



Enid Francis, Sponsored Gran

Right Under My Nose

One of the most powerful experiences I have had with HelpAge Canada is travelling and being confronted, face to face, with hard working, family loving, self-giving older people, who are destitute because there is no social security in their country. Older people in many places, when they stop working, are lucky if they can bunk with a family member, or they become homeless, penniless, voiceless, and alone.

Hard for us to imagine. No medical support or access to medication, no transportation, no food, no home, no security, no dignity. For many cultures, to voice one's unhappiness or suffering is to bring shame onto the individual and the family, all too often older people suffer in silence - even victims of abuse. Canada may have a social security net, for which we can be grateful, but many low income or underserved older Canadians also suffer in silence. Isolation and loneliness, limited or inaccessible transportation, elder abuse, limited nutritional food options, and sometimes forced to choose between food or medication within a limited budget are battles faced by older Canadians every day. Not to mention, residents of Long Term Care homes in Canada represented 81% of all reported COVID-19 deaths compared with an average of 38% in other countries.

Ageism is REAL. Right under our noses. It is so normalized that we don't even notice the assumptions, the narratives on aging and of older people that are part of our very language, our vision of the world. Somehow, we act as if some people are more deserving than others, that older people are a burden to be dealt with.

I know that addressing ageism starts with me. What assumptions do I possess? What caricatures and judgements do I create or uphold and paint my world with? Would I be OK with letting my own parents starve or be homeless - just because they are older? Why is it OK for other older people to suffer in such a way?

Tough questions.

As we look to Ukraine where one in four people are over the age of 65, when we consider the drought in the Horn of Africa, the people of Yemen, Afghanistan, and right here in Canada, what is the story we tell of how we stand with one another, our aging family, friends and fellow world citizens? Yes, tough questions, but if we are going to make changes in this world, it starts with me - right here under my nose.

Gregor Sneddon, Executive Director



Ukraine Crisis

250
Staff and
Volunteers
Assisting

Food for
200,000
Refugees in
Moldova

Humanitarian Response for older people, their families, and communities

On February 24th the unthinkable happened: Russian forces invaded Ukraine and more than ten million people have now fled their homes. For older Ukrainians, the situation is particularly dangerous. One out of four people in Ukraine is over the age of 60, making it one of the oldest populations in the world. The United Nations has determined that 32% of those in humanitarian need are 60+ years of age.

Regardless of whether they stay or flee, older Ukrainians are now increasingly vulnerable to violence and neglect. A Rapid Needs Assessment conducted in early May highlights the urgent needs of older people as the conflict continues to escalate:

- 91% of older people report that they do not have enough food to eat
- 79% of older people report that they do not have access to sufficient clean drinking water
- 34% of older people require urgent medication for their chronic illnesses
- 75% of older people report that they need hygiene items such as toothpaste, soap, and toilet paper

HelpAge has been working in Ukraine since 2014, and with over 250 staff and volunteers, we were unusually well placed to be one of 5 Non-governmental organization identified by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to lead the humanitarian response. HelpAge also has offices in Moldova and strong partners in Poland where we are actively supporting refugees. HelpAge Canada has received the support of Global Affairs Canada

for \$4,000,000 and we have raised over \$1,000,000 through donors like you, the Canada Ukraine Foundation, Islamic Relief Canada and The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund.

OUR RESPONSE AS OF MAY 5TH:

Moldova:

- 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.
- 45 refugee accommodation centres received institutional hygiene kits.

Ukraine:

- 2,690 older people in Donetsk Oblast who are under constant shelling are receiving counselling calls from HelpAge’s 189 volunteers.
- 1,714 hygiene kits were in the Donetsk Oblast of eastern Ukraine. These kits include adult diapers, personal protective equipment, and absorbent pads.
- Currently providing 55,000 internally displaced people with food and hygiene kits in Lvivska, Ivano-Frankivska, Chernihivska, and Dnipropetrovska Oblasts.

OUR SUPPORTERS:

 CANADA-UKRAINE FOUNDATION
FONDATION CANADA-UKRAINE
КАНАДСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКА ФУНДАЦІЯ

In partnership with
 **Canada**

 **PWRDF**
The Primate’s World Relief
and Development Fund

 **ISLAMIC
RELIEF
CANADA**

**HUMANITARIAN
COALITION** 



I have never seen anything so horrid before. Trains were so crowded that people were clinging to the outsides and falling. Why can't there just be peace?

