



SHELTERBOX AND ROTARY: SAVING LIVES WITH CLEAN WATER

There's nothing more essential to life on Earth than water. Yet 2.2 billion people worldwide currently live without access to safe water.

March represents Rotary International's Clean Water and Sanitation Month. We know that Rotary members are playing a crucial role in helping communities across the world access clean and safe water.

Here at ShelterBox, we believe that water, just like shelter, is a human right. Whoever you are, wherever you are – you are entitled to clean, safe water.

But, we also know that when disasters devastate communities and force people far from their homes, families often find themselves in inhospitable areas or overcrowded camps, where finding safe water is a daily struggle.

That's exactly why, as part of our aid packages, we provide families with water filters and water carriers - so that safe drinking water can become one less thing to worry about.

Our water filters can turn up to 1000 litres of unsafe water into clean drinking water, by removing viruses, bacteria, pathogens, chemicals, heavy metals, and fecal matter.

Our water carriers ensure that families have a place to store the purified water, so it can be kept clean and safe to drink.

But, we are only able to provide these items thanks to Rotarian support. Our values mirror each other in so many ways - and this month is another reminder of our shared cause of 'service' on behalf of others.

MEET MAÏRAMU

33-year-old Maïramu and her seven children live in Minawao Refugee Camp in Cameroon - where they fled to, after Boko Haram attacked their village in Nigeria.

Her life at Minawao is completely different to the life she had at home. She copes with the loss, because the safety of herself and her children is more important than anything else: "It is an experience that I would not wish on anybody. It was like a horror film which makes me cry every time I think about it. One day you have everything, the next you lose everything within a few minutes".

Like many refugees, the most difficult situation that Maïramu faces daily is that of access to water. Her and her children must get up early and travel long distances to access water. But, distance is not the only issue. Drinking dirty, contaminated water caused the family to get sick. Maïramu tried to filter the water using fabric, but there was no change and the family continued to suffer with the same symptoms: "We started to get sick. After a while, I noticed that my children and I were having frequent stomach aches. I realised it was caused by the water".

After receiving a ShelterBox water filter, Maïramu cannot contain her joy at the impact it has had on her family. She and her eldest daughter filter the water for the rest of the family, and they no longer suffer with sickness: "This filter has become our doctor. It puts an end to the problem of sickness that we had after drinking water".

"Today, we drink water without fear. Even though the distance is the same with all the difficulties that we have when fetching water, we are now spared from sickness. I use the filter without difficulty as it's very simple to use. The only thing we can say is thank you very much ShelterBox".



PROVIDING SAFE WATER: OUR AID



Water filters:

When families are unable to access clean water, water filters enable them to produce safe drinking water. These can remove viruses, bacteria and pathogens that can be found within contaminated water, as well as chemicals, heavy metals and fecal matter. A water filter can turn up to 1000 liters of unsafe water into clean drinking water – that's enough for a family of four for a month. We make sure that the families we support know how to get the best from the water filters, by providing extensive training to whole communities.

Water carriers:

Through working with disaster-affected families, we know that it's important to always provide water carriers along with water filters. This makes sure families have a place to store the purified water, so it can be kept clean and safe to drink. In the Philippines, our collapsible 10-liter capacity water carriers were particularly welcomed by women, who told us they were light and easy to carry. Sometimes, families even use the collapsed carriers as bowls to eat from or to store food.

