

## Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria Disaster Responses

*Helping families displaced by Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria*

Final Report: June 2018

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Last year you provided ShelterBox USA with funding to help meet the shelter needs of vulnerable families displaced by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. This support enabled ShelterBox to provide 1,950 families with critical shelter supplies across the Caribbean islands. Without your partnership, ShelterBox would not have been able to reach these vulnerable families whose homes have been ravaged by the hurricanes.

### **DISASTER RESPONSE BACKGROUND**

Irma was the first Category 5 hurricane of the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season and caused widespread and catastrophic damage throughout its long lifetime. The storm reached winds of 185mph, killed 134 people and caused an estimated \$67 billion in damage. Less than two weeks later, Hurricane Maria made landfall, bringing with it a new wave of destruction. The arrival of these Category 5 hurricanes made 2017 one of the most ferocious hurricane seasons ever recorded. Tearing off roofs and leaving homes destroyed across the Caribbean, the prime minister of Barbuda sadly proclaimed the island was “rubble.”



Figure 1: The island of Barbuda after the hurricanes.

### **SHELTERBOX'S INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS**

In preparation for the hurricanes, ShelterBox sent a Response Team to Panama, where we pre-positioned stock, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to start assessments. Utilizing our strong network of contacts, partners and Rotary connections in the region, we identified communities in need of support. The team soon moved to Barbados, which was being used as a hub by the Shelter Cluster, to begin orchestrating a response across multiple islands. The response hub was later moved to Antigua, where working ports were better able to facilitate the import and exports of ShelterBox aid to the British Virgin Islands, St Kitts and Nevis, Antigua, Barbuda, Dominica, and the Dominican Republic. In each country we tailored our aid to best support the needs of different communities.

In St Kitts and Nevis and the Dominican Republic we supported families to rebuild their homes with the help of ShelterKits. The kit contained the basic tools and materials needed to repair roofs and walls, and included tarpaulins, duct tape, nails, and a saw, in addition to other supplies. Prior to distributing the kits, we conducted training sessions with members of the local community to show people the different ways the kit can be used, and how to make stronger, more resilient structures.

Elsewhere in the British Virgin Islands, our tents were the best option – creating a warm safe home while the long clean-up process takes place. We distributed solar lights in Antigua. For families in Barbuda, this process has taken much longer than other areas as the island was almost completely destroyed after the storms. While our work is complete on the other islands, our efforts continue in Dominica and Barbuda, where we are helping families to return home and begin the rebuilding process with tents and ShelterKits.



*Figure 2: A Dominican man utilizing a ShelterBox tent as a temporary residence while rebuilding his home*

Below you will find a list of distributed materials, by country:

<b>Country</b>	<b>Materials</b>
<i>Antigua</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,000 solar lights</li> </ul>
<i>Barbuda</i> <sup>1</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 147 Shelter Toolkits, 176 tents, 1475 solar lights, 150 ThirstAID stations, 550 water carrier, 180 tarpaulins, and 350 mosquito nets</li> <li>• A project has been set up with Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross that will see 186 tents distributed to Barbudan returnees over the next 18 months; the entire populations had been evacuated to Antigua</li> </ul>
<i>British Virgin Islands</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28 ShelterBoxes, 28 tents, and 42 solar lights to the Island of Jost Van Dyke</li> </ul>
<i>Dominica</i> <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase 1: 485 ShelterKits, 2,486 solar lights and 2,255 water carriers</li> <li>• Phase 2: 116 tents will be distributed with our unnamed partner; 103 have been distributed to-date</li> </ul>
<i>Dominican Republic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 799 ShelterKits</li> </ul>
<i>St Kitts and Nevis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 Shelter Toolkits and 400 tarpaulins</li> </ul>

In total, ShelterBox distributed 28 ShelterBoxes, 1,284 ShelterKits, 174 Shelter tool kits, 506 tents, 5,003 LuminAID solar lights, 150 ThirstAID stations, 2,805 water carriers, 580 tarpaulins, and 350 mosquito nets.

