

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023



3	<b>FOREWORD</b>	18	<b>NATIONAL PROGRAMMES</b>
4	<b>WORLDWIDE PROJECTS</b>	18	<b>IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMMES</b>
6	<b>INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES</b>	20	<b>OPEN.MED MUNICH AND BERLIN</b>
6	<b>UKRAINE</b>	22	<b>REACH.OUT MUNICH</b>
8	<b>ETHIOPIA</b>	24	<b>POLITICAL AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>
10	<b>SYRIA/TÜRKIYE</b>	24	<b>ADVOCACY</b>
12	<b>PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES</b>	26	<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>
14	<b>YEMEN</b>	28	<b>FUNDRAISING</b>
16	<b>CAMBODIA</b>	28	<b>THANKS TO OUR DONORS</b>
		30	<b>FINANCES</b>
		30	<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>
		36	<b>PROJECTS WITH GERMAN FUNDING</b>
		37	<b>OUR ASSOCIATION</b>
		38	<b>OUR WORK IN NUMBERS</b>
		40	<b>IMPRINT</b>

**Cover image:**

A mother and her child in a shelter in Idlib, northern Syria, where they sought refuge after the earthquake in February 2023.

Photo: © Doctors of the World / DDD



Visit our website  
[www.aerztederwelt.org/jahresbericht](http://www.aerztederwelt.org/jahresbericht)  
for further information  
about our activities in 2023.

# CONTENTS



Chair Doctors of  
the World Germany,  
Dr Peter Schwick

Photo: © AdW



Director Doctors of  
the World Germany,  
François De Keersmaeker

Photo: © Simone Schneider

Dear readers, dear friends, dear supporters of Doctors of the World, even for long-serving humanitarian workers, 2023 was a remarkable year. The world was shaken – in some cases literally – by one crisis after another. Tens of thousands of people died in the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria at the beginning of the year and countless people were made homeless. Some of the victims of this unimaginable disaster were colleagues of ours. Doctors of the World is still helping the affected population cope with the aftermath.

Meanwhile, Ukraine entered a second year of war. You can learn more about how people are dealing with an increasingly uncertain future and why it is so important that we continue to stand by them in this report.

Then, almost at the end of this crisis-ridden year, came the event that will certainly be on everyone's mind for a long time to come: Hamas's brutal attack on Israel and the relentless reaction to it. Our staff in Gaza are among those fearing for their lives ever since. Sadly, not all of them made it through: 2023 was a year of

mourning, for our colleague Maysara Rayyes who died in November under the rubble of a bombed house, and for the countless other civilian victims. Doctors of the World is doing everything it can to provide medical and psychological assistance in the Gaza Strip. As direct witnesses to the tragedy that is unfolding there, we are campaigning vigorously for a ceasefire.

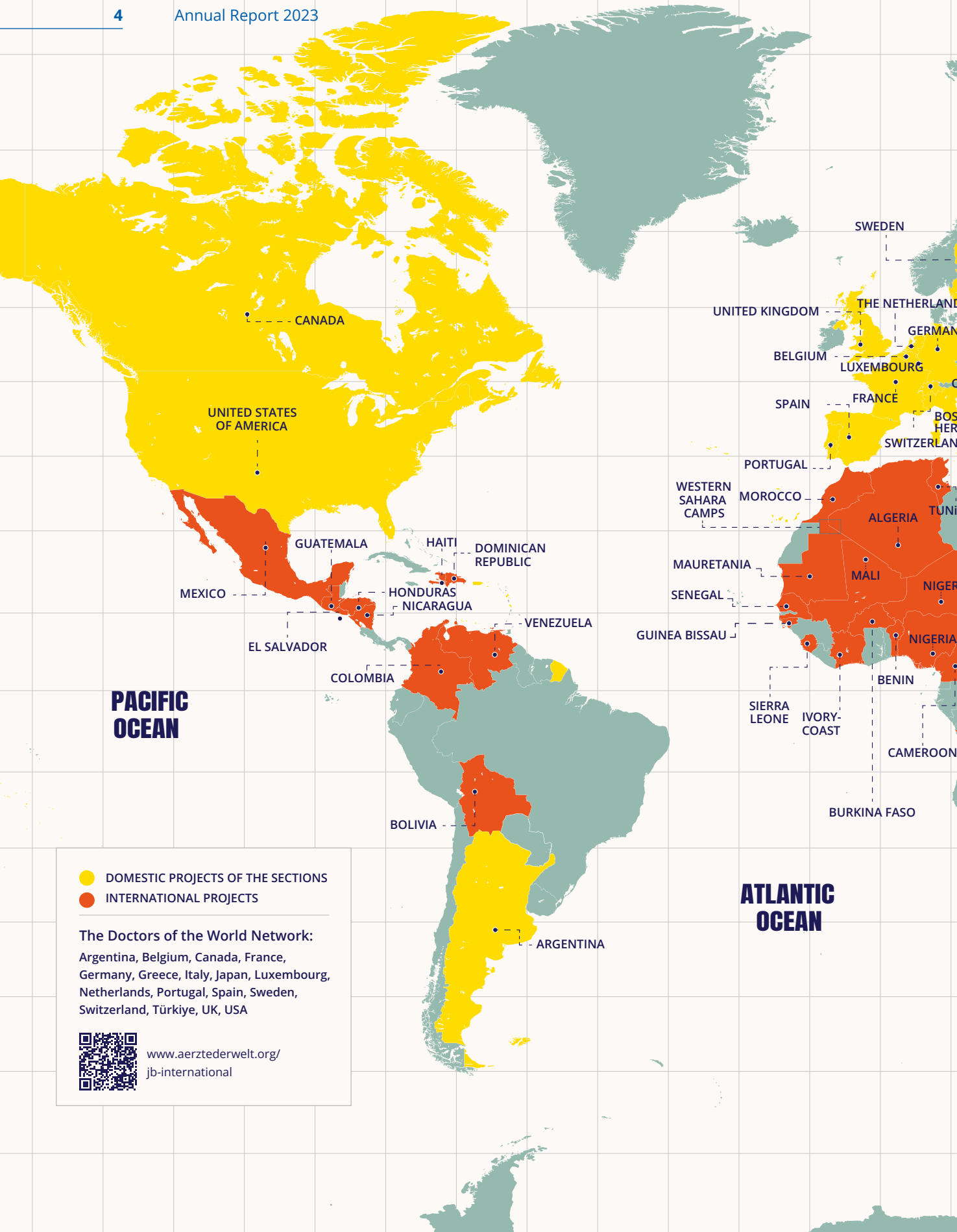
We continue to be active in Germany and have achieved a great deal. Summer saw the opening of our new practice: open.med Berlin-Lichtenberg. And in Munich, Hamburg and Stuttgart, we treated and counselled hundreds of patients unable to access regular medical care due to barriers in the German healthcare system.

Keeping our finger on the pulse and always helping where the need is most urgent is still the aim of Doctors of the World. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our organisation grew considerably in 2023. We were able to expand our international team and carry out numerous additional projects. This has enabled us to achieve more than ever before.

**Our donors and supporters have ensured that we have not given up hope despite all that has happened. For that we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts!**

