

Shelterbox Presentation - January 26, 2015

Shelterbox has a presentation to make today, and we thought it might be interesting to augment it with a short behind the scenes look at some of the logistics involved in responding to a disaster. SB is consistently a first responder, and here are some reasons why:

Preparation:

Boxes:

Assembled in Britain, some items (tent) take up to 6 months to manufacture, so much work is underway well in advance.

These are stored in GB and also prepositioned in 12 -15 areas around the world (Philippines)

Volunteers: are solicited in 20 some countries to act as Response Team members. Mostly Rotarians, they have to establish with their employer the flexibility to take off 2 or more weeks at literally a moment's notice. These SRT's are given 2 or 3 weeks intensive training in Britain dealing with the complex issues involved in responding to a disaster area. One point is that they must be entirely independent so as not to add to the needs on the ground.

And critically, their role is to accompany boxes to ensure they make it to those in need.

Partnerships are pre-established, e.g. with airlines (Virgin Air), ground transportation (DHL), storage locations around the world and with other aid groups such as the Red Cross.

Perhaps most important, SRT's on the ground liaise with the local Rotary Clubs, whose members typically include people who can make things work in that region, including decisions as to where the need might be greatest.

All of these connections help ensure the operation is speedy and most cost effective.

When disaster strikes....

SB headquarters in Britain monitors various sources 24/7/365. There are on average 600 + "disasters" annually. For all of these, SB analyses the need to respond.

Three notable examples:

Haiti: a team was assembled within 12 minutes of notice of the quake and were on the ground in 24 hours. 7000 boxes were distributed in the first 4 days; 28,000 boxes eventually housing almost 1/4 million displaced persons. 61 SRT's were involved over a period of months.

Japan: Took about 1 hour 15 minutes to analyse the effect of the tsunami. Teams on the ground in 24 hours. 1700 boxes delivered, and some set up in gyms to provide not just shelter, but family dignity.

New Zealand: Significant earthquake, but SRT's already there. As is typically, in a developed country, the decision was that there was no need for boxes.

So far about 250 deployments in 90 different countries giving out 135,000 boxes to needy families.

Innovation: As an aside, the tent and equipment keeps evolving. There is now a "midi" version, much smaller and more versatile in crowded or evolving conditions. Solar lights are available, and thermal liners and a chimney hole allow the stove to be inside for cold places such as Turkey in the winter.

SB has initiated a program called SB HERO. Rotary Clubs who have donated at least 3 boxes in a given year are recognized with a banner. On behalf of SB, it is my pleasure to ask Cathy Whiting to accept this on behalf of our Club for her year as president.

We should be very proud of our commitment to this program. It is very difficult to determine exactly how many boxes our club have donated. WCS, individual club members, and other individuals and groups such as schools that we have inspired have all contributed. For example, we just received a note from the SB CEO with thanks for the \$600 raised at the Y during Peace Week. We will be notified, as with all donations, when this box is deployed.

Upwards of 40 boxes are attributed to our club so far. Hopefully our support will continue. SB is a very worthy charity.

Lastly, Tom Cook and I have decided that our Club needs new ideas and energy for this committee and fortunately for all, Jeff Celentano has agreed to take over the role of ShelterBox Ambassador, being the official liaison with SB Canada. Thank you very much Jeff!

Stand up and take a bow!

So from now on, we should probably address Jeff as "Ambassador Celentano" or maybe "His Excellency"?