



16 November 2018

Dear SMOAT supporter

This year we are again supporting two projects. The first is a project from an organisation called the Virtual Doctors, who work in Zambia. The second project is from IMPACT and supports a floating hospital in Bangladesh.

The Virtual Doctors

The Virtual Doctors is a UK registered telemedicine charity that has a growing and respected reputation as a leading authority on telemedicine in the not-for-profit sector. They have been in operation since 2009.

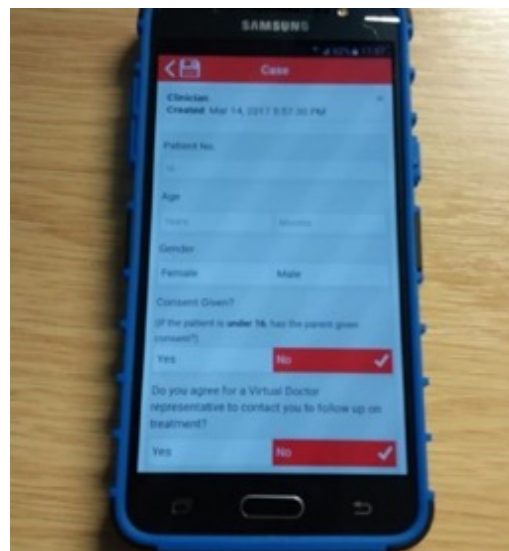
They use smartphone technology to connect isolated health professionals with volunteer doctors (predominantly in the UK but also elsewhere in Africa) who offer diagnostic advice for complex cases, to educate, empower and help save lives. They are the only charity doing this specifically rurally focussed work in the region. They have equipped healthcare workers in more than 60 clinics with App-loaded smartphones. These 60 clinics serve as many as 1.6 million people who have no direct access to a qualified doctor. Their ambition is to increase the number of clinics in rural Zambia to 100.

Their service was launched in Zambia, where there are only 1,600 doctors to serve a population of over 15 million people. Two-thirds of the population live in rural areas. They have no access to qualified doctors and have to travel long distances to the health centres and even then receive inadequate treatment or diagnosis due to the centres being under-resourced. This obviously has a social impact by compounding family hardship. The Virtual Doctors' simple telemedicine software, designed with rural communities in mind, connects remote healthcare workers with volunteer doctors, who give diagnosis and treatment advice. This means that travelling long distances for hospital trips can be avoided.

With money raised by the Christmas Appeal, we would be aiming to provide a service from at least two rural health clinics in Zambia. This would involve buying smartphones, together with the appropriate software, training and start-up education, set-up, support costs and trouble-shooting, mobile device management and security protection software.

Survey results, as of December 2017, show that using the Virtual Doctors service:

- Improved a patient's symptoms in 92% of cases
- Prevented the need for a hospital referral in 78% of cases
- Provided an educational benefit in 97% of cases



IMPACT – Floating Hospital “Jibon Tari”, Bangladesh



Jibon Tari translates to “Life” and the Jibon Tari floating hospital is known as the Boat of Life.

The population of Bangladesh is 164.7 million, with over 16 million of those people being disabled in some way. Bangladesh has a large network of rivers, running from North to South and East to West and the boat travels throughout the country, offering medical treatment and surgery to marginalised, rural communities. 80% of the Bangladeshi population live in rural communities and have little access to medical treatment.

Since its launch in 1999, more than 400,000 patients have been treated in 26 different locations in Bangladesh. The Jibon Tari is currently undertaking its 54th project in Kaligani, in the district of Gazipur, on the banks of the River Shitalakshya. It will stay here for 12 months performing various surgical procedures (cataracts, club foot, post-polio deformities, cleft lip and loss of hearing). The average cost of an operation is £40.

As with any disability in some countries, there is a social stigma attached. Also, the people affected are unable to work and look after their families.

Through the Christmas Appeal, we are hoping to help fund IMPACT’s 54th project, which will include surgical procedures and training for local health workers so that knowledge can be left behind once the Jibon Tari sets sail for its next destination.

As you will have realised, both of our projects this year centre round the health of people in remote areas. Millions of people simply cannot access medical care because of where they live. This impacts not only on them but on their families. The fact that they cannot get treatment means that they cannot work and support each other financially, thus driving more and more people into poverty.



These two projects are very different but are both crucial to support people’s independence and their ability to live their lives out of poverty. We hope you will be able to support us.

On behalf of the SMOAT Committee, I wish you a joyous and peaceful Christmas and a New Year of hope and happiness.

Barbara Perkins (Chair)

SMOAT Christmas Appeal 2018

I enclose a gift of £ towards SMOAT's work in Zambia and Bangladesh.

Title First Name or initials Surname

Cheques, payable to **SMOAT** should be sent to: SMOAT Treasurer, 12 Ifield Close, Redhill, RH1 6SW

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