



# The work of the British Red Cross touches on many different areas of humanity

## Introduction by Seema Assadullah, Service support worker at British Red Cross

The Red Cross has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. It was my childhood friend, as a little girl growing up in Afghanistan at a time of war. I used to see the Red Cross medical centres and the hope they gave to local communities. When someone in my family was unwell, the usual ways of accessing medication and healthcare were limited, but the Red Cross was always there for us. Their medical centres made a huge difference to our local community.

Once I was living in the UK, my childhood experiences encouraged me to start volunteering for the British Red Cross in three different roles from early 2018.

The Red Cross had given me so much, and I wanted to give back.

My time volunteering, helping and supporting other people was a very good experience for me, and also provided a place for me to develop my own skills and strengths. While volunteering at the British Red Cross I found there was a place for me. The organisation's purpose is to support people, and make sure they are heard. It is built on people who care, who are patient with people and show empathy. In my role as a community connector working to tackle loneliness, I learned the importance of listening to people, of reassuring them, and of putting yourself in their place. That has helped me a lot.

## **The British Red Cross celebrates the power of kindness, and it supports people that do this, too – both staff and volunteers.**

As a volunteer, my co-ordinator saw that I worked hard and truly cared about the people I was supporting. She in turn helped me to grow, and I later became an employee, working as a Support Worker in the organisation's Independent Living Service. In this role I spend a lot of time with different people, helping them to overcome difficult periods in their lives. When people come out of hospital they receive medical and psychiatric support, but to really recover often they need more than that. I help them to access support around their housing, benefits or mental health. These are things that can have a worrying effect on their recovery if they aren't in place. My active listening skills and patience have always helped me build a strong rapport with the service user. My ability to speak multiple languages has also allowed me to connect with different communities.

The British Red Cross is a humanitarian organisation. This shows in the way that it treats people as human beings, whatever their background. The work that I do, together with my colleagues across the organisation, ensures people's voices are heard. We listen, we show empathy, and we build rapport with them.

**Our work is about ensuring that people in different types of crisis have everything they need to recover, and that people aren't left to deal with their problems on their own.**

It touches my heart to see how people work together to make this happen.

But not everyone knows what the Red Cross does, beyond its work on conflict. The work of the British Red Cross extends far and wide, and touches on so many different areas of humanity. The issues discussed in these essays are so important, and they show just how far our work reaches. I hope this collection helps people to understand the importance of this amazing work, and the changes that are needed to bring about a kinder world for everyone.

I will never forget the horrible face of war, but will always remember the generosity and kindness of the Red Cross.

**Seema Assadullah**

