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Geodiversity and geoheritage research and education in Mexico

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Geosites, geomorphosites, geoheritage, geodiversity and other related research and educational fields have been absent in the curricula of Mexican universities, although some efforts to consider those topics started in 2004 (Garrido, 2004). In the case of Mexico, Geographers have been the main promoters of the study of geoparks and, more recently, geomorphosites; studies on geosites have been developed by geologists although, in all cases, concrete examples are very limited in number since no systematic work has been proposed.
A general educational project to promote the study and research on Geoparks (including Geodiversity, Geoconservation, Geosites and Geomorphosites) has been recently proposed atthye Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. The main components of this project include:
a) Teaching. Starting only this year, the School of Geography (undergraduate level) incorporated for the first time a subject specifically related to geoparks, geosites and geomorphosites. The subject is complemented with other, more specifically related to the land use management, cartography and (geo)tourism;
b) Research. At the Institute of Geography, projects to conduct systematic research on geoparks and related items has just started;
c) Natural heritage promotion and Geotourism. In a national context, where tourism has received official attention and extraordinary financial support, Geotourism plays an important part of the educational project. A proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Tourism so that students are expected to get an official certificate to carry out activities related to the promotion of the natural heritage as a (Geo)tourist Guide.
Among general goals, the creation of regional and national networks of geoparks, and participation in international efforts (geosites and geomorphosites lists), are also considered.

References

Garrido A. A GIS-oriented method for landscape evaluation within the framework of Geopark. A case study of the “Pico de Tancítaro” area in central Mexico. MSc Thesis, 2004. International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (ITC). Enschede, The Netherlands p. 152.