EDITOR'S CHOICE

A champion for medicine's humanity

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"Man's inhumanity to man, Makes countless thousands mourn," wrote Robert Burns in 1784. Evidence of that inhumanity is all around us, in reports from the world's war zones, the refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe, and closer to home wherever we are. This week, with the annual celebration of Burns's birthday, we also celebrate your support for a charity whose volunteers provide healthcare to vulnerable people suffering the effects of inhumanity.

Doctors of the World is part of the global Médecins du Monde network, which runs more than 350 projects in more than 80 countries with more than 3000 volunteers. Over the past two months our Christmas charity appeal has been seeking your donations to support the work of Doctors of the World. We have heard how its volunteers and local salaried staff are helping Sierra Leone's health system recover after the epidemic of Ebola virus disease (doi:10.1136/bmj.h6841). We have also heard how the charity helps doctors and nurses volunteering in the Middle East and Europe to provide healthcare for refugees fleeing Syria and Afghanistan (doi:10.1136/bmj.h6515). Despite the destruction of its clinic in Calais and ever present risks to its staff, Doctors of the World continues to run pop-up clinics for refugees stranded there in appalling conditions (doi:10.1136/bmj.i182). The charity's ability to bring political and legal pressure has forced the French authorities to provide basic public health measures such as clean drinking water.

This week Richard Hurley brings things closer to *The BMJ's* home town, reporting on the charity's work in London (doi:10.1136/bmj.i502). As well as its permanent clinics in Bethnal Green and Hackney, Doctors of the World has identified a particularly vulnerable group, London's foreign domestic workers. With their visas now tied to a single employer, isolated and fearful of deportation if they seek help, this mainly female group of about 16 000 workers is at high risk of physical and sexual abuse. The charity's volunteers provide healthcare and advice, while fighting for wider recognition that it is everyone's right to receive free primary care regardless of immigration status.

Doctors of the World needs more volunteer doctors and nurses, and it relies on private donations to continue its vital independent work. Readers of *The BMJ* have already generously donated over £25 000 (€33 000; \$36 000). If you would like to donate, the details of how to do so are at the end of this week's article (doi:10.1136/bmj.i502). Thank you to all who have donated money so far and to Doctors of the World for championing medicine's enduring humanity.

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