Dr Peter Schwick and  
François De Keersmaeker

# FOREWORD



**PACIFIC OCEAN**

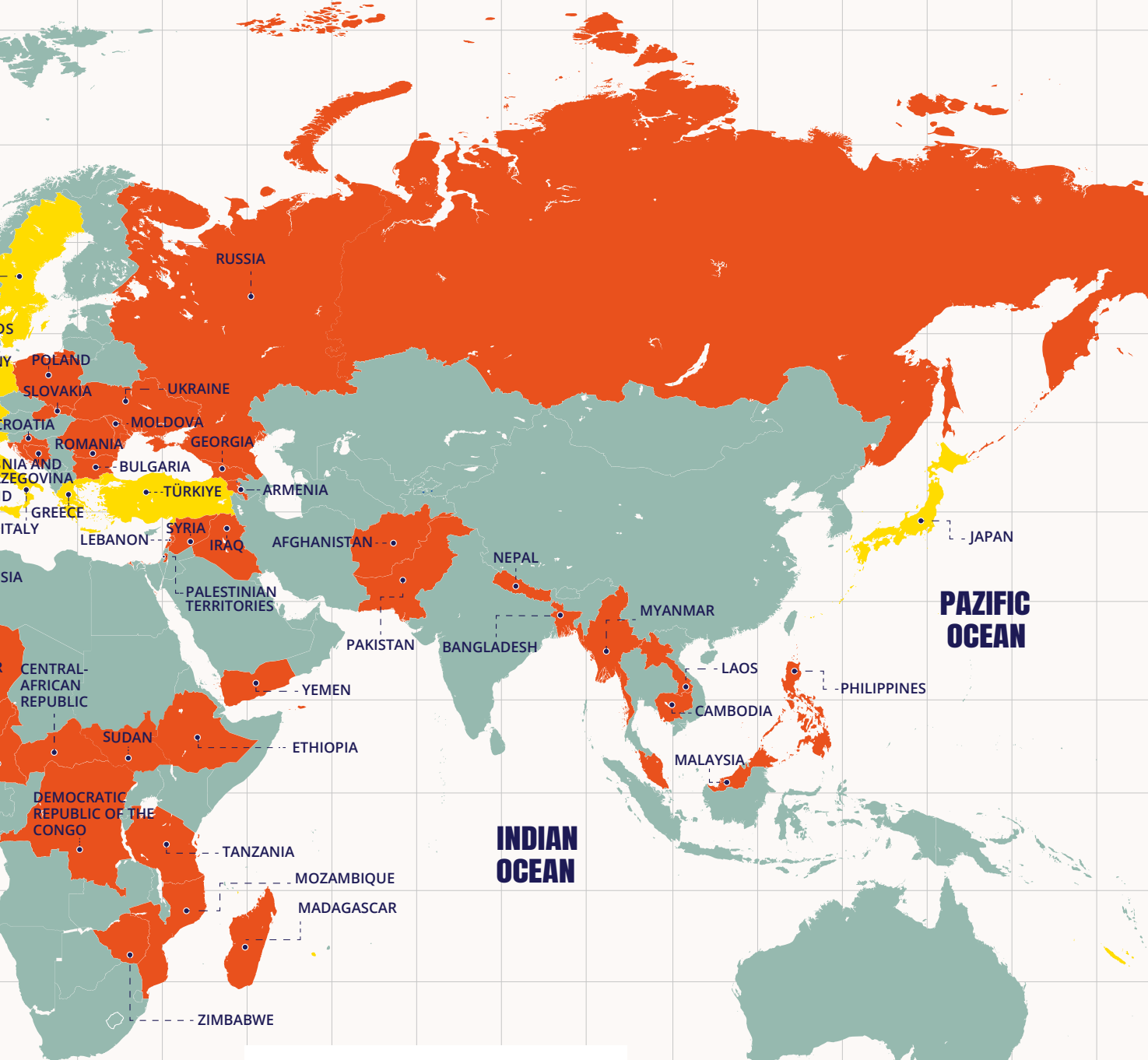
**ATLANTIC OCEAN**

- DOMESTIC PROJECTS OF THE SECTIONS
- INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

**The Doctors of the World Network:**  
 Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France,  
 Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg,  
 Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden,  
 Switzerland, Türkiye, UK, USA



[www.aerztederwelt.org/  
jb-international](http://www.aerztederwelt.org/jb-international)



**THE DOCTORS OF THE  
WORLD NETWORK RUNS  
410 PROJECTS  
IN 75 COUNTRIES.**

## UKRAINE

# IMPRESSIONS FROM AN EMBATTLED COUNTRY

Eighteen months after Russia invaded Ukraine, Doctors of the World Germany press officer Stephanie Kirchner joined our colleagues on the ground.

I set off with the mobile team for the small town of Obukhivka in central Ukraine. The team consists of a midwife and a psychologist who are there to support the general practitioner working in the health centre.

Dr Valeria Romanova paints a dramatic picture of the effects the war is having on the local health system. "When we had power cuts in the winter, people who were particularly dependent on a contin-

uous power supply died – people who needed a ventilator because they had a Covid-related disease, for example."

Patients such as 67-year-old Valentyna Samoilenko are very grateful for the work of Doctors of the World. "I have a disability and have been diagnosed with cancer. My daughter suffers from epilepsy. We get medical help and medication here."

**“DOCTORS OF THE WORLD PROVIDES US WITH A LOT OF SUPPORT.”**

Valentyna Samoilenko,  
patient, 67 years old

### Examples of what we have achieved

- Around 22,000 people treated and counselled in 40,000 medical consultations
- Around 11,800 people provided with psychosocial support
- 140 healthcare facilities and 74 social facilities supported with medical and non-medical supplies

### The main providers of funds

German Federal Foreign Office:  
€ 2,180,000  
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ):  
€ 1,430,000  
ECHO: € 400,000  
Sternstunden e. V.: € 750,000  
Swiss Solidarity: € 619,835  
Our many donors



#### ^ Midwife Olesia Panfilova talking to a patient

Photo: © Doctors of the World

### **Strengthening mental health and a sense of community**

The next day we accompanied a mobile team to the village of Dniprovske. Several women were already waiting for a gynaecological consultation with the midwife. If she is unable to help her patients, she will refer them to a specialist practice in the area. Some have their grandchildren with them. The local kindergarten does not have a shelter, so they are looking after their grandchildren in case there is an air raid while their parents are at work. Although the women have come with gynaecological concerns, it is clear from the conversations how important psychological care is for the people here.

31-year-old Olena Shevtsova has experienced this. She is back in Dniprovske after fleeing to Poland with her two children at the beginning of the war. "The people are angrier, they no longer feel any joy. It's difficult to make friends. The atmosphere is so gloomy that I just don't feel like meeting up with other people."

Doctors of the World offers individual and group psychological sessions. We are also working with a theatre group that specialises in Playback Theatre. As the performers act out the experiences, worries and fears of the audience, a dialogue is generated and the sense of community is strengthened. This helps people process what they have experienced.

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# ETHIOPIA

## LIVING IN EXTREME CONDITIONS

The climate crisis is felt everywhere, but in the hot, dry Somali region of south-eastern Ethiopia, people are feeling its consequences more than most. Doctors of the World Germany consultant Diana Beck reports on a visit of one of our projects and on what global warming means for our work.

On the way to one of our health centres in the Somali region, we pass a warthog, a vast number of goats, and a few camels and donkeys. From Jijiga, the regional capital, we drive for three hours on a tar-macked but pot-holed road. We then continue on a gravel road, on which deep furrows formed at the end of the rainy

season. We make slow progress and take two more hours to reach our destination. We can clearly see the consequences of the last drought: a few bushes still have green leaves, but otherwise everything is withered.

### The effects of the climate crisis are weakening the people

The Somali region, with its hot, dry climate, is one of the regions of Ethiopia most affected by the climate crisis. The rainy season is also changing. When it rains, the dried-out soils are often unable to absorb the sudden mass of water, which leads to flooding. The contaminated water brings infectious diseases such as cholera.

### Examples of what we have achieved

- Care provided in 12 health centres and by two mobile units directly supported by our 75 local and international staff
- 2,700 births attended
- 5,900 mothers given pre-natal care
- Around 84,000 children under the age of 5 tested for malnutrition
- 26,300 children vaccinated against polio
- 145,000 people reached through health-information campaigns

### The main providers of funds

German Federal Foreign Office:  
 € 2,404,829  
 ECHO: € 308,635  
 Sternstunden e. V.: € 150,000  
 Stiftung Zwei Freunde: € 20,000  
 Our many donors





^ Midwife Sarah Ibrahim with a patient in a health centre in Ethiopia

Photo: © Doctors of the World

### **Almost a quarter of the children are undernourished**

Our destination is a health centre in a small village. It has a main street, well-kept houses, a mosque, a primary school and a comprehensive school. There is enough meat, even camel milk, but for vegetables you have to drive to a town nearby, which has its consequences, especially for our young patients. The Somali region has one of the highest rates of undernourishment in infants and children, with about 23% affected. We are helping to reduce the number of undernourished children by carrying out pre- and post-natal medical tests, providing special foods for newborns, and conducting regular examinations.

### **The long distances are a medical challenge**

There is something else that becomes very apparent during our trip: the distances. The Somali region is about three times the size of Austria. There are only two health centres in a *woreda* (an administrative district) for 90,000 people, and the journey to them is often long and arduous. There are many home births. Expectant mothers do not always manage to get to the health centres in time to give birth, either for financial or logistical reasons, or because they are not confident that they will be treated well there. In this respect, the education provided by our teams and trained staff in the community is particularly important.

