

HelpAge Ukraine Conflict Situational Report



April achievements

200,000 hot meals

provided to Ukrainians in refugee centers in Moldova.

3,100 hygiene vouchers

provided to refugees in Moldova to purchase essential items.

2,690 older people

in Eastern Ukraine received psychosocial support from HelpAge volunteers.

Ukraine

One in four Ukrainians are over 60, leading the current emergency to be called the "oldest humanitarian crisis" in the world. A HelpAge assessment carried out at the start of the current conflict, found that the majority of older people interviewed required food assistance, medicine, and hygiene items. The situation remains the same today. Older people are especially at risk as many are unable or reluctant to leave their homes. As others flee, those remaining 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 responds to the needs of the older population. Therefore, HelpAge plans to conduct a new assessment to capture their needs, particularly for internally displaced people, in central and western Ukraine.

Like many organizations, HelpAge currently faces challenges reaching those most at risk, especially in the Donbas. While programs 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 continue to provide crucial assistance when and where they are able.

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 continue to receive counseling calls from HelpAge's 189 volunteers. These older men and women are those whom HelpAge supported 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 Center for Mothers) in the Donetsk Oblast of eastern Ukraine. These kits include adult diapers, personal protective equipment, and absorbent pads.

HelpAge plans

- This month, with partners Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini (TLU) and Right to Protection, HelpAge plans to 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 worth \$74 each to at risk families.
- HelpAge recently set up offices in Lviv and Dnipro and is currently recruiting new local staff to help deliver future programs 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, water, medicine, generators, cash and legal advice.

TLU is a Ukrainian NGO providing support to older people since 1999. During the crisis, they are 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, towns close to the previous contact line, HelpAge provided support to some of the most at risk older people. This included home-based care visits by volunteers as well as cash assistance through the postal system to help cover basic needs. In addition, HelpAge established community safe spaces where older people could meet, socialize, and access information about services.

Moldova

In Moldova, 434,275 people have entered the country, of whom 9% are over 65, according to REACH. While most have traveled through Moldova onto Romania, or have returned to Ukraine, 97,000 have chosen to stay. Of these 4,384 people are residing in 95 refugee accommodation centers while others are staying with host families or friends or are renting private accommodation. Older people who arrive in Moldova often have faced difficult and traumatizing journeys, complicated by mobility issues that many face. Every person who arrives in Moldova has unique needs. Ensuring that assistance is tailored to individuals 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 received food catering or food vouchers** in 46 refugee accommodation centers across Moldova since the middle of March. This includes three hot meals a day to some of the most at-risk refugees.
- **3,100 refugees received hygiene vouchers** distributed at 45 refugee accommodation centers across Moldova in April, enabling refugees to purchase soap and hand sanitizer at local stores.
- **45 refugee accommodation centers received institutional hygiene kits.** These included mops, dish soap, hand sanitizer, and other items.

HelpAge plans

- In the coming weeks, HelpAge will scale up and modify food assistance in refugee centers, in collaboration with the World Food Programme.
- For older refugees in rural areas, HelpAge aims to provide cash assistance and establish community safe spaces for people to gather to socialize and receive accessible information. We are identifying partners to ensure the services are 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 at risk of being isolated from friends and family, particularly in rural areas. HelpAge has been

assisting older people through home visits, social activities, and provision of internet access. Our Moldovan colleagues have expanded their work significantly to respond to the recent influx of refugees.

Advocacy calls

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 to ensure older men and women and people with disabilities who have not left their homes, including those 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 and gender-based violence services, and social services including pensions, transport, and information. Evacuees should not be forced to move into institutions.
- Refugee host countries must guarantee older people's rights, including by 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 those with disabilities and older women; and access to national health and social protection systems.
- Humanitarian actors and donors should include older people in humanitarian assessments, consult with them and incorporate their views into program and service design.

Communication

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

You can support our work in Ukraine by [donating here](#).

For more information, contact Cindy Cox-Roman, CEO, HelpAge USA, at ccoxroman@helpageusa.org.

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 \(in Ukraine and everywhere else\)](#)

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

Diana, our Global Disability Advisor, after her recent trip to Moldova, meeting Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge.

