

Ukraine



In November, HelpAge's programme lead for Western Ukraine, attended a humanitarian reception at the Buckingham Palace alongside Cherian Mathews (HelpAge CEO) and Alison Marshall (Age International CEO).

"I cannot express how grateful I am for the opportunity to speak to His Majesty the King and Members of Parliament, the DEC and my colleagues in London on behalf of the older men and women and the whole team in Ukraine. I am confident that Ukraine will not be forgotten amid the terrible crises that have erupted in other parts of the globe," said Victoriia.

Context

- As we approach the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, conflict fatigue seems to be setting in. This is mirrored not only by Ukrainians, living day to day with the constant threat of air attacks, but also by donors. An example of this is the EU's slow delivery of its promised €50bn in financial assistance to the Ukrainian government which is vital for essential services from running hospitals to paying pensions. Therefore, as the media attention pivots it is crucial that the world remains committed to Ukrainians in the long term.
- As we know older people are disproportionately affected by the crisis. They are more likely to stay behind in conflict-affected areas, whether because of the disabilities that make fleeing impossible or because they are reluctant to abandon their homes, which are usually their only valuable asset. Even when able to flee to safer areas of Ukraine, older people often face insurmountable hurdles in their efforts to rebuild an autonomous and dignified life, struggling to access housing, support services and healthcare on an equal basis with others. Another worrying trend is that a significant number of older people have been placed in institutions since the war, even though providing them with care in their communities would be more dignified and enhance their wellbeing. While de-institutionalisation should occur, it must be done with care so that at-risk older people are not left without support.

Key Figures

44 million – Total Population
10 million - Total Older Population (approx.)
17.6 million – People in Need
6.3 million– Ukrainian refugees across the world
3.7 million – Internally displaced

- In Poland, nearly 1 million Ukrainian refugees reside in the country. Nearly 73,000 of them are over 60. Some of the key challenges faced by older refugees include long-term accommodation. In a recent survey conducted by HelpAge for our report ["Everyone has their own story, but it hurts us all the same"](#) nearly half of respondents rented their accommodation and half benefitted from some kind of accommodation support. The findings of the report highlight a strong need for maintaining the accommodation support, such as free of charge access to collective shelters or rent subsidies for the most at-risk older refugees who cannot afford the cost of rent.

- In Moldova, there are over 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, which amounts to a 4% increase in the total population of the country. According to a recent REACH survey, approximately 17% of refugees are over 60 and most of them live in private accommodation. As savings dwindle, they require increased financial support to meet their basic needs. In addition, Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe, therefore there is a need to ensure humanitarian assistance is not just targeted at refugees but also those at risk from their host community. This also importantly helps to build the much-needed social cohesion given the likely protracted nature of this crisis.

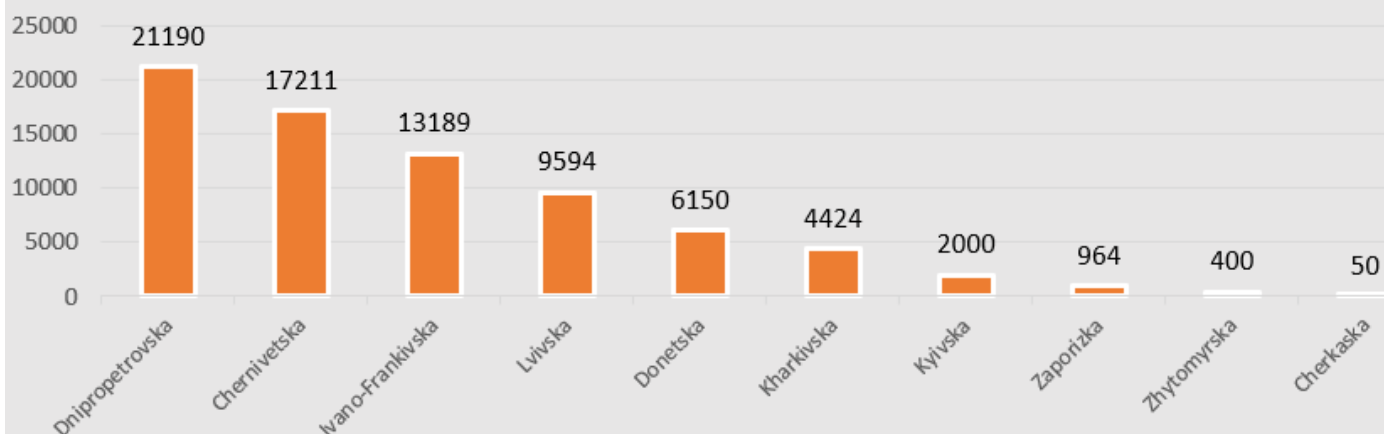
Ukraine - Programme delivery since February 2022

