

Highlights

- Since the start of the crisis, HelpAge has supported **11,000 older people and their families** through distribution of food kits, hygiene vouchers, and psychosocial support both in Ukraine and Moldova.
- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights released a report on 13 April which concluded that there were clear patterns of violations of international humanitarian law by Russian forces in the period 24 Feb to 1 April. The report highlighted the specific and heavy impact on older people as both direct and indirect victims of the conflict. Examples included specific incidents in which older people appear to have been targeted intentionally in bombings or shootings as acts of extrajudicial killing. In addition, it is noted that the conflict has meant that older people who stay or are left behind in conflict areas “remain without access to food, drinking water, vital medicine and health care” and the “disruption of the social security system or the impossibility to get access to payment points constitutes a serious threat to their life”.

April achievements

Over **150,000** hot meals

have been provided to Ukrainians in refugee centres in Moldova.

2,150 hygiene vouchers

have been given to refugees to purchase essential items in Moldova.

2,690 older people

have received psychosocial support from HelpAge volunteers in Eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine

The current crisis has been referred to as the world’s “oldest humanitarian crisis” as a result of one in four of Ukrainians being over 60. Currently there are 7.14 million internally displaced people inside the country, with this number likely to increase as conflict escalates in the east. Critical needs identified by the International Organization for Migration include cash and food assistance. These findings are supported by a HelpAge assessment carried out at the start of the crisis that identified that the majority of older people interviewed were need of food assistance, medicine, and hygiene items. One noticeable common trend in the east of Ukraine is that many older people are reluctant to leave their homes or do not have the money to move. Therefore, as others flee, those left behind often find themselves with limited support. This results in many older people struggling to access basic necessities including food and essential medicines. However, for many organisations, providing this assistance will be difficult due to accessibility challenges.

People reached so far in Ukraine

- **2,690 older people** in Donetsk Oblast are continuing to receive counselling calls from HelpAge’s 189 volunteers. These older men and women are those that HelpAge provided support to prior to the current escalation of the conflict.
- **1,714 hygiene kits** were distributed in late March via two local NGOs (Hands of Friends and Slavic Heart) and two municipal authorities (Psychoneurological Center and Social Centre for Mothers) in the Donetsk Oblast of eastern Ukraine. These kits include adult diapers, personal protective equipment, and absorbent pads.

People HelpAge plans to reach

- It is planned that in four weeks, with partners Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini (TLU) and Right to Protection, HelpAge will provide 55,000 internally displaced people with food and hygiene kits in Lvivska, Ivano-Frankivska, Chernihivska, and Dnipropetrovska Oblasts.

Partners in Ukraine

Right to Protection has been a leading voice standing up for the rights of those most at risk in Ukraine since 2001. Since the start of the conflict, they have been active across much of Ukraine, providing food, legal advice, water, generators, and cash while also supporting Ukrainians in need to access medicine.

TLU is a Ukrainian NGO which has been providing support to older people since 1999. During the crisis, they have been working through their large network of volunteers across Ukraine to provide food, medicine, and hygiene items.



TLU is providing food, medicine, and hygiene items to some of the most at risk older people across Ukraine.

HelpAge's history in Ukraine

HelpAge has been operating in Ukraine since 2014 when conflict broke out in the east of the country. Through HelpAge's staff and volunteers in Sloviansk and Severodonetsk, we provide support to protect older people from violence, abuse, and neglect and help to reduce psychosocial distress. This includes providing home-based care and setting up community safe spaces for older people to meet and socialize. However, since the start of the current crisis, our offices in the east have been forced to close and many staff have relocated to different parts of Ukraine and into neighbouring countries.

Moldova

In Moldova, 425,227 older people have entered the country, of which 9%, according to IMPACT Initiatives, are over 65. While most have passed through Moldova to Romania, 95,000 have chosen to stay in Moldova. Of these 3,853 are residing in refugee accommodation centres while the rest are either staying with host families or friends or are renting private accommodation. Older people who arrive in Moldova have faced often difficult and traumatizing journeys, complicated by mobility issues that many face. Every person who arrives in Moldova has unique needs. Ensuring that support is tailored to the individual will remain critical.

People reached so far in Moldova

- **3,000 refugees** have been provided with hot meals and food catering in 44 refugee accommodation centres across Moldova since the middle of March. This support includes providing three hot meals a day to some of the most at-risk refugees who are currently residing in the centres as they have neither friends or relatives nearby, nor the financial resources to rent private accommodation.
- **2,150 refugees are receiving hygiene vouchers** that are being distributed at 45 refugee accommodation centres across Moldova, enabling refugees to purchase soap and hand sanitizer at local stores.
- **45 refugee accommodation centre received institutional hygiene kits.** These included washing mops, washing up liquid, hand sanitizer, and other items.

People HelpAge plans to reach

- In the coming weeks, HelpAge will scale up the provision of food assistance, in collaboration with the World Food Programme, and hygiene kits to 6,000 refugees. Subsequently, as need inside the refugee centres reduces, HelpAge will provide vouchers to 2,000 refugees who are living in the host community to access food and hygiene kits.
- We are also aiming to provide more support to the refugees in the rural areas including providing safe spaces for refugees to gather and providing cash assistance. Currently there is limited information on the needs of the refugees in the community; therefore, HelpAge is planning to conduct a needs assessment to assess this planned programming in the coming weeks.

HelpAge's history in Moldova

HelpAge has been operating in Moldova since 2000. Many older people in Moldova do not have access to pensions and often live in homes with no running water. Without the internet and mobile phones, older people are also at risk of being isolated from friends and family, particularly in rural areas where there is a lot of migration. HelpAge has been supporting older people through providing home visits, social activities, and ensuring they have access to the internet. Due to the recent influx of refugees, despite their small team, our Moldovan colleagues have expanded their work significantly to also provide support to the refugees.

Advocacy call:

We call on all parties to the conflict and on humanitarian actors responding to the crisis to ensure that

- Safe, rapid, and unimpeded humanitarian access is in place to ensure older men and women and people with disabilities who have not been able to leave their homes, including those living in institutions, can be reached, can access essential life-saving humanitarian support and tailored and prioritised assistance, and can be evacuated to safety.
- Older Ukrainians who have fled to other areas of the country can access full basic services, including food and water, healthcare including mental health support, social services including pensions, transport, and information. Those who have been evacuated should not be forced to move into institutions.
- Refugee host countries must ensure that older people's rights are upheld, including ensuring dignified reception at border and transit points with prioritisation procedures for crossing of older people; respect for family unity and facilitation of older people reuniting and settling with family members; prioritisation of protection for those facing additional risks, such as older people and women with disabilities; and provision of access to national health and social protection systems.
- Older men and women should be included in humanitarian assessments and programme activities to ensure that they are provided with appropriate humanitarian protection and assistance.

Communication

Visit the [Ukraine crisis](#) website page to get the latest updates on HelpAge's work, including testimonies from older people and our colleagues on the ground in Ukraine, Rapid Needs Assessments, interviews, and news statements.

To access our donations pages through our supporting members: helpage.org/donate

Below is some of our recent media coverage:

- BBC News: [Older residents of the east reluctant to hit the road](#)
- iNews: [Ukraine news: Elderly people forced to hide alone in basements during airstrikes, aid worker warns](#)

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