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# SYRIA / TÜRKIYE

## GIVING BACK SECURITY

A year is nowhere near enough time to cope with the unimaginable consequences of the earthquakes that struck Syria and Türkiye on 6 February 2023. Tens of thousands of people died, were injured or lost their homes. Our teams on both sides of the border not only cared for physical wounds, but also mental trauma. In the Turkish province of Hatay, there was a particular focus on caring for and protecting women and children.

Doctors of the World has been working in the Türkiye-Syria border region for over ten years. This made it possible to provide much-needed assistance immediately after the devastating earthquakes. Since then, the acute emergency relief has evolved into a more comprehensive service for those affected, and a good year later, around 250 staff members are still providing people with medical and psychological care. We are focusing particularly on women and children, because

### Examples of what we have achieved

In the Aleppo, Idlib and Hama governorates of north-west Syria, in eleven health centres and in two community centres:

- Basic medical care is offered.
- In over 245,000 consultations, around 165,000 people affected by the earthquake are receiving medical and psychological care.
- Over 30,000 emergency kits have been distributed in the governorates of Aleppo, Idlib and Hama.

In Türkiye:

- Over 26,500 people have been counselled and treated in around 33,500 consultations.
- Psychological group sessions with 7,100 participants, and individual psychological sessions with over 600 people

In Syria and Türkiye:

- Over 425,300 medical treatments provided for over 200,000 people via mobile services, health stations and community centres,
- Hygiene and childbirth kits distributed among the population affected by the earthquake

### The main providers of funds

German Federal Foreign Office:

€ 6,252,550

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development:

€ 760,000

R+V Foundation: € 50,000

Sternstunden e.V.: € 250,000

Our many donors

they are the ones who suffer most from the consequences of disasters. Among those affected by the earthquake were thousands of pregnant women who had suddenly become homeless. It is almost always the women who have to look after their families. It is almost impossible for them to travel long distances to access medical, psychological or social services.

Doctors of the World teams in the southern Turkish province of Hatay have therefore set up spaces specifically for women. These spaces are easily accessible and free of charge, and women can take their children along with them. "Here they can access a wide range of services, including psychological support, medical examinations and health services relating to sexuality, pregnancy and childbirth. The women have access to showers and washing

facilities. They are protected from assault. This allows them to create a private space where they feel at ease and can use our services", said Cuma Ali Özbek, head of the emergency assistance department of Doctors of the World in Hatay.

**“Doctors of the World has given us the strength to maintain our hope in the midst of this disaster.”**

Yeşim Kapi from Hatay

Photo: © Huseyin Aldemir

▼ The family of Yeşim Kapi (third from left) survived the earthquake in the Turkish province of Hatay and is being supported by the Doctors of the World team.

Photo: © Huseyin Aldemir



# PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

## VOICES FROM GAZA

The already tense situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank escalated after Hamas's brutal attack and Israel's relentless reaction. Doctors of the World staff were now also fighting for survival. Read some of their accounts here.

### **Dr Murad Abed, staff member of Doctors of the World:**

A few days ago, I lost my house in an Israeli air strike. Fortunately, a few hours earlier I'd been able to escape to another house nearby with my family. That night

was terrible. I could hear the noise of the bombs and ambulances, it was burning everywhere. My daughter cried all night. She asked me what was going on. What's happening to our house? What will happen to my bird? I tried to reassure her, to say that everything was fine, we were safe and that she needn't be afraid. But the noise of the planes and the large-scale destruction really worried me. It was a bad night. The next morning, I went to our square in the hope of finding my house. And I found it among many

### Examples of what we have achieved

Doctors of the World has been providing medical and psychological assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since 1995.

#### Gaza

- 1,369 people provided with support on domestic violence, child protection and mental health issues

### The main providers of funds

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development:

€2,250,000

Our many donors

#### West Bank:

- 5,626 people affected by violence at the hands of radical settlers or the military, as well as people whose homes have been demolished by order of the Israeli authorities, have been provided with psychosocial first aid
- Guidelines on the prevention of gender-based violence and support for those affected have been developed together with the German Federal Ministry of Health and established as part of primary healthcare provision



^ In a mobile phone video, Doctors of the World staff member Dr Murad Abed reports from Gaza about his family's struggle to survive.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

destroyed houses and roads and fires. I could smell death everywhere. Fortunately, we found my daughter's bird alive. But all our mementoes are gone. They were wiped out in the attack.

**Sally Saleh, Doctors of the World coordinator in the Gaza Strip:**

I am 31 years old and have already been through six major attacks, several military escalations and ground offensives. But this is the worst kind of war imaginable. Despite the terrible attacks I've already been through, I never thought I'd lose my home.



^ Doctors of the World coordinator Sally Saleh calls on the international community to help the people of Gaza.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

But I've lost my house. I've lost many friends. I've lost my neighbours. I've lost my memories. I've lost my dreams. And, last but not least, I've lost the concept of homeland. My neighbourhood in Gaza City has completely disappeared. So far, I've had to be evacuated three times. I'm alive today, but I don't know what will happen a second from now, a minute from now. Please support the people of Gaza.

## YEMEN

### “A FORGOTTEN COUNTRY”

For almost ten years, the people of Yemen have been suffering in a civil war with international involvement. Majed Taleb, Deputy Programme Director of Doctors of the World in Yemen, describes how, in the most difficult of conditions, Doctors of the World is improving medical care.

#### Can you tell us what the healthcare priorities of Doctors of the World are in Yemen?

Doctors of the World has been working in Yemen since 2007, but we started to scale up our medical assistance in 2015 because of the war. Our focus is on primary healthcare for the population with a particular emphasis on particular emphasis

on women's health and mental health. There are currently around 4.5 million internally displaced persons in the country, 80% of whom are women. Through the services we offer, we can reach about 640,000 people in the immediate vicinity of the supported health centres – another 2.9 million people benefit indirectly from the care we provide.

#### What are your biggest challenges at the moment?

Yemen is a forgotten country. Needs are constantly increasing, but the money coming into the country is decreasing. For security reasons, access to certain regions is also very difficult.

#### Examples of what we have achieved

- 306,634 medical consultations in 20 health facilities (including hospitals) in 14 districts
- 1,743 children under the age of 5 treated for malnutrition, 90 % of whom have recovered and been discharged
- 123,194 counselling sessions on sexual and reproductive healthcare conducted (including 5,025 births)
- 3,710 people (77 % women) treated for mental health issues and given psychosocial support
- Intensive lobbying at all levels of government on mental health, protective measures and access to medical care

#### The main providers of funds

German Federal Foreign Office:  
 € 3,133,333  
 Sternstunden e. V.: € 160,000  
 Our many donors



### **What motivates you most about your work?**

We are also creating permanent structures. For example, we have just handed over a functioning hospital – which is about two hours away from the Yemeni capital Sanaa – to the state government. Four years ago, there was practically nothing left. The building was in a bad state, and there were no medical staff. We set up individual departments, re-appointed medical specialists and regularly organised advanced training courses. Patients are now being treated there again.

~ In Yemen, Doctors of the World focuses on the prevention of malnutrition in children.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

Every day we see how incredibly important our work is. I remember one story in particular. With our help, a pregnant woman reached a health centre. She was close to death and didn't even know she was pregnant with twins. So we had her taken to the nearest hospital at the expense of Doctors of the World. Today, mother and both children are doing well!

## CAMBODIA

# FAREWELL TO PHNOM PENH

After more than 20 years, Doctors of the World's "Operation Smile" project in Cambodia has come to an end. Together with local colleagues, our teams have achieved a great deal. Some impressions of the farewell visit.

On an early November morning, a special tour group checks in at Munich Airport: a team of maxillofacial surgeons, plastic surgeons, anaesthetists and nurses. In their luggage they have several boxes of

surgical equipment bearing the logo of Doctors of the World. Their destination: the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh.

The volunteer team is going to Phnom Penh to operate on children with congenital malformations or facial tumours, and the victims of burns and accidents.

The team will also train local colleagues in what is its last assignment for the Doctors of the World project "Operation Smile". The local medical doctors are now highly trained, and cleft-lip and palate surgery have become standard procedures. Back in 2017, Doctors of the World shifted the focus of the project to tumour surgery and other complex procedures. Local specialists are now able to carry out these procedures themselves, meaning that Doctors of the World will be able to help where our help is needed more urgently in the future.

