

Supplementary figure 1 (S1)

Rikuzentakata is a regional city with a population of 24,000, located in the southeast of Iwate Prefecture in the Tohoku region of Japan. Its exact location is 141 degrees 38 minutes east, 39 degrees 1 minute north. Its location is extremely close to the epicenter of the Great East Japan Earthquake (magnitude 9.0), which occurred at 2:46 p.m. on March 11, 2011. The city is comprised of a relatively small low-lying area that extends over a part of the low shoreline, and of high ground that encircles the flat area (see aerial photo). The flat area was completely destroyed by the massive tsunami, but the high ground escaped damage.

