

Progress Report on the Hokkaido JICA program (2009-present) on Improvement of Mitigation and Management Ability of Volcanic Disasters for the Central and South America.

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Short training program by Hokkaido JICA had started in 2009 on the subject of Mitigation and Management of Volcanic Disasters for the Central and South America. The lectures are given at Hokkaido JICA center by various professors, technical specialists, officials and journalists who had experienced the recent eruption crises. Besides, Mr. Yamanaka, the former Mayor of Sobetsu Town gave an attractive lecture at Usu on the risk management during the 2000 Usu eruption. One unique program is a full day long discussion with two journalists (S. Sato of Muroran Minpo NP, and S. Koike, an ex-editor of Asahi NP Hokkaido Branch) under the coordination by Ui and Okada. Both journalists had a decade-long involvement of Usu volcano. Visits to Sapporo Meteorological Observatory, Geological Survey of Hokkaido, and Hokkaido Prefectural Government are included. Two main field topics; two days long visit to Mt. Tokachi, and four days to Mt. Usu. Excellent Spanish-Japanese translator, is accompanied and assists throughout the program. The original program was three years, but good reputation and the overseas requests extended the program for another 3 years. At the excursion to Mt. Usu, we take a field trails for inspecting the damages of the 2000 eruption, visit to Showa-Shinzan, summit craters and various sites. Visits also include Toyako Visitor Center, Volcano Science Museum, Mimatsu Memorial Hall, Date Bosai Center, Sobetsu Information Center, and some others. On the trails, we often meet school children groups with the guides. It is not so common in their countries. Very unique experience is the discussion gathering with the local people around Mt. Usu who experienced the recent evacuation. Common questions from the Latin American participants are; why do you still continue to live on such a risky area. Typical answer is, - because I love the area, and except certain highest risk period, it is safe and comfortable here. This volcano did show always in the past a clear precursory sign when eruption is imminent. Some people insisted frankly that it was too much overdue for them, because they keep cattles or engage fishing or farming. So, next time I might not evacuate. It is a common difficult problem in the world. We must realize the difficulties. Many programs at Usu are supported by Volcano Meisters (VM). VM is a unique certification system in Toya-Usu Global Geopark, and can be approved by the examination (combination of report, field, and interview). Expectation to the VM is the high quality key person resources in the area, who can support sustainably volcano Geopark during the dormant period, and effective risk collaboration when crisis arises. We sometimes feel that we Japanese (especially disaster officials) also need to have such intensive training course, because Japanese system is effective for top-down vertical linkage but often missing the lateral linkages.