~ **Anna (73)** fled Ukraine with her daughter and granddaughter. Our colleague, Sarah Pilchick, with Anna at MoldExpo, a centre hosting refugees in Moldova. Anna and her family are on their way to Germany.

An Inspirational Visit

Jamaica Update

In February, Gregor had the opportunity to visit our Sponsor A Grandparent partners in Jamaica. He travelled to our local Salvation Army partners in Montego Bay, Port Antonio, and Kingston, and St Monica's Home for the Abandoned Elderly in Kingston, a mission of the St Patrick Foundation. Jamaica is a beautiful country that suffers from economic hardship, structural poverty, and has no social security program. As such, older people are subjected to tremendous hardship, insecurity, and loneliness. The spirited Hermine Bascoe at St Monica's runs an amazing program with many long standing staff but shares how difficult it is with rising costs, the devaluation of the Jamaican dollar, poverty-level wages for nurses, and the 300 long waiting list to find a bed in her 30 room home.

Lloyd Anderson wakes up every morning at St Monica's to sweep the walkway to the church and tend the garden. When feeling low from the burden of his many health conditions, he says:

“ *I just get up, and grab the fork, till the soil, plant a seed.* ”

William Lawrence has been disabled since childhood and moved home to care for his ailing father. He makes his living repairing shoes, 100% hand stitched as without legs, he cannot operate a sewing machine. William has been diagnosed with glaucoma and is going blind without social security or resources.



Lloyd Anderson, Sponsored Gran



William Lawrence, Sponsored Gran

The Drought in the Horn of Africa

Elders Harvest Campaign Update

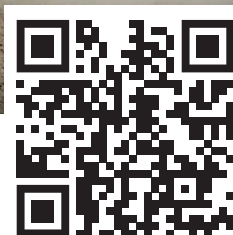
In our last newsletter we announced our Elders Harvest Update which unfortunately was eclipsed by the Ukraine crisis. We are relaunching to raise the \$40,000 for the tractor in Ahero Kenya especially in light of the famine in the Horn of Africa. Almost half (44%) of the grain in Africa is imported from Ukraine and Russia, which will be greatly restricted this year, as well as spikes in the prices of all commodities. This year 20 million people will be in need of emergency relief due to the drought, the worst in 50 years, consuming Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan. HelpAge Canada will be supporting older people through the region particularly in Ethiopia and Kenya.

Our longest serving Sponsor A Grandparent partner, JOOT Social Services, in Ahero, Kenya have asked for a tractor to help till the four acres they bought to provide maize, lentils and other staples to the hundreds of older people and their grandchildren in their care. This will be a critical support throughout the drought.

Our campaign goal is to raise \$40,000 for a Tractor, Subsoiler and Rotovator. You can support this campaign here: helpagecanada.ca/elders-harvest



THE ELDERS HARVEST



Watch the Elders Harvest campaign video!



6

Innovation Solutions Awarded



Uncovering Innovation in Canada and Abroad

F.A.S.T. Track Project Update

F.A.S.T. (funding accelerator for seniors transportation) Track is our national initiative supporting transportation innovation. **This one-year project has just completed, and we are recognizing and celebrating six organizations across Canada who have innovative solutions in place, or concepts they are trialing, to improve seniors' mobility in their communities.**

These organizations are:

York Regional Transit – awarded for breaking away from the traditional para-transit model during COVID-19 by offering free, on-demand rides to any person aged 65+ within a 5KM radius on the smaller para-transit vehicles.

Sou'West Nova Transit Association's – awarded for going above and beyond transportation by working in partnership with the provincial Seniors' Safety program to refer seniors in need to support services.

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House – awarded for their innovative idea to combine transportation programs to better serve their clients.

Our Greenway Conservancy – awarded for trialing a practical mobility solution for suburban neighbourhood seniors: creating a free e-Trike and e-Rickshaw program.

ASK Friendship Society – awarded for their idea to create an affordable bus rental program for their wheelchair accessible vehicles, making them available to other organizations who are unable to purchase them for their own fleets.

The Village of Granisle – awarded for creating local partnerships to support the operation of a weekly shuttle bus that regularly travels over 100KM per journey.