Over **140,000** people directly supported

Worked with over **51** local organisations

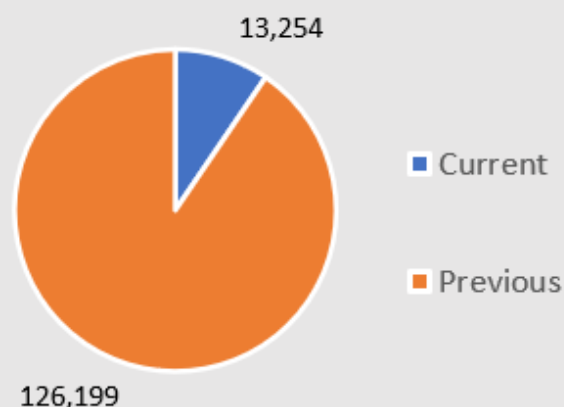
- **19,971 older people** (14,235 women / 5,736 men) who have mobility issues, who are often isolated, are being provided with homebased care from trained HelpAge staff. This includes providing support to improve their wellbeing, independence as well as support in accessing basic goods and services. It should be noted that many of these also receive a range of other assistance including cash, hygiene kits and winterization items. These projects are funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), US Aid, ECHO, and CARE International.
- **4,734 older people** regularly visited 14 community safe spaces (3,566 women / 1,168 men) where they can access a range of free support services, including fitness classes, arts & crafts, hairdressing, cultural excursions, and a psychologist. These centres are operational in several locations in Ukraine in the west (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi Oblasts) and the east (Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts). This work is funded by GAC, GFFO, US Aid, SIDA, GHWF, and CARE International.
- **14,388 older people** received multipurpose cash assistance (7,866 women / 3,169 men) which was sent through the Ukrainian post office (Ukrposhta). This cash assistance was given between spring 2022 until summer of 2023 as one-off amount off 6,600 Ukrainian Hryvnia (180 USD) and since as a one-off amount of 10,695 Ukrainian Hryvnia (290 USD). This provided beneficiaries with enough cash to cover their basic needs for three months. These projects are funded by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), GAC and by GFFO.

Breakdown by oblasts (does not include those who benefited from small partner grants)



- **45,903 people** (23,814 of which were over 60) were supported through a range of activities from provision of shelter, food, hygiene items, clothes, transportation, and psychosocial support. These activities were carried out by 31 very small local organisations in Eastern and Western Ukraine, who received £30,000 to support their work. These grants were provided in January of 2023 and served as a top-up to a previous grant received in the summer of 2022 which ranged between £15,000 to £20,000. In addition, in September 2023 a further 10 local organizations received grants of £20,000 to be used by the end of December. This project was funded by the DEC, Hilton Foundation and Canda Ukraine Foundation (CUF).
- **39,00 displaced people** received food kits (2,786 women / 1,214 men) which include items such as pasta, beans, canned meat, and rice. The kits were distributed by HelpAge volunteers as well as by partners, Turbota pro Litnih v Ukraini (TLU) and Right to Protection in spring of 2022. The project was funded by the DEC and the Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
- **20,487 hygiene kits** (13,034 women / 5,303 men) were distributed in Ukraine which included, toothpastes, shampoo, dishwashing detergent, sponges, razors, and towels. In addition, as part of the kits, 3,763 received adult diapers (2,637 women / 1,126 men) for those with incontinence as well as 971 women were provided with urological pads. The kits were funded by DEC, GAC, USA Aid, US Appeals funds, CARE, OCHA and ECHO.
- **7,563 older people** with disabilities received assistive products (5,541 women / 2022 men). These include canes, toilet chairs, walkers, and crutches. The products were funded by GAC, ECHO, USA Aid, CARE, and SIDA.
- **5,875 winterisation kits**, funded by ECHO, were distributed in Ukraine. These kits included blankets and warm clothes. In addition, in autumn of 2023, 2,261 received winter vouchers (1,552 women / 709 men) of between 13,200 Ukrainian Hryvnia (360 USD) and 2,590 Ukrainian Hryvnia (70 USD) to be spent on the purchase of key winter items from Epicentre stores, a large retailer in Ukraine. This was funded by SIDA and US Appeals funds.