### Examples of what we have achieved in those 20 years or so

- More than 2,500 operations carried out
- Colleagues trained and given advanced training, and supplied with medical equipment
- Support for a department set up at the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital in Phnom Penh
- Local staff helped to organise their own missions in more remote regions
- Helped ensure that cleft-lip and palate surgery have become standard procedures

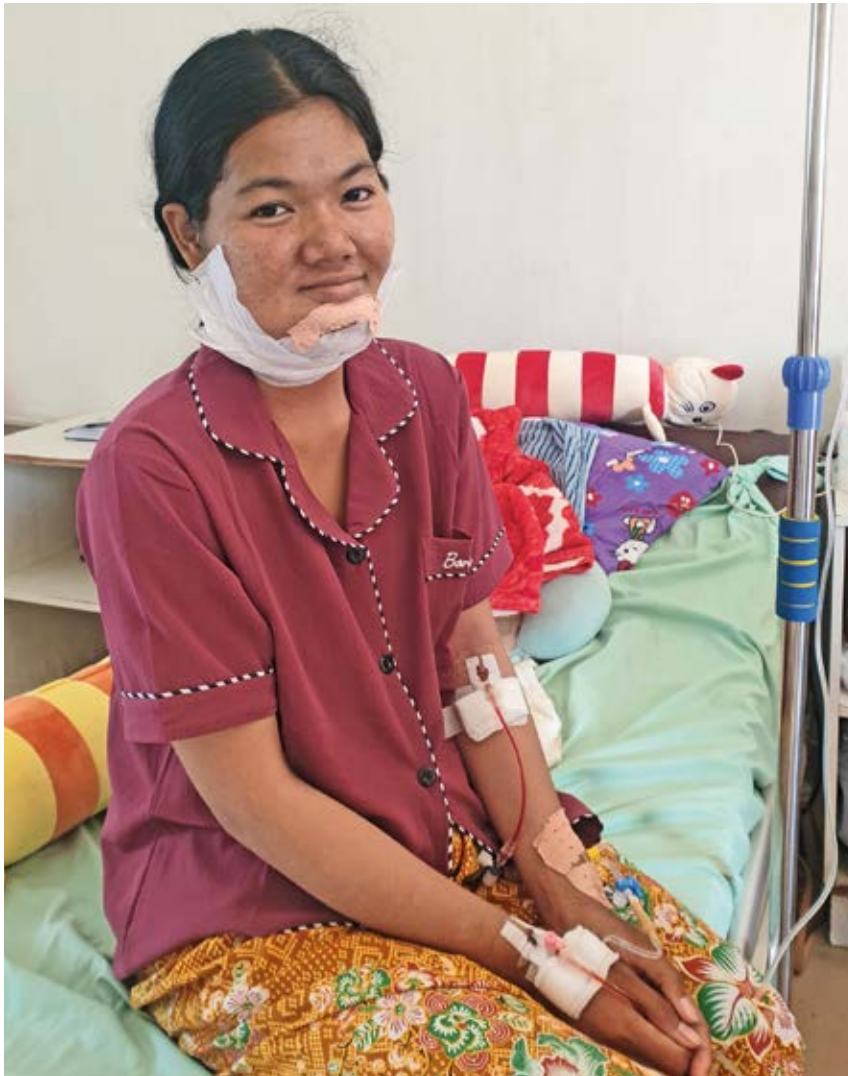
### The main providers of funds in 2023

Our many donors

### Many patients have been on a difficult journey

The team led by Prof. Tobias Ettl from the University Hospital Regensburg has one final marathon operating session to go. On the day they arrive, 30 patients turn up. People have come from all over the country – many have had a difficult journey. They have learnt about the mission through appeals on the radio and television or by word of mouth. Our Cambodian partner organisation, Smile Cambodia, helps families with transport, food and accommodation if necessary.





◀ Our surgical team in Cambodia recently focused on treating face and neck tumours.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

“We don’t see cases like these in Germany,” said Prof. Pit Voss, a specialist in oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University Hospital Freiburg. “On the one hand, there are other diseases, genetic diseases. On the other, these diseases are detected and treated earlier in our country.”

On Monday, when an eight-hour operation begins, everyone is raring to go. A girl is having her previously removed jaw replaced with a bone from her hip. This is not an everyday operation, even for the German surgeons. The team will perform eleven operations during the week.

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## GERMANY

# IMPACT OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMMES: COMMITTED TO QUALITY

The national programmes of Doctors of the World Germany are subject to stringent quality standards, and the impact of our work is systematically assessed. Public Health officer Gianni Varnaccia, and Head of National Programmes Christian Stegmüller explain what this means in practice.

**Christian Stegmüller:** Doctors of the World treats people who have little or no access to medical care. For our country, we estimate that several hundred thousand people are in this situation, despite the fact that Germany is legally obliged to provide all people with access to medical care.

**Gianni Varnaccia:** In order to measure the day-to-day impact of our medical practices and our treatment bus, we regularly conduct patient satisfaction surveys. Based on these surveys, we have established psychiatric and psychological consultation sessions in Munich, for example. Berlin is currently looking into whether or not such sessions can be offered there in the future.

**Christian Stegmüller:** We have also signed up to the standards of *Kooperation für Transparenz und Qualität im Gesundheitswesen* [Cooperation for Transparency and Quality in Healthcare (KTQ)], a leading quality-management system for healthcare in Germany. This system requires regular self-assessment in six areas: patient orientation, staff orientation, security and risk management, information and communication, management, and quality management. This means that we foster an active 'error culture' in our projects. In a standardised manner, we report on what has not worked and see what we can do to avoid these weaknesses: for example, we are currently standardising the process for social counselling at our various locations and clarifying how to deal with difficult situations.

**“Through political work and medical assistance, Doctors of the World is committed to ensuring that everyone everywhere can exercise their right to health.”**

Christian Stegmüller,  
Head of National Programmes,  
Doctors of the World Germany

# NATIONAL



[www.aerztderwelt.org/jb-inland](http://www.aerztderwelt.org/jb-inland)



^ Patient satisfaction is the top priority for our open.med teams.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

For example, when relatives assume the role of interpreter during medical treatment, there is always a risk that translation errors will lead to potential errors with the treatment.

**Gianni Varnaccia:** In order to achieve a sustainable impact and provide direct healthcare to people who have no health insurance, however, the underlying social and political fabric also needs to change. For our lobbying work, we publish our health report every year. As the basis for this, we collect anonymised data about our patients and analyse why they come to us, what complaints they have, and what their personal circumstances are.

This is a veritable treasure trove of data that needs to be mined, because the people who come to us simply do not appear in official statistics. We make sure that our data are as meaningful as possible and that the insights gained are easy to understand.

**Christian Stegmüller:** We are planning a study with patients who have been reintroduced into the health insurance system. In addition to the short- and medium-term effects that we are already measuring, we would also like to record the long-term effects. Specifically, what we want to know is: how is someone we reintegrated into the health insurance system three years ago doing today?

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## GERMANY

### EXCLUDED, BUT NOT ALONE



People who cannot go to a regular doctor's surgery can get help at the drop-in centres and treatment buses run by Doctors of the World Germany. We opened a new one at the beginning of June: open.med Berlin-Lichtenberg.

Joseph Moussa (not his real name) has pulled his cap down low. He keeps running his hands over his face. "I've not been well for the past three months. I've lost my appetite and can't sleep," he begins in French. Richard Dargie, a volun-

teer general practitioner, listens to the interpreter who is translating via video conference.

This scene takes place in the new open.med centre that opened in the summer

Photo: © Max Avdeev

of 2023 in Berlin-Lichtenberg. It is a service which should not actually be needed in Germany, because the team treats and counsels people who have no – or not enough – insurance, or who cannot go to a regular medical practice due to other barriers. This is despite the fact that Germany has committed itself, in various national and international treaties, to providing medical care for all people in the country. At open.med, patients receive the medical and psychological help they need, and our staff help them (re)join the health insurance system.

Joseph Moussa, who comes from a central African country and lives in accommodation for asylum seekers, lacks the information he needs to seek treatment

in a regular practice. He is also frightened of being deported. At open.med he gets help unbureaucratically and can maintain complete anonymity. And he urgently needs this help, because not only has the doctor diagnosed gastro-intestinal issues and a skin infection, but he also discovers in conversation that Joseph is feeling severely suicidal. With the patient's consent, our open.med staff immediately arrange for him to be admitted to a psychiatric hospital.