The six organizations received an award and recognition at the first ever Innovation Summit on Seniors Transportation. This took place virtually on May 12th, hosted by HelpAge Canada and our project partners CanAge and O'Hara Aging + Accessibility Inc.

Men's Sheds are Growing in Canada

We are so excited to be supporting the growing Men's Sheds movement throughout Canada. **A Men's Shed is a place where men can come together to learn, share skills and become friends.**

By providing Start-Up funding and Project funding we are helping with the development of new Sheds and the growth of already established Sheds.

So far our project grants have supported new innovative programming, the securing of larger spaces to accommodate growing Sheds and the purchase of tools and equipment for new projects.

To date, we are pleased to be providing grants in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta and are continuing to grow.

Do you know of individuals thinking of starting a Men's Shed in your community? Get in touch at menssheds@helpagecanada.ca

Learn more!



Music, Maps & Indigenous Knowledge Apps

Connected Elders and Youth Program Update

Music, maps and Indigenous knowledge apps were among the most popular topics during Connected Elders & Youth program delivery in Arviat, Nunavut. Youth have begun assisting Elders to get online for the first time in this community as part of this HelpAge Canada digital learning program. Above we see an Elder showing others in the program his home community on the SIKU app. Below, we see an Elder listening to music for the first time on a tablet.

Youth mentors are equally benefiting from the program. One youth mentor in Arviat shares how much enjoyment she gets out of teaching, and how she is developing her own leadership skills. "That's what I love seeing about elders: they enjoy it and I try to help them out or help other mentors out when they need help."

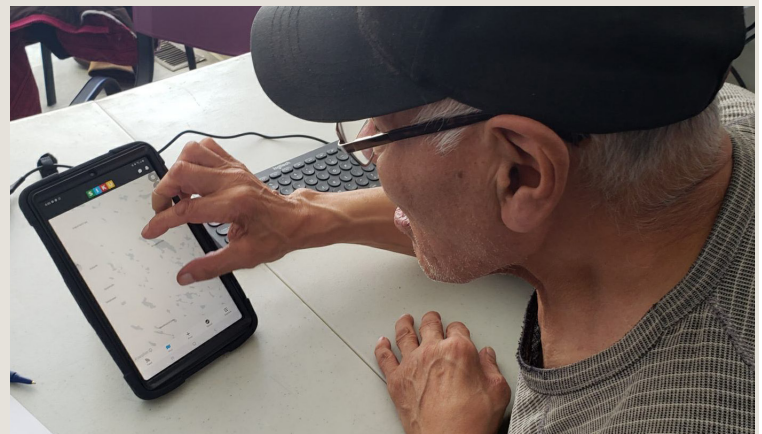


Our program delivery partner Pinnguaq also observed firsthand the significance of this program:

“It was clear that many of the elders that participated are, or easily could be, isolated in their homes and this use of technology would offer them opportunity to participate in the outside world.”

~ **Robynn Pavia**, Delivery Lead, Pinnguaq Association

As HelpAge Canada enters a new fiscal year, it is anticipated that this program will continue not only in the Kivalliq, but also in Clyde River and Iqaluit. Youth mentors and Elders alike look forward to being together, sharing further, and building their skills, knowledge and confidence online.



Dig-IT: Hitting the Ground Running

Our Digital Literacy program Dig-IT has hit the ground the running! In partnership with 10 community organizations across Canada we have committed to distributing 150 data enabled tablets to low-income seniors.

We are receiving positive feedback from Dig-IT participants who are enjoying learning the educational content provided by our delivery partner, Gluu Technology Society. One of our recent graduates Diana said "I look forward to [my lesson] every week. I can't wait to participate and see what we are going to do next and how much fun it's going to be!"

“It's a two-way thing. I've been using technology my whole life but I've learned so much from interacting with my seniors... they teach me as much as I teach them.”

~ **Dawn Idoko**, Digital Coach

Our volunteer Digital Coaches, like Dawn Idoko, who walk the participants through their courses, are also reaping the benefits of giving back.

We are looking forward to keeping you updated as older adults all across Canada are empowered to build digital skills, stay safe and have fun online!



A Time for Rebuilding

Haiti Earthquake Update

This past year, Haiti has endured one of the most painful periods in memory. The tragic events of last August's earthquake, compounded with the global COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing political crises, and widespread economic and social insecurity has immensely disrupted and challenged the lives of all Haitians and particularly that of all older persons in Haiti.