Current beneficiaries vs previous



Battling war and illness: Alla's journey



Alla, 61, and her family evacuated from native Lysychansk as soon as the full-scale invasion started. Little did they know that the area they fled to – Kyivan suburbs – was even more dangerous. Flanked by Bucha and Irpin, their temporary home was soon occupied and lost access to the outside world, as well as to electricity and gas. Evacuation out of there was even longer and riskier but a few days later it finally brought them to safety. They've been living in Drohobych, western Ukraine since, in a shelter for displaced people. Apart from the challenges of life in displacement, Alla suffers from serious health problems: she has stage 3 inoperable cancer for which she receives treatment as part of a clinical trial. "The treatment has severe side effects – I can't feel my fingers, my eyesight has gone worse. I am immensely grateful for the glasses, tonometer, winterisation and health vouchers from HelpAge. It's through programmes like this that people get the support they need."

Ukraine advocacy update

Working with HelpAge's Europe Representative, the country office established a relationship with the Deputy Minister for Social Policy and the Presidential Commissioner for Barrier-free Environment. It held meetings with them in October, as a result of which it was invited to support and participate in developing the government's strategies on healthy and active longevity, long-term care and deinstitutionalisation.

The country office translated its briefing "Rebuilding a society for all ages in Ukraine" into Ukrainian and shared it with Ukrainian partners. In November, the country office and HelpAge's Europe Representative organised a launch event for its briefing for a Ukraine-based audience. Speakers included the British Ambassador and the Deputy Minister for Social Policy while panellists and the audience comprised senior civil servants, the new coordinator of the protection cluster and other UN officials.

In addition, bilateral meetings were held in October and November with senior staff at UNDP, FCDO, the Protection cluster, the Swedish and Canadian Embassies, and the UN-FPA country representative. All meetings were used to deliver our advocacy messages related to the inclusion of older people in Ukraine's recovery plans and to highlight the need for continued humanitarian funding. Ukraine advocacy update

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A barrier-free environment: equal opportunities for people of all ages and physical abilities.



On 26 October, in Lviv, HelpAge's local partner within its DEC project – NGO Ptaha organised a forum on social services for older people and people with disabilities. Aiming to bridge the gap between the needs and the services, it brought together sector experts, representatives of businesses and religious organisations, civil society and Ukrainian officials. HelpAge's Programme Lead and one of the key speakers of the forum, Victoriia Panchenko talked about HelpAge's work in Ukraine since 2014 and the needs of older people that have been further aggravated by the full-scale invasion.

"Time for joining efforts for dignified lives of older people and people with disabilities is now," said Victoriia. "We are happy to share our knowledge and expertise to contribute to long-term solutions that will make the environment accessible and age-inclusive, and services more adapted to their diverse needs."

Poland - Programme delivery since February 2022

4,392 people directly supported through local partners

- 3,837 at risk refugees received cash assistance. This involved three different rounds of distributions implemented by The Polish Center for International Aid: July to December in 2022,

October 2022 to March 2023, and lastly April to August 2023. These were all to separate beneficiaries. In the last phase of the project, the transfer value increased from 710 to 1,