

University of Bologna-IRIDeS Winter School on “*Bōsai* and climate change: Learning from disaster experiences for disaster risk reduction in Japan and Italy” held at IRIDeS (2026/3/6~15)

Topics: Climate Change, Flood Disasters, Great East Japan Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster (3.11)
Place: IRIDeS, Sendai, Ishinomaki, Natori, Futaba, Namie

From March 6 to March 15 2026, a winter school organized jointly by University of Bologna faculty, Assistant Professor Annaclaudia Martini, and IRIDeS faculty, Associate Professor Julia Gerster (Disaster Memory Studies Lab), was held at IRIDeS. The project was kindly supported by the Toshiba Foundation, F-REI, and the Disaster Resilience Co-creation Center, IRIDeS, Tohoku University and is also an outcome of ongoing co-research projects of the two researchers. In addition to Assoc. Prof. Martini, Assoc. Prof. Martina Tazzioli, Researcher Michaela De Giglio, and 10 students joined from the University of Bologna, as well as IRIDeS faculty and visiting researchers, to discuss the challenges posed by climate change, the ways in which certain aspects of past disasters are remembered and forgotten, and how lessons from Japan can be applied to other countries.

After a visit to Matsushima to experience Japanese culture and learn about local history and the impact of 3.11 on tourism guided by GOZAIN, the academic program started on March 9 with presentations about the Great East Japan Earthquake (Julia Gerster, Annaclaudia Martini), the Noto Peninsula Earthquake and Floods (Prof. James Short, Toyo University), and local impacts of 3.11 (Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Maly (International Research Collaboration Office), Research Associate Yumiko Saito (Uehiro Disaster Risk Reduction Research Division)). In the afternoon, Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Maly guided the group through the Shinhama area to learn about disaster mitigation, living with nature, and creative usage of tsunami and flood hazard zones. March 10 started with a guided tour by Director Richard Halberstadt at the Disaster Heritage Site Kadonowaki Elementary School in Ishinomaki, and was followed by field work in the Kadonowaki area and discussions with Hajime Chiba (Ishinomaki Senshu University) and Naomi Chiba (Ishinomaki Senshu University, IRIDeS Visiting Researcher) on the creation of the Ishinomaki recovery park, recovery policies and sea walls. The group spent March 11 in Yuriage, Natori City, where they learned about relocation policies in the new and former Yuriage area and flood-based evacuation procedures, and local impacts of 3.11 at the Natori City Disaster Memorial Museum. The group then joined local commemoration activities and the minute of silence. The final fieldwork day on March 12 was spent in Namie and Futaba, Fukushima Prefecture, where the group visited the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Museum, joined a kataribe storytelling session, conducted fieldwork in Namie and Futaba, and attended a workshop organized by the museum to reflect on the nuclear disaster and energy-related questions. Based on preparations held at the University of Bologna prior to the winter school, March 13 was spent preparing the poster presentations that were held the next day at the Sendai Bosai Mirai Forum, and included counter mapping and insights from the field. Once again, we would like to thank the sponsors and collaborators for their great support of the winter school.

Report by: Julia Gerster (Disaster Memory Studies Lab)
Elizabeth Maly (International Research Collaboration Office)
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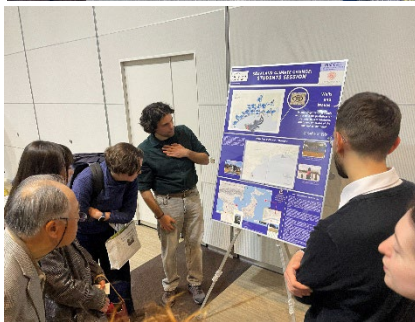
Disaster
Heritage
Site
Kadonowaki
Elementary
School.



Participating
in a
memorial
service in
Yuriage,
Natori City.



Field visits to Namie and
Shinhama.



Workshop in Futaba and
final poster presentations
at the Sendai Bosai Mirai
Forum.