### **Many Germans do not have any health insurance cover**

There are also German citizens who depend on the support provided by Doctors of the World Germany. One reason for this may be that they can no longer afford to pay their private health insurance premiums.

### **Examples of what we have achieved**

- **In our centres and treatment buses, 2,197 patients have been treated and counselled in 7,110 consultations.**

### **The main providers of funds**

Deutsche Fernsehlotterie  
[German TV Lottery]: **€ 50,778**  
Deutsche Postcodelotterie  
[German Postcode Lottery]: **€ 99,900**  
State capital Munich: **€ 82,826**  
SDK STIFTUNG [SDK Foundation]:  
**€ 12,000**  
Stiftung Antenne Bayern hilft  
[Bavaria Antenna Foundations helps]:  
**€ 30,000**  
Stiftung Zwei Freunde  
[Two Friends Foundation]: **€ 6,000**  
Our many donors

Homeless people all too often face barriers when they need medical care. One such person is Elif Demir (not her real name). She is almost blind because her diabetes was not treated for a long time. In Doctors of the World Germany's mobile clinic in Munich, she gets medical help. The bus goes to places where many people find themselves in difficult circumstances, such as emergency shelters for homeless people or the main railway stations. Elif Demir appreciates the support.

**“I don't feel alone.  
I'm so glad that these  
services exist.”**

Elif Demir,  
a patient at open.med Munich

## GERMANY

# EMPOWERING REFUGEES

Women, men and children in German accommodation centres for refugees not only suffer from poor living conditions, but also from a lack of information. In the so-called Ankerzentren, Doctors of the World Germany offers workshops on health and other topics of concern to asylum seekers in this difficult situation.

“What do I do if I get ill? What are my rights? Where can I get help if I have experienced violence?” Many people in Bavarian accommodation centres for asylum seekers do not have the answers to these vital questions. By offering workshops on a variety of topics, we at Doctors of the World Germany provide them with the support they need to find their bearings and help themselves. For this purpose, we also train so-called multipliers. These are people who live or used to live in refugee accommodation centres and pass on their knowledge to other residents.

### **Vulnerable to attack**

The following example of a client of Doctors of the World Germany illustrates how terrible the situations are that many find themselves in. At the age of 14, the woman was sold to a 65-year-old man in her home country in Africa. She later became a victim of human trafficking and forced prostitution in Europe. She was raped countless times and suffered other serious forms of violence. The woman is severely traumatised and chronically ill with hepatitis. Nevertheless, from one day to the next, without warning, she was moved from the Fürstenfeldbruck “Ankerzentrum” to a gym that had temporarily been converted into a refugee shelter. Here, there was a danger that our client would be subject to further attacks and be traumatised again. Furthermore, the gym was so cold that women had to sleep in thick winter coats. Kettles for making tea or filling hot-water bottles were forbidden. Only one hot meal per day was served and it was not possible to prepare any-

**A key aspect of Doctors of the World Germany’s reach.out project is to prevent violence against women to provide support for survivors.**



thing else to eat. It was only with the extensive support of the Doctors of the World Germany team that the woman could be transferred to another accommodation and be given general medical and psychotherapeutic treatment.

Doctors of the World Germany also publicly advocates for the rights of women in asylum centres. To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, for example, we issued a press release and reported on our experiences via social media to call for better protection of women in asylum centres.

~ Doctors of the World  
Germany supports refugees  
in one-to-one counselling  
session, for example.

Photo: © Doctors of the World

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### Examples of what we have achieved

- 153 people given advice and support in 26 workshops and 115 one-to-one counselling sessions
- 8 multipliers trained in 12 face-to-face and 9 online training courses
- These multipliers have supported clients on 3,246 occasions

### The main providers of funds

Foundation Deutsches Hilfswerk € 50,987  
Our many donors

## ADVOCACY

### EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL!

Just like everyone else, refugees have the right to healthcare. German law, however, severely restricts this right. Last year, Doctors of the World Germany did everything in its power to fight this injustice. But there is still a lot to do.

“Every person on earth deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.” What Doctors of the World Germany staff member Ifunanya Concilia Dimaku says here sounds obvious. When it comes to the fundamental right to healthcare, however, the reality for many people is different. Dimaku herself experienced this when she had to apply for asylum in Germany.

Refugees are excluded from many essential treatments. The Asylum Seekers Benefits Act, which has now been in force for just over 30 years, is largely to blame for this. Doctors of the World Germany teams see the serious consequences of people being denied social and medical services every day in their practices for patients who fall through the cracks of the regular healthcare system.

To mark this sad anniversary in 2023, we stepped up our opposition to the discriminatory law and, together with over 200 civil-society organisations and associations, called for it to be repealed.

#### **Working together for the human right to health**

The Federal Constitutional Court has expressly emphasised that human dignity cannot be relativised for migration policy purposes. The government coalition declaring in its 2021 agreement to revise the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act initially gave hope.

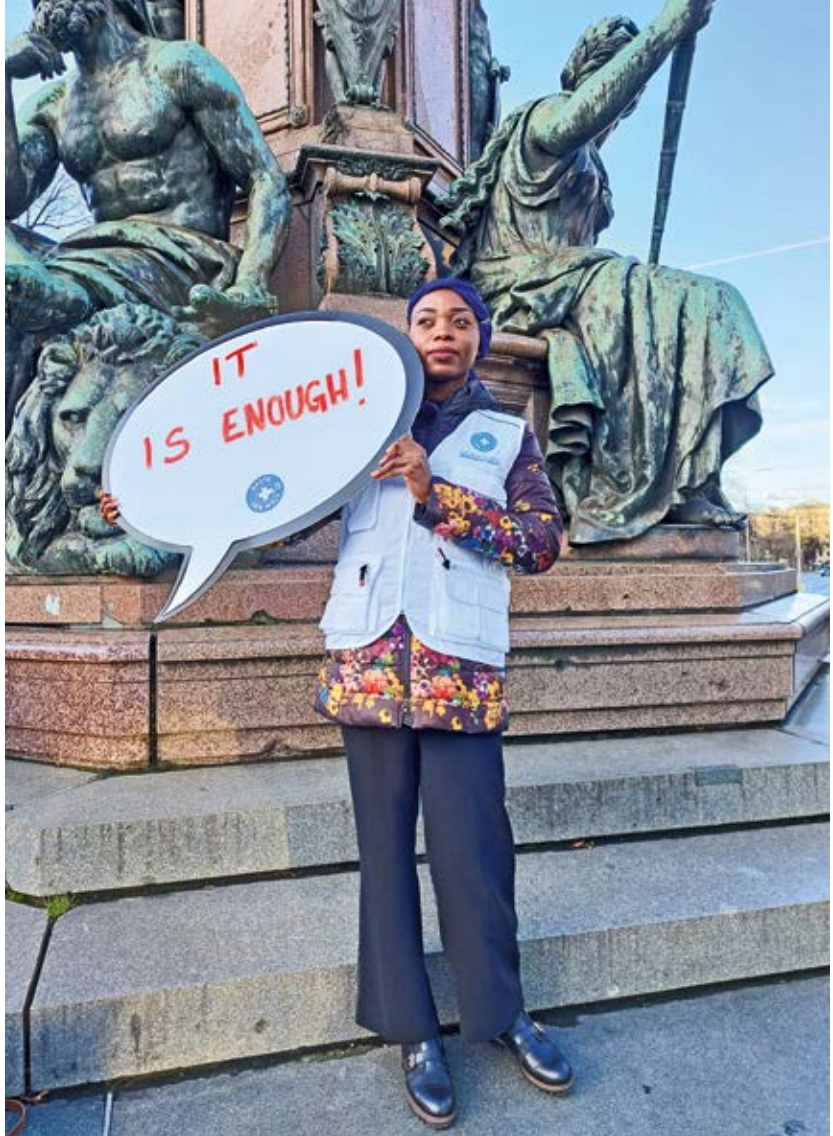
In order to jointly affirm that this discriminatory legislation must be repealed, Doctors of the World Germany, together with the BafF (the umbrella organisation of psychosocial centres in Germany) and the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, organised a conference entitled ‘30 Years Asylum Compromise – 30 Years of Discrimination by Law.

# POLITICAL AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



› Our staff member Ifunanya Concilia Dimaku at a protest event in Munich

Photo: © Doctors of the World



The government listened to us: we organised a workshop on healthcare for refugees at the Forum Against Racism in the Federal Chancellery. For the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, we wrote a report pointing out the unequal treatment under the law and presented it to the Federal Ministry of Justice. The UN commission in charge subsequently expressly reprehended the German Asylum Seekers Benefits Act.

