

“In my temporary room of temporary shelter, I sometimes feel depressed, but I can be relaxed at home, though it is still too damaged to live.” Muneo Oikawa is currently living at the Konakai Temporary Shelter Complex in Ofunato, because his house, located 250 meters away from the sea, was damaged in the tsunami on March 11, 2011. Muneo is now gradually repairing his house with frameworks barely left from the disaster.



*In front of his house. Muneo installed new windows with financial support from Habitat*

Habitat Japan met Muneo in fall 2011, when staff visited the Konakai Complex to assess the housing damage of the community. Habitat found his house repairable and he received financial support from Habitat. Muneo could install new windows and this encouraged him to continue his house repair by himself. Muneo is now commuting from temporary shelter to his house to repair his house a little by little.



*Muneo working with volunteers*

Muneo is also active to improve the living environment of the complex. When Habitat first visited him at the complex, he worked hard as a leader there. He listened to each resident, and visited each family every day to cheer them up. These efforts of Muneo brought up the voices of the residents; “Our house is too small to put all belongings,” “Windows are too high to hang out laundry, so it is dangerous to use especially for the elderly.”

Habitat Japan with the Konakai residents and volunteers built a storage unit that is communally used by the residents, and bench-like steps and planter stands for each family. The storage unit was painted to look like a brick house and it is now a landmark of the community. “When we stayed at evacuation centers, we could do nothing but move to temporary shelters. Then, we have been working to improve our living environment of temporary shelter. Now 2 years after the disaster, we are finally able to think of our own houses to return.” Muneo’s next goal is that all of the residents of the complex return home and rebuild community.



*Dedication with Habitat volunteers*