The Water Survival Box is the initiative of the Rotary Club of Chelwood Bridge, Somerset, and is a registered charity. It arose following six months of continuous work after the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean during which 3,200 Aquaboxes were packed with items donated by members of the public. That operation was reviewed at the end of the 6 months and a number of ways in which it could (and should) be streamlined were identified.

In summer 2006, six members of the Rotary Club of Chelwood Bridge set up a limited company (Worldwaterworks Ltd) in order to develop the Water Survival Box. Its primary purpose is to provide a means of purifying water for the benefit of families that survive natural or man-made disasters.

Clean water is essential to protect against water-borne disease. Family homes are destroyed and all their possessions lost in many natural disasters. This is why the box also contains a range of essential survival items including cooking pots, bowls/plates, mugs, and utensils; health and hygiene items; basic shelter and simple tools; etc.

Our first consignment of 60 WSBs followed a typhoon that devastated part of the Philippines. Since then we have responded to 67 disasters in 34 countries in SE Asia, Africa, Middle East, S America and the Caribbean.

The trustees have adopted a policy of continuous improvement. We have established a continual review process, informed by feedback from agencies involved in distributing our boxes and on-going research. In this way the box, water purification kit, other contents, and methods of delivery and distribution have been developed and regularly updated.

Since 2006, we have established a number of partnerships with Rotary Clubs and Districts as well as aid agencies such as Red Cross/Red Crescent, Oxfam, Merlin, Humanity First UK, World Vision Taiwan, School in a Bag and Khalsa Aid International. Our partners take responsibility for ensuring swift transit of our consignments through customs on arrival and distribution to families most in need. They also provide us with feedback in the form of video and photographs as well as an account of the distribution operation.

Volunteers from Rotary, Inner Wheel, Schools, and local community groups do all the management of the project and the practical work involved. In this way, every pound donated is converted into Water Survival boxes or helps pay for the cost of air freight.