In an open letter, supported by over 50 organisations and associations, and in talks with political decision-makers, we

appealed to the Federal Government not to give in to pressure from the right. Unfortunately, this was all in vain.

Instead of fulfilling its promise in the Coalition Agreement, the federal government has decided to tighten the rules. Asylum seekers will now receive benefits under the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act, i.e. payments that are below the level of regular social benefits, for 36 months instead of the previous 18 months.

We shall continue to campaign to ensure that everyone in Germany can exercise their fundamental right to healthcare.

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# IMPACTING PUBLIC DISCOURSE SPEAKING OUT FOR THE HUMAN RIGHT TO HEALTH

The challenges of our time demand plain speaking. Doctors of the World Germany clearly states its political positions in public, including on social media. A few examples from 2023.

## Against populism

CDU party leader Friedrich Merz apparently spread targeted disinformation when he claimed in a TV talk show that asylum seekers are given preferential treatment when it comes to dental care. We helped set the record straight about this in interviews with journalists and posts on social media. Because the truth is: refugees clearly find it much more difficult than most German citizens to access healthcare services, including dental care.

## Award-winning and critical

Open.med Munich, our practice for people who do not have adequate health insurance cover, was awarded the Berliner Gesundheitspreis [Berlin Health Prize] in 2023. This was well-deserved recognition for our volunteer and full-time staff who tirelessly for their patients' right to healthcare. Nevertheless, our team wishes that a service such as open.med did not have to exist and that everyone could access the medical services they need. And our colleagues continuously advocates this in public.



Graphics: © Doctors of the World



Photo: © Stefan Melchior



[www.aerztederwelt.org/jb-wirken](http://www.aerztederwelt.org/jb-wirken)

### The war in Gaza

Israel's reaction to Hamas's attack has plunged the Gaza Strip into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The vast majority of the victims are civilians – many of them children. Despite the desperate situation that also put the lives of our staff in danger, we provided people with humanitarian aid as best we could. In numerous public statements, and together with other civil-society organisations, we called upon the belligerents to respect international humanitarian law.



Photo: © Doctors of the World

### Having control of your own body

Abortion is a criminal offence in many countries. This and other barriers make it extremely difficult to access safe abortions – often with dramatic consequences for those concerned. For us, it is very clear: abortion is an important part of primary medical care and therefore a human right!



Graphics: © Doctors of the World

## YOUR SUPPORT GIVES HOPE

Without the generous support of our donors, we would not be able to help anyone. This is particularly true when we are faced with extreme challenges brought by natural disasters such as the earthquakes in Morocco and the Syria-Türkiye border area.

The solidarity of our donors has therefore inspired us all the more. This commitment motivates us and means that our patients can continue to receive the care they so desperately need. Three of our donors tell us why this support is important to them.

*Irene Sarre*

“Whether it’s an earthquake somewhere in the world, or war, displacement, hunger and despair, I’m always reminded how well we’re doing here in safe Germany. Yes, there are people here who are having a hard time. That makes it all the more important that an organisation like Doctors of the World also takes care of these people. Just like those who need help in Syria, Türkiye and the Gaza Strip for example. Thank you for your work, which I’m very happy to support.”

---



Photo: © Private

*Isabel Andersson*

“Our world has frequently been overshadowed by bad news over the past year. I didn’t want to just sit back and watch, so I decided to become a permanent donor. I’d like to set an example and bring about concrete change. People have a right to medical and psychological care, and Doctors of the World is committed to providing it. It feels right to be part of something that does good.”

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[www.aerztederwelt.org/ihre-hilfe](http://www.aerztederwelt.org/ihre-hilfe)

# DONATE



Photo: © Private

*Stephan Weber,*  
*Senior Consultant at NEOMATIC AG*  
"In the specific case of Ukraine, I feel that solidarity is very important, and I think that safe, prosperous countries have a responsibility towards those who are suffering in unimaginable conditions in war zones. Every contribution, no matter how small, can make a difference to the lives of those affected by conflict. I therefore think that it's important to provide support here, especially in these challenging times for Ukraine.

Of course, this doesn't just apply to Ukraine, but also to other countries suffering from war or other disasters. I think the diversity of the support provided by Doctors of the World is truly fantastic."

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Photo: © Doctors of the World

*Anna Whaley,*  
*Head of Fundraising*  
"Last year, our donors showed confidence and solidarity in the midst of global challenges. Their contribution has made it possible to provide direct support for people in need in the earthquake region of Türkiye/Syria, in Morocco, Gaza and many other regions around the world. Thanks to their tireless help and trust, we've been able to make a real difference together.

On behalf of the entire team, I would therefore like to express my deepest thanks to our dedicated donors."

---

# FINANCIAL REPORT

Thanks to our long-standing partnerships with the Federal Foreign Office, Sternstunden e.V. and the BMZ, we have been able to continue providing medical aid in our project countries: Ethiopia, Yemen, Nigeria, Ukraine and the Central African Republic. Furthermore, thanks to the support of our institutional donors, we have been able to pursue our commitment to alleviating the plight of people in countries with long-term crises, such as Afghanistan, Palestine and Syria.

Despite the continued good support of our donors, unrestricted donations declined slightly in 2023 to around 3.16 million euros (from around 3.2 million euros the previous year). With regard to donations for specific purposes, there was substantial income for Yemen, Palestine, Greece and Türkiye/Syria (emergency aid after the earthquakes). These donations were made available to the international network of Doctors of the World for emergency and crisis aid. Furthermore, there was a high level of donations for our projects in Ethiopia and Ukraine.

The assets side of the balance sheet is essentially characterised by liquid funds or current assets in the amount of EUR 9,020k so that current payment obligations can be met. Fixed assets almost doubled on the previous year and now stand at EUR 270 k.

The liabilities side includes free reserves of EUR 2,673 k – the same as the previous year. The equity ratio is approximately 30%. Another significant liability item is the provision for the use of donations in the amount of EUR 6,136k. These are mainly unused donations for specific projects in Ethiopia, Cambodia and Ukraine, as well as for domestic projects or projects within the international network for Greece, Yemen and Syria among others.

In 2023, Doctors of the World Germany had a total income of EUR 35,041 k (previous year: EUR 30,268 k). This was offset by total expenditure of EUR 35,038 k (previous year: EUR 29,787k). The net loss for the year thus amounted to EUR -416. Income from general donations fell by 23 % on the previous year, and amounted to EUR 5,568 k. This fall reflects the general normalisation of donations after three successful years. Revenue from public grants amounted to EUR 27,600 k in 2023 (previous year: EUR 20,229 k). These funds mainly came from the Federal Foreign Office and the BMZ.

As part of 2024 budget planning, the Board of Directors has approved a budget with income of EUR 31.8 million and expenditure of EUR 32.5 million. In 2024, an increase in costs for the project and administrative structures of national projects is envisaged, including costs relating



### ^ A Doctors of the World staff member in the Turkish earthquake region

Photo: © Huseyin Aldemir

to the establishment of a new medical drop-in centre in Magdeburg.

The positive economic development of Doctors of the World Germany was also confirmed in 2023, although we remain subject to external factors, especially humanitarian emergency and crisis situations. It has become apparent that the willingness to donate is declining because of the tense economic situation.

#### **Forms of advertising**

In order to achieve greater financial security for our work as an organisation and to continue to expand it over the coming years, we regularly talk to existing and po-

tential new supporters by means of fundraising letters, electronic messaging, on the telephone or in person. Furthermore, our team is an important point of contact for the questions and concerns of people who are interested in Doctors of the World Germany. The donations received by Doctors of the World Germany are independently checked and evaluated by the DZI [German Central Institute for Social Issues]. The annual award of the DZI's seal of approval proves that our organisation handles the donations entrusted to it responsibly and prudently, and communicates objectively and truthfully in its information and advertising material.

→

- After a significant increase in donations in 2022 – triggered by donor solidarity during the escalation of the Ukraine conflict – the earthquake in the Türkiye / Syria border region in particular had an impact on the willingness to donate in 2023. We had 32,454 donors in 2023 (34,102 the previous year), a fall of almost 5 %.

As the recruitment of permanent donors via street advertising was paused in 2023, the number of permanent donors also fell to 8,742 people during this period (9,245 the previous year). The previous years' focus on attracting permanent donors had to be abandoned due to the lack

of external resources and high in-house resource expenditure. In 2023, the recruitment of new donors was therefore expanded through mail drops, personal bequest and major donation fundraising, and corporate giving.

