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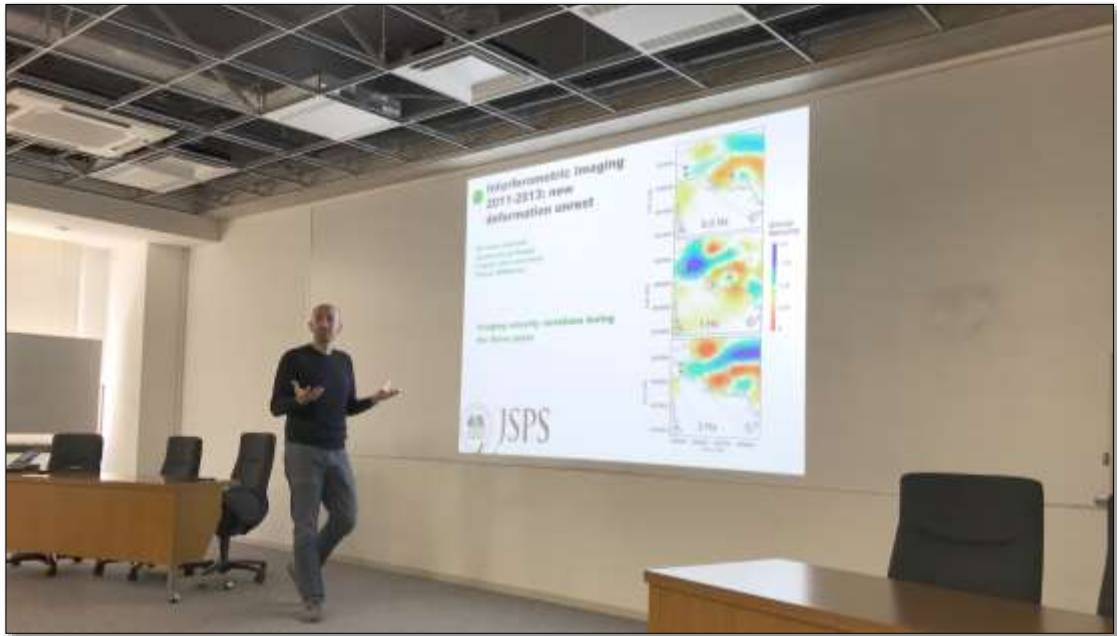
My entire career has been devoted to the study of the velocity, attenuation, and scattering properties of the heterogeneous Earth with seismic waves. Japanese researchers, especially those at Tohoku University, had written the first manuscripts I have read on the topic. The theories and techniques I have developed afterwards have been strongly influenced by the original, disrupting ideas these scientists have continued to propose. Being able to work with them in the framework of a JSPS fellowship has represented the fulfilment of a longstanding desire.

The interferometric maps we have developed during my 1-month long stay with the group of Prof. Nakahara, at the Solid-Earth Lab of the Graduate School of Science, are for the assessment of seismic and volcanological hazard at Campi Flegrei caldera, the largest and most hazardous volcano in continental Europe. The technique we have applied uses noise instead of earthquakes to see inside the volcano: in the last 30 years, low seismicity has been recorded at the volcano, and our results may thus represent the main seismological imaging data for forecasting future volcanic unrest. Indeed, Francesca Bianco, Head of the Vesuvius Observatory (the institution monitoring the volcano) has already presented our preliminary results to the Italian civil protection and the President of the Italian Research Council.

I have travelled to Sendai with my wife and my 1-year old child. The possibility JSPS gives of moving to Japan with my family has been fundamental to enrich the experience of living in such a different country. The support of my Japanese colleagues has been outstanding in terms of both research and solutions to real life problem. JSPS funding has given me funding to travel to Tokyo and present my research to two different research Institutions (the Earthquake Research Institute, hosted by Dr. Takuto Maeda, and the Earth and Life Science Institute, hosted by Prof. George Hellfrich).

I strongly recommend PhDs, post-docs and Senior researchers to apply for JSPS funding. Becoming a fellow opens the path to research knowledge and funding non-fellows cannot access. Travelling with my family has been far less challenging than I expected. The Japanese hospitality is fantastic, and the level of the MSc Japanese students I met excellent. Research-wise, there is no better place to be. Also, understanding each other has never been an issue. I

recommend getting in touch with your host and visiting their group before applying for the funding. In 2013 I had applied for the long-term JSPS post-doc opportunity, but my lack of knowledge of the research currently undertaken in the institution had hindered success. Visiting Japan the same year on my own has given me access to core knowledge and links that will help better shaping the application.



Presentation of my work at the Earth Research Institute, Tokyo