With the generous support, kind messages, and impactful donations from our donors, HelpAge Canada was able to assist over 120 older peoples, who are a part of the [Sponsor A Grandparent Program](#). With your help, \$8,000 has been provided to our local Haitian Partner Organizations, which have assisted in repairing damaged or destroyed homes of the grandparents.

Our local partners were quick to provide temporary shelters and ensure necessities were given to the Grandparents in need. With the consultation and insight from Grandparents, they have approved home repair plans that ensure greater safety and resistance to future flooding and earthquake tremors. Currently, they are coordinating with contractors to purchase the needed supplies and are looking to begin construction.

Pictured here are the temporary shelters that continue to be in use at the Foyer Saint Etienne in Les Cayes, Haiti. Throughout all the challenges, they've continued to provide medical services, COVID-19 vaccinations for all Grandparents, and regularly host church services



and Foyer celebrations. Father Fred has mentioned that *"despite the difficulties and feelings of homesick, the Grandparents continue to be serene, patient, and hopeful to getting back to a new normal."*

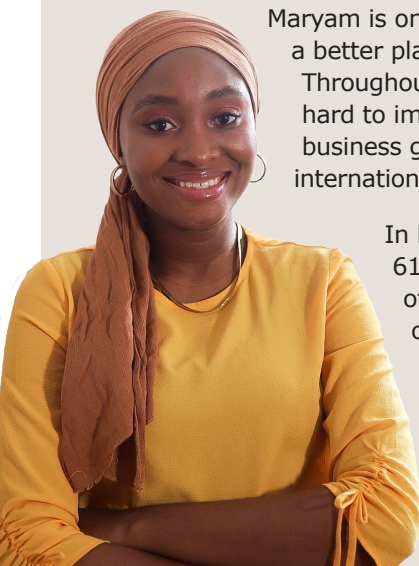
Furthermore, this past winter saw another natural disaster hit the town of Cap-Haitien. Thousands of homes flooded, and their inhabitants were displaced as torrential rain led the riverbanks to burst. All our Sponsored Grandparents in Cap-Haitien were deeply affected. We thank you as with your aid we can provide new shoes and clothing for the Grandparents of Centre Sacré Coeur.

With much gratitude to all donors who have supported and helped with the Haiti Earthquake Relief Campaign and aided the Grandparents of Cap-Haitien, we thank you! Like yourselves, we are eager to hear of the positive progress from our Haitian partner organizations towards rebuilding the Grandparent's homes and look forward to sharing more updates soon!

We welcome two new team members!

Maryam Atoyebi

MANAGER, COMMUNICATIONS



Maryam is on a journey to make the world a better place through storytelling. Throughout her career, she has worked hard to implement tactics that drive business goals for both local and international organizations.

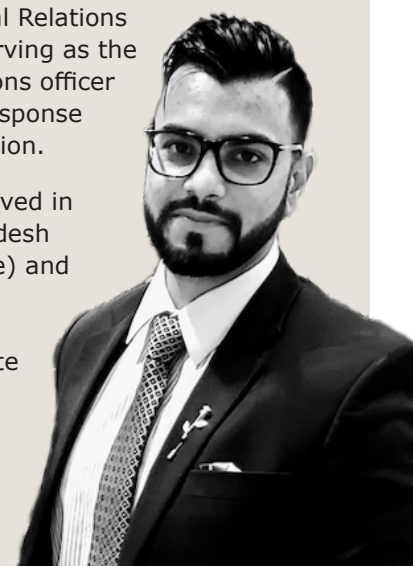
In her most recent role at Refugee 613, she facilitated the translation of COVID-19 resources into over 20 languages to reach underserved immigrant and refugee communities. She also contributed to event promotion through compelling messaging and agile content distribution.

Hamza Ansari

LEAD, GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Hamza is a passionate External Relations professional, most recently serving as the Fundraising and Communications officer for the COVID-19 Pandemic response for the World Health Organization.

During the last 5 years, he served in various roles at BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and United Nations Agencies, most notably the Rohingya Refugee Crisis. A Canadian and graduate of the University of Toronto, Hamza decided to pursue a field in humanitarian work shortly after getting a taste for giving back.



FOLLOW US



205-1300 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 7L2 | 613-232-0727 | 1-800-648-1111
www.helpagecanada.ca | info@helpagecanada.ca