**In 2022, the proportion of total expenditure spent on advertising and administrative expenses stood at**

**9,96 %**



Deutsches  
Zentralinstitut  
für soziale  
Fragen (DZI)

**Zeichen für  
Vertrauen**

## STAFF AND REMUNERATION

The remuneration of Doctors of the World Germany staff is based on an in-house salary model and depends on task content, area of responsibility and relevant professional experience. Pay increases are based on public-sector wage settlements. In 2023, in total, the five highest annual salaries amounted to 347,090.58 euros (director and four full- and part-time executives) with an average full-time salary of 6,049.58 euros. The average salaries at specialist/advisor level or assistant/administrative level are 4,010.17 euros and 3,327.22 euros respectively.

For data protection and labour law reasons, the salaries of individual members of staff cannot be published. The Chair of the Board of Directors receives no remuneration, not even for activities that go beyond the remit of the Board of Directors's general activities. All other members of the Board of Directors also work on a voluntary basis and therefore receive no remuneration.



## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

ASSETS	31.12.2023 in €	31.12.2022 in €	LIABILITIES	31.12.2023 in €	31.12.2022 in €
<b>A. Fixed assets</b>			<b>A. Equity</b>	2,672,239.96	2,672,656.71
I. Tangible fixed assets	270,277.19	144,482.42			
	270,277.19	144,482.42	<b>B. Unspent donations</b>	6,136,551.51	4,086,354.23
<b>B. Current assets</b>					
I. Stocks	4,326.66	499.60	<b>C. Provisions</b>	132,360.00	124,364.70
II. Receivables and other assets	935,322.74	880,825.22	<b>D. Payables</b>		
III. Cash and bank balances	7,797,821.64	6,080,722.44	I. Trade payables	47,221.16	166,161.03
	8,737,471.04	6,962,047.26	II. Other payables	32,027.05	67,881.11
<b>C. Deferrals and accruals</b>				79,248.21	234,042.14
	12,651.45	10,888.10			
	9,020,399.68	7,117,417.78		9,020,399.68	7,117,417.78

**Notes:**

The **balance** sheet represents the association's assets and financial situation as at the 31.12.2023 reporting date.

**Fixed assets** essentially include IT equipment and medical devices.

**Current assets** include, in particular, bank balances and grants from project partners.

**Equity** corresponds to the association's assets, which are intended to serve, inter alia, as reserves and security.

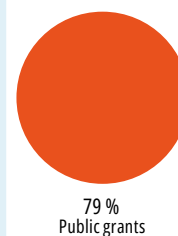
**Unspent donations** refers to commitments for project expenditure.

**Provisions** mainly includes holiday entitlements as well as expenditure for the annual audit.

**Payables** are outstanding payment obligations.

## INCOME 2023

INCOME		2023 in €	Share 2023 in %	2022 in €
<b>1. Donations and grants</b>		<b>34,484,099.84</b>		<b>28,327,093.17</b>
<b>1.1 Donations from individuals, companies and institutions</b>		<b>5,568,204.77</b>		<b>7,210,123.86</b>
Individuals, companies and institutions	5,568,204.77		16 % Donations from individuals, companies and institutions	
<b>1.2 Donations from non-governmental organisations</b>		<b>1,310,000.00</b>		<b>870,500.97</b>
Sternstunden e.V. for Ethiopia	150,000.00			
Sternstunden e.V. for Yemen	160,000.00			
Sternstunden e.V. for Syria	250,000.00			
Sternstunden e.V. for Ukraine	750,000.00		4 % Donations from non-governmental organisations	
<b>1.3 Public grants</b>		<b>27,600,034.57</b>		<b>20,229,136.05</b>
Federal Foreign Office for Ethiopia	2,404,829.00			
Federal Foreign Office for Iraq	103,500.00			
Federal Foreign Office for Yemen	3,133,333.00			
Federal Foreign Office for Nigeria	1,776,500.10			
Federal Foreign Office for Pakistan / Afghanistan	3,000,000.00			
Federal Foreign Office for Syria	6,252,550.10			
Federal Foreign Office for Ukraine	2,180,000.00			
Federal Foreign Office for the Central African Republic	2,890,895.52			
BMZ for Palestine	2,250,000.00			
BMZ for Syria	760,000.00			
BMZ for Ukraine	1,430,000.00			
ECHO for Ethiopia	308,635.42			
ECHO for Ukraine	400,000.00			
SWISS Solidarity for Ukraine	619,834.71			
State Capital Munich for open.med Munich	82,826.12			
State Capital Stuttgart for MedMobil Stuttgart	7,130.70			
<b>1.4 Financial penalties</b>	3,910.00	<b>3,910.00</b>		<b>3,750.00</b>
<b>1.5 Donations in kind</b>		<b>1,950.50</b>		<b>13,582.29</b>
<b>2. Other sales revenue</b>		<b>553,578.58</b>		<b>1,938,154.63</b>
Doctors of the World network	375,888.00			
Bequests	152,856.58			
Membership fees	3,984.00			
Sponsoring	500.00			
Prize money and lectures	20,350.00			
<b>3. Other operating income</b>		<b>424.70</b>		<b>3,017.20</b>
Release of provisions	424.70			
<b>4. Interest income</b>		<b>2,828.84</b>		<b>507.29</b>
<b>Total income</b>		<b>35,040,931.96</b>		<b>30,268,772.29</b>



## EXPENDITURE 2023

	2023 in €	*	2022 in €
<b>1. Programme expenses</b>	<b>29,807,735.27</b>	<b>90.0 %</b>	<b>24,128,009.86</b>
Personnel expenditure	2,944,211.00		2,197,216.51
Material and other expenses (incl. depreciation)	26,863,524.27		21,930,793.35
<b>2. Advertising and public-relations expenses</b>	<b>2,291,166.11</b>	<b>6.9 %</b>	<b>1,751,217.08</b>
Personnel expenditure	740,834.23		653,444.89
Material and other expenses (incl. depreciation)*	1,550,331.88		1,097,772.19
<b>3. Administrative expenses</b>	<b>1,006,922.99</b>	<b>3.1 %</b>	<b>905,865.02</b>
Personnel expenditure	732,671.64		635,535.66
Material and other expenses (incl. depreciation)	274,251.35		270,329.36
<b>4. Allocations to project reserves</b>	<b>1,935,524.34</b>		<b>3,003,003.87</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>35,041,348.71</b>		<b>29,788,095.83</b>

### Notes:

**Income:** Donations and grants consist of project-specific and free donations, donations from non-governmental organisations, grants from public funds, financial penalties and donations in kind.

**Expenditure** is categorised in accordance with the Seal of Approval guidelines of the DZI [German Central Institute for Social Issues]. In this respect, the expenditure has been broken down into the above-mentioned categories.

**Programme expenses** include direct project expenses pursuant to the Articles of Association.

**Administrative expenses** expenses relates to the ongoing costs of maintaining the branch office.

\* Calculation of the proportions and percentages is based on the current DZI concept for advertising and administrative expenses. In this respect, the entry **Allocations to project reserves** is not part of total expenditure and is not included in the calculations.

## AUDITING BY THE STATUTORY AUDITOR

Doctors of the World Germany has voluntarily had its accounts audited pursuant to §§ 317 ff. of the HGB [German Commercial Code]. The audit covered the accounting records and annual financial statement as at 31 December 2023 as prepared in accordance with German commercial law, and the activity report for the 2023 financial year.

The audit concluded that, in all material aspects, the annual financial statements comply with the requirements of German commercial law as applicable to corporate entities, have been compiled in accordance with the German principles of proper accounting, and give a true and fair view of the assets, financial position and profit/loss situation of the association as at 31.12.2023 and for the 2023 financial year. On the whole, the activity report gives a true picture of the position of the association. In

all material aspects, this activity report is consistent with the annual financial statements, complies with German legal requirements and accurately presents the opportunities and risks of future developments.

Various instruments have been established as standard in-house control mechanisms within the organisation. In addition to various guidelines (anti-corruption, procurement and signatory authorization, travel expenses etc.), the four-eyes principle is firmly anchored in the procedures and processes at all levels. In this regard, the high demands on control and transparency are increasingly supported and professionalised by digital systems. Furthermore, an independent ombudsperson is available as an external point of contact for reporting possible instances of misconduct confidentially and anonymously.

