

Promoting Rokua Geopark and the Geoparks networks in Finland

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Rokua Geopark, the first and only Geopark in Finland, became a member of the European and Global Geoparks networks in 2010. The Geoparks network was mostly unknown in Finland before the membership. After three years of functioning as a geopark, Rokua Geopark has been able to raise the awareness to a new level. In 2014 Finland has five areas interested in joining the network and the Finnish Geoparks committee has been founded to guide the development of these aspiring Geoparks.

The strategic aim of Rokua Geopark is to raise awareness of its area and services so that the number of visitors to the Geopark area increases, creating new job opportunities for the local people. With the creation of the Geopark the area has been able to attract some new customer groups and to increase the knowledge of the area as a tourism destination.

The main actions so far have been the preparation of a communications strategy, and plan and inform the public accordingly. The brochures, website and information panels have been renewed. Events have been made, with the Rokua Geopark Challenge adventure race as the main product. The adventure race has been completed for three years, and it is currently the biggest adventure race in Finland. The Geopark Challenge has also been broadcast on national TV for each of three years. The Geopark has also started cooperating with local businesses in joint marketing and in the making of new tourism products. Close cooperation with the local schools is also a valuable tool in raising Geopark awareness amongst the local people.

The communication and promotion actions have raised the awareness of Geoparks as interesting tourism and living areas, but a lot of work is still to be done to get the Geoparks brand better known inside Finland and abroad.

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