

Introduction of Awardees (2020)

Prof. Fumihiko Imamura; Director, International Research Institute of Disaster Science, Tohoku University; Professor, Tsunami Engineering, Japan



Professor Fumihiko Imamura conducted tsunami disaster risk reduction/mitigation technology development, tsunami numerical analysis, and tsunami damage surveys for over 30 years. Currently, he plays internationally as the responsible person for the Tsunami Inundation Modeling Exchange (TIME) project. In particular, he played a leader of the international emergent field survey teams since the 1992 Nicaragua Earthquake Tsunami and later, and also gave advice on the field survey reports and the restoration from the damages. He published more than 150 academic papers on tsunami in English and Japanese, a number of prefatory notes, and keynote papers. He also supported and promoted disaster prevention awareness activities related to the World Tsunami Awareness Day advocated by the United Nations, and contributed by presenting world tsunami risk assessments for the past 400 years. He served as a member of the Central Disaster Prevention Council Special Investigation Committee, the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Initiative Council Study Committee, and the Vice Chairperson of the International Geophysical Geodesy Society Tsunami Committee. Since August 2019, he has been serving the representative director of 3.11 Road Promotion Organization.

Prof. Costas Synolakis; Professor of Civil Engineering, University of Southern California, USA and Greece



In the late 1980s, Prof. Synolakis published his seminal analytical solution for the runup of solitary waves on a sloping beach. This result is the well-known “runup law” for solitary waves. He subsequently developed the theory for leading depression waves and showed that they climb further on beaches than leading elevation waves. His legacy also includes the development of MOST (Method Of Splitting Tsunami) model, developed with his students, which is now the standard operational tsunami inundation model for the tsunami warning centers at NOAA and National Weather Service, and employed world-wide. In the past decade, Prof. Synolakis and his group have organized or led in field expeditions to Flores, Indonesia, 1992, Java and Mindoro, 1994, Manzanillo, 1995, Papua New Guinea, 1998, Vanuatu, 1999, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Kenya, 2004, Java, 2006, Samoa 2009, Chile and Mentawais, 2010, Japan, 2011, Ventura, 2015, Palu, 2018, Krakatoa, 2019. These have resulted in 31 field reports and have also led to identifying previously unrecognized tsunami amplification phenomena. These results have now altered public policy on protection from tsunamis. In addition to educating and inspiring a generation of coastal engineers, Prof. Synolakis is the most articulate advocate of public literacy on tsunamis by publishing more than 25 editorials and hundreds of interviews in international outlets such as CNN, BBC, WSJ, NYTimes and Washington Post and others.

Aceh Tsunami Museum, Indonesia



The Aceh Tsunami Museum is established as a symbolic reminder of the earthquake and tsunami Indian Ocean 2004, as well as an educational center for disaster mitigation. It received the Indonesia Museum Award 2018 out of 400 museums in Indonesia. Its most important roles are to pass disaster experiences in the 2004 tsunami down to the next generation, to widely spread lessons learned from earthquake and tsunami disasters, and to prepare for future disasters. It has provided many of temporally exhibitions, workshops and events, and attracts many visitors including teenagers and foreigners. The number of visitors ranges between 2,000-3,000 on weekdays and can reach 6,000 on weekends. It has worked hard to educate younger generation who does not know much about the disaster. Disaster mitigation campaigners from 600 junior high schools have been assembling to provide education on disaster preparedness. The museum is also in charge of an evacuation center. It is designed as an evacuation hill in anticipation of future tsunami hazards.