# PROJECTS WITH GERMAN FUNDING

**AFRICA**  
€ 6,654,846.89

- Africa (general) € 8,694.63
- Ethiopia € 2,086,451.59
- Nigeria € 1,718,550.40
- Morocco € 35,011.41
- Central African Republic € 2,806,138.86

**EUROPE**  
€ 6,114,356.01

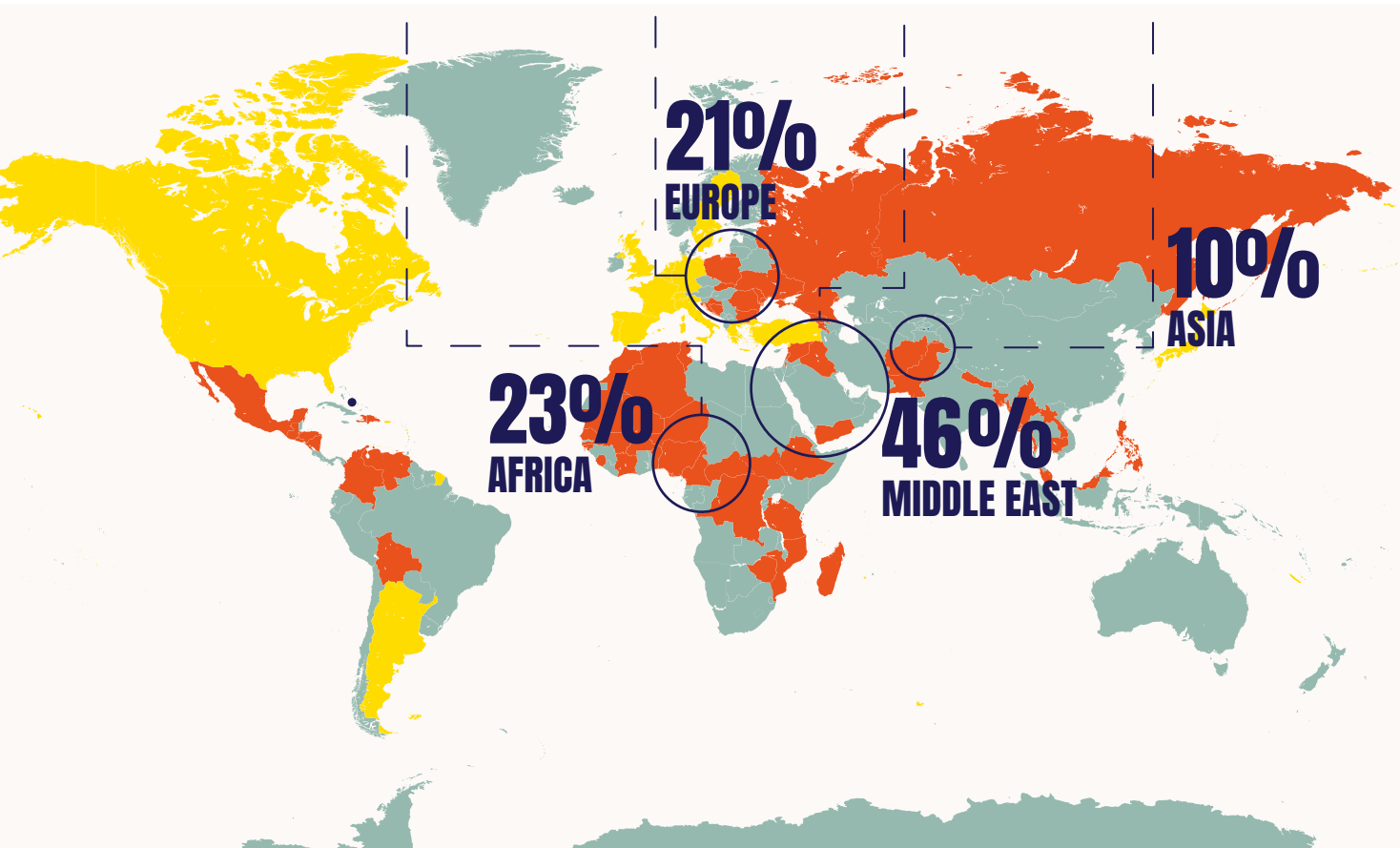
- Germany € 1,099,604.97
- Greece € 87,303.83
- Italy € 50,000.00
- Ukraine € 4,877,447.21

**MIDDLE EAST**  
€ 13,313,797.85

- Iraq € 100,194.50
- Yemen € 3,071,034.27
- Palestine € 2,293,428.26
- Syria € 6,941,009.00
- Türkiye / Syria € 908,131.82

**ASIA**  
€ 2,961,780.42

- Afghanistan / Pakistan € 2,919,572.57
- Cambodia € 42,207.85



## THE ASSOCIATION DOCTORS OF THE WORLD GERMANY

The General Assembly is the supreme controlling body of Doctors of the World Germany.

The General Assembly was held as a video conference and in person on 23 June 2023. 18 members of the association were represented by voting rights. At the time of the General Assembly, 85 members were eligible to vote. The actions of the Board of Directors were approved, and the 2022 financial statements were confirmed unanimously and with no abstentions. The external auditor, Mr Köhl, drew a favourable conclusion for the association: the annual results are positive and the association is in a sound financial position.

Dr Peter Schwick shared his impressions of his project trip to Ethiopia. He was very impressed by the work of the team on site. Günter Fröschl also reported on his deployment to Syria and Türkiye shortly after the earthquake in spring 2023. As a doctor, he supported the Turkish team of Doctors of the World for several weeks.

### Volunteer Members of the Board of Directors

Dr Peter Schwick (Chair), Thomas Bader, Günter Fröschl, Peter Frank, Prof. Heinz-Jochen Zenker, Sybil Schulz (re-elected), Birgit Spiewok (re-elected). In accordance with the articles of association, the Volunteer Board is responsible for the day-to-day business of the association and oversees its proper implementation.

### Volunteer Members of the Special Supervisory Body (BAO)

(elected by the General Assembly)  
Stefanie Ziegler, Otto Neuer, Axel Ebert.

The BAO's tasks include advising and overseeing the Board of Directors on matters relating to the management of the association and its strategic direction, compliance with the annual budget, and the remuneration and expenses allowances of members of the executive body.

### Mitgliedschaften

- VENRO (Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs)
- Q!SH (Qualitäts-initiative Straßen- und Haustürwerbung e.V [Quality Initiative for Street and Doorstep Advertising])
- Nord-Süd-Forum

## THE INTERNATIONAL DOCTORS OF THE WORLD NETWORK

Ärzte der Welt is the German section of the humanitarian organisation Doctors of the World/Doctors of the World/Médicos del Mundo. With over 400 projects in more than 70 countries, our volunteer and full-time staff provide medical assistance at home and abroad. Through evidence-based advocacy, they help marginalised people and groups claim their right to healthcare. Together, they are fighting

for free access to essential medical services for all. The Doctors of the World network is run by offices in 17 locations. It has no party-political, religious, military or financial affiliations.

### The sections of the international network

**are:** Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States.

In our buses and surgeries in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg and Stuttgart, our teams

**have treated and counselled**

**2,197  
people.**

**7,110**

**consultations**

were given by our full-time and volunteer teams in our domestic projects in 2023.

**We would like to thank the over**

**100** **volunteers**

who support us with our domestic projects.

We would like to thank our  
**32,456** donors.

We are running

**410** projects in  
**75** countries.

**11,899**  
**people**

donated to Doctors of the World for the first time.

**Ärzte der Welt e.V. /  
Doctors of the World Germany**

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Berlin office:

Berlin Global Village

Am Sudhaus 2

12053 Berlin

**Donation account**

Deutsche Kreditbank (DKB)

IBAN: DE06 1203 0000 1004 3336 60

BIC: BYLADEM1001

Ärzte der Welt e. V. is recognised as a non-profit organisation. Donations are tax deductible.

Since April 2006, Ärzte der Welt has received the DZI Seal of Approval every year as a sign of its trustworthiness. It therefore fulfils the strict criteria of the German Central Institute for Social Issues.



Deutsches  
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für soziale  
Fragen (DZI)

Zeichen für  
Vertrauen



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Visit our website

[www.aerztederwelt.org/Jahresbericht](http://www.aerztederwelt.org/Jahresbericht)

for further information about our

activities in 2023.