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ABSTRACTS BOOK

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS

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Research in science communication has brought many contributions to improving society's relationship with science, unfortunately very little incorporated in geoscience communication.
Science communication and public engagement are among the main priorities of UNESCO Global Geoparks, privileged territories for science, culture, education, and sustainable development. Geological heritage of international relevance, integrated strategies for geodiversity, together with geoscientific research and geoconservation make UGGps ideal arenas for effective geoscience communication.
Today 197 UGGps in 48 countries are developing tremendous endeavours to bring society closer to science, being a reference for the communication of geosciences on a global scale.
In this sense, we start to study these contexts, conducting a comprehensive analysis on science communication practices in UGGps, including literature review and documentation analysis. This stage has already revealed a great variety of strategies, tools, approaches and terminology, which allowed the identification of theoretical communication models and paradigms. Besides it was also possible to recognize the diversity of terminology and different understandings or scopes referring to science comunicação.
In a second phase, a benchmarking methodology is being conducted to strategically analyse best practices in selected Geoparks. The data collection includes site visits, direct observation and interviews applying specific data collection instruments for qualitative analysis. This more refined analysis of the territories is finding relevant strategies and solutions, regarding situ interpretation, hands on modules, films, digital and augmented reality tools, targeted communication, and storylines, among many others.
This study is part of a larger project that included the identification and discussion of the main challenges on geoscience communication (Rodrigues et al 2023a) and the study of the representations and practices of geoscientists (Rodrigues et al 2023b).Previous and new results will be integrated in order to develop a strategy to promote, stimulate and improve geoscience communication, addressing the identified challenges and meeting the specific segmented needs. Although the strategy to be developed fits into the specific context of Geoparks, we think that this kind of strategy, currently non-existent even in other areas, could contribute as a reference for the promotion of geosciences and the sustainability of planet Earth on a global level, and could be used as a parameter in UGGps, but also in other contexts.