools in Vietnam. Educational methods are varied using local presenters, panels, brochures, guide books, posters and visual aids and that promote both global citizenship, but also value the local cultural diversity of the area.

© Patrick Mc Keever



## SDG 5

In the Qeshm UNESCO Global Geopark in Iran, a local women's cooperative runs the Star Valley visitor centre. They also display and sell their traditional handicrafts, a skill which is passed on for generations. The cooperative runs the local café and provide catering to one of the many geopark guesthouses. The cooperative allows and empowers the women to actively contribute to the life of the community.

© Kristin Lemon



## SDG 8

Sustainable tourism is at the heart of each UNESCO Global Geopark. In the Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark in Canada visitors can enjoy a comprehensive Earth history of the area while paddling along the Kennebecasis River system, which allows them to truly experience the uniqueness of this tidal river and its freshwater marsh.

© Stonehammer UNESCO Global Geopark, Canada



# Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere  
(especially target 1.5)

Disaster risk reduction is essential to ending poverty and fostering sustainable development. The bottom-up approach of the UNESCO Global Geoparks reduces the vulnerability of local communities to extreme events and other shocks and disasters through active risk awareness and resilience training.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all  
(especially target 4.7)

UNESCO Global Geoparks actively educate their local communities and their visitors of all ages. UNESCO Global Geoparks are outdoor classrooms and incubators for sustainable development, sustainable lifestyles, appreciation of cultural diversity and the promotion of peace.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  
(especially target 5.5)

UNESCO Global Geoparks strongly emphasize the empowerment of women through educational programmes or the development of women's cooperatives. Such cooperatives provide an opportunity for women to obtain an additional income in their own area and on their own terms.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all  
(especially target 8.9)

The promotion of sustainable local economic development through sustainable (geo)tourism is one of the key pillars of a UNESCO Global Geopark. This creates job opportunities for the local communities through tourism, but also through the promotion of local culture and products.

Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable  
(especially target 11.4)

Protecting, safeguarding and celebrating our cultural and natural heritage are the foundation of the holistic approach of the UNESCO Global Geoparks. UNESCO Global Geoparks aim to give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen the identification with the area.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns  
(especially target 12.8 and 12.b)

UNESCO Global Geoparks educate and create awareness on sustainable development and lifestyles. They teach the local communities and visitors to live in harmony with nature.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  
(especially target 13.3)

All UNESCO Global Geoparks hold records of past climate change and are educators on current climate change. Through educational activities awareness is raised on the issue and people are provided with knowledge to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development  
(especially target 17.6, 17.9 and 17.16)

UNESCO Global Geoparks are all about partnership and cooperation, not only between local stakeholders, but also internationally through regional and global networks where knowledge, ideas and best practices are shared. Experienced geoparks guide aspiring geoparks to reach their full potential.

# UNESCO Global Geoparks

Are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of **international geological significance** are managed with a holistic concept of **protection, education and sustainable development**. A UNESCO Global Geopark uses its geological heritage, in **connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage**, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using Earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing the impact of natural disasters. By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UNESCO Global Geoparks **give local people a sense of pride** in their region and strengthen their identification with the area. The creation of innovative local enterprises, new jobs and high quality training courses is stimulated as **new sources of revenue** are generated through **geotourism**, while the geological resources of the area are protected.

## For further information, please contact:

UNESCO Global Geoparks  
Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences  
UNESCO  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

[unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/  
pj.mckeever@unesco.org](https://unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/pj.mckeever@unesco.org)