

April achievements

200,000 hot meals

have been provided to Ukrainians in refugee centres in Moldova.

3,100 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

One in four Ukrainians are over 60, leading the current crisis to be referred to as the "oldest humanitarian crisis" in the world. HelpAge identified through an assessment, carried out at the start of the crisis, that the majority of older people interviewed were in need of food assistance, medicine, and hygiene items. Older people are especially at risk as many are unable or reluctant to leave their homes. As others flee, those left behind often find themselves with limited support, especially in the Donbas region in the East.

The lack of publicly available age disaggregated data makes it difficult to ensure programming is specifically adapted to the needs of older population. Therefore, HelpAge plans to conduct a new assessment to capture the needs of older people in central and western Ukraine.

Like many organizations, HelpAge faces challenges with being able to reach those most at risk, especially in the Donbas. While programme in this region have been partially paused due to the safety and security of HelpAge staff, who themselves have been displaced and dispersed, Helpage volunteers are continuing to provide support when and where they are able to.

15.7 million need support (OCHA)

11 million Ukrainians are over 60 (HelpAge)

7.7 million are internally displaced (IOM)

5.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine (UNCHR)

People reached so far in Ukraine

- **2,690 older people** in Donbas region 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.

HelpAge plans

- It is planned that in the coming month, with partners Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini (TLU) and Right to Protection, HelpAge will provide over 35,000 internally displaced people with food and hygiene kits in Lvivska, Ivano-Frankivska, Chernihivska, and Dnipropetrovska Oblasts.
- In May, HelpAge will provide 2,220 supermarket vouchers at the equivalent of £60 as a one-off amount to at risk families.
- HelpAge has also recently set up of office's in Lviv and Dnipro and it currently recruiting new local staff to help deliver future programmes. This increased capacity will enable deliver programmes across the country at greater speed and scale.

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 volunteer providing medicine to an older Ukrainian.

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, which is close to the previous contact line, HelpAge provided support to some of the most at risk older people. This support included providing home-based care where volunteers would visit the older people in their homes. In addition, community safe spaces for older people were established where older people could meet and socialize. Finally, cash assistance was provided through the postal system to help cover their basic needs.

Moldova

In Moldova, 434,275 older people have entered the country, of which 9%, according to REACH, are over 65. While most have passed through Moldova to Romania, or have returned to Ukraine, 97,000 have chosen to stay. Of these 4,384 people are residing in the 95 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.

97,000 refugees are remaining in Moldova (UNCHR)

Approximately, **8,700** refugees remaining in Moldova are over 65 (REACH)

People reached so far in Moldova

- **2,250 refugees** have been provided with food catering or food vouchers in 46 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.
- **3,100 refugees have received hygiene vouchers** that were distributed at 45 refugee accommodation centres across Moldova, in April, enabling refugees to purchase soap and hand sanitizer at local stores.
- **45 refugee accommodation centres received institutional hygiene kits.** These included washing mops, washing up liquid, hand sanitizer, and other items.

HelpAge plans

- In the coming weeks, HelpAge will scale up and modify the provision of food assistance in the refugee centres, in collaboration with the World Food Programme.
- HelpAge is 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. Partners are being identified to ensure the support can be provided through organisations with local expertise.

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 has been significant migration in recent years. 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:

- Avvenire (Italian newspaper): [The remaining elderly: "Our whole life is within these walls"](#)
- Oxfam Blogs: [The impact of war on older people \(in Ukraine and everywhere else\)](#)

Donors:



Viktoria, an older person we support, meeting Charles Michel, the President of the European Council, in Moldova.

Diana, our disability advisor, after her recent trip to Moldova, meeting Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge.



For more information contact

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