### **PARTNER: HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

Despite the great need, ShelterBox had limited personnel resources to implement the needed shelter response in the Dominican Republic. As a result, we partnered with Habitat for Humanity. The ideal partner in the Dominican Republic, Habitat for Humanity is well respected by communities and local leadership having a presence as a development organization on the island since 1986.



Figure 3: A ShelterBox and Habitat for Humanity ShelterKit “Train the Trainer” demonstration in Dominican Republic.

<sup>1</sup> Distribution is still in process.

<sup>2</sup> Phase 2 is in process.

ShelterBox provided aid materials including ShelterKits and corrugated iron, as well as provided Habitat for Humanity personnel with training on shelter construction and repair in the Dominican Republic. In turn, Habitat for Humanity provided support for the needs assessment, training on shelter construction and repair to families, as well as aid material distributions through village and community leaders. Habitat for Humanity's infrastructure and strength in personnel allowed the project to build to scale.

Aid beneficiaries were identified by Habitat for Humanity and Dominican Republic community leaders based on ShelterBox's criteria. Beneficiaries receiving aid and training included families with female headed households, elderly, and disabled. Monitoring and evaluation results showed that families were very satisfied with the support and results of ShelterBox and Habitat for Humanity's good work, including the training on construction or repair of their shelters as well as the materials provided.

As a result of this good work, 799 families were able to provide temporary repairs to their home or construct new temporary shelter until finding a more permanent shelter solution. This project ensured families in the Dominican Republic are protected from weather and environmental extremes, are able to remain in their community, and are now empowered with the knowledge, skills, and tools to conduct repairs on their own shelters.

A great partnership and mutual success, ShelterBox and Habitat for Humanity anticipate collaborating on future responses to the Dominican Republic together.

### **BLANDINA JOSEPH'S STORY**

*'When the hurricane came I was at my uncle's home, we were sitting in the living room when we heard a big noise... BOOM. Everything was gone and there was no roof. All we could see was sky, we had to go and hide in the bathroom. There was so much wind and so much noise.'* Blandina Joseph endured Hurricane Maria for eight hours in her uncle's house in the district of La Plaine on Dominica. The both of them huddled in the bathroom for the little protection that it offered. During the eight hours of wind and rain, they held containers over their heads to try to keep some of the water off but still everything got soaked.



*Figure 4: Blandina Joseph lost her home in the hurricane.*

When she returned to her house everything was gone, she slept for two nights in her local church before being offered temporary shelter in a friend's home. Far from an ideal situation, and with her privacy gone Blandina was desperate to return home.

*'These lovely people from ShelterBox came and set up a tent for me which I was so happy about. I love the tent so much as it allowed me to return home, and to my work on my vegetable patch with my*



Figure 5: Blandina Joseph standing in front of her new home.

*tomatoes and cabbage. It helped me to be able to build my new home whilst I stayed in the tent. I am very thankful and happy for this.'*

Blandina was provided a ShelterBox relief tent which enabled her to stay on the site of her demolished home whilst materials were sought and a new structure built. She was also able to continue work on her extensive garden next to where her tent was pitched. The garden provides a source of food and income for her, work would not have been

able to continue due to the location of her temporary accommodation. **One month after returning home, Blandina now has a new structure on her old plot and the garden is doing well. She still spends some nights in her tent pitched next to the tomato patch.**

### THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT

At ShelterBox we know that shelter is not just a roof, canvas or tarp over your head, it's the process of recovery, of returning to normal when disaster strikes. That is why we do not just provide items that give shelter, but items and training that help people make better shelters. After Hurricane Irma, one of the strongest storms to ever hit Caribbean, which was swiftly followed by Hurricane Maria, we have been supporting communities across the region.

For thousands of vulnerable families whose homes were destroyed or badly damaged, your support provided the tools and necessities they need to begin self-recovery. The provision of tents, ShelterKits, and non-food items helped villages and neighborhoods meet their basic needs and helped protect families from harsh elements. ShelterBox was only able to reach these vulnerable children, women, and men with your support – those who otherwise would not have received the aid they desperately needed. **Thank you for your partnership that made this work possible.**

Figure 6:  
ShelterBox  
tent in  
Barbuda

