**Seki**: To lose a home after a disaster means that you have lost pretty much everything. It could be a violent conflict. It could be a natural disaster. When you have lost the place where you live you cannot get on with your life. People's coping mechanisms, the social cohesion, the contact to that place has been totally destroyed so we want to support that full recovery of that person or family or the community from such devastating crises.

**Narrator**: Helping families meet their shelter and settlement needs during and after an emergency is a priority for Catholic Relief Services, a member of Caritas Internationalis. Our mission is to work with the most vulnerable people on earth, helping them fulfill their very human right to safe shelter and a fulfilling life. Since 1995 CRS has supported 208,000 households – equivalent to more than million people – with transitional or permanent sheltering solutions. Our shelter programming has a mission of providing a home; shelter that at its most basic protects people from the elements. But also a home that provides living conditions that restore self-worth, security, access to services, a place to work and raise a family, and one that is resilient to the growing effects of climate change.

**Seki**: No communities on earth are the same. The needs are all different. People are different. By going through the process of community consultation, community mobilization, this is where we can really assist the communities the best way that they want us to. Why is it so important? Because it's the building blocks for their recovery. They have nothing. They flee with one bag, if anything, with one passport if they have a passport. They come across borders. They get introduced to local communities, welcomed or not welcomed, and this is where us as humanitarians and not politicians can support that time the need where people need us the most. We look at the conditions on the ground, we look at the community's capacity, and we tailor our response specifically so we can contribute to the maximum impact.

**Narrator**: Shelter, then, is a process, not a product. Our shelter and settlements rapid response and recovery cycle focuses on two goals: protecting lives and rebuilding lives. First, we focus on emergency shelter assistance. We offer the most basic yet vital life-saving care, protection from rain, sun, heat and cold, in the form of tents, basic shelter materials, tools and living supplies. At the same time, we assist communities in search of more durable solutions. Most displaced families want to return home. When possible, we help rebuild those homes but, when safety concerns make this impossible, we help families integrate at the place of displacement or relocate to a third country. Re-establishing a home involves addressing many complex and critical issues. This is why our approach to these programs is just as vital as to what they provide.

**Seki**: The way that we do our programming can bring the community together. The way that we organize communities; the way that you reconstruct physically the locations of how the houses are together; whom is the neighbor of whom; I think how you plan the social spaces, the schools, the squares, the infrastructure – that has a big impact on how people react to each other.

**Narrator**: These are our shelter programming priorities. We're community based. We use local materials technologies and skills whenever possible. We consult local construction workers in both male and female members of households in the design of our programs to ensure they are culturally appropriate and respond to local needs. We're market-based. We assess the strengths of local economies. If markets are healthy enough, we provide people with cash or vouchers so they can purchase materials and hire laborers locally. When direct distributions are necessary, we strive to purchase locally available goods and services. We're tailored. We collaborate directly with communities to ensure that our construction meets the needs of each disaster as well as the community's capacity. We build pilot demonstration shelters and ask for community feedback. We're safe and durable. To help our shelters withstand future disasters, we strengthen designs and capabilities, working with local carpenters and masons. We're integrated. By connecting our shelter programs with other emergency or development activities, we can strengthen livelihoods, improve water and sanitation, protect the most vulnerable populations, champion environmental sustainability, and help communities map out a disaster risk reduction plan for the long-term resilience.

**Seki**: I think that if we can do it the right way, and if we could do it in the best way that we can, we have an opportunity to change people's lives. You see people getting on with their lives. Maybe if we've done it right, we see them strive even beyond what they had before. When we have something to offer, I think that's a huge privilege to offer that so that that knowledge, that resource can make the biggest impact to people in the biggest need in this world.