

## **SHELTERBOX RESPONSE TEAMS**

**Delivering aid direct:** ShelterBox prides itself on getting aid direct to the people who need it most – and one of the ways we achieve that is through our ShelterBox Response Teams or SRTs.

Members of our SRTs are all volunteers and come from all walks of life. The first teams were deployed following the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004. Since then, SRT members have delivered ShelterBoxes to victims of disasters in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe and South America.

### Getting there fast - and first

Our links with the Rotary organisation mean that in most countries of the world we have a ready-made source of support and information for our teams. In the field, our SRTs also base themselves in the affected area so that they can directly co-ordinate action on the ground.

Because ShelterBox is non-partisan and uses volunteers who work and live with the local population, our teams can often cross political and religious divides to reach areas where some organisations are reluctant to operate.

As a result – in Sri Lanka and Indonesia following the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004, in Pakistan following the Kashmir earthquake of 2005 and in Java following the earthquake and tsunami of 2006 – our SRTs were often the first on the scene with help. We also got aid to many victims of Hurricane Katrina days ahead of US government agencies.



### **Are you ready for the challenge?**

ShelterBox is keen to recruit and train more SRT members but deploying with our aid is not for the faint-hearted.

Volunteers going into a disaster zone don't just need to be willing. They must be both physically and mentally capable of handling what could lie ahead.

Conditions in the field can be very basic and SRTs may be operating within days of a disaster that has killed huge numbers.

Apart from the human tragedy, the infrastructure of the affected area may be in ruins.

This means our teams must be totally self-sufficient – capable of operating without adding to the burden of the people we are there to help.

Volunteers also need to be practical and resourceful as getting boxes to their destination can be a massive logistical challenge. Delivering aid may involve anything from negotiating with local customs officials to building rafts or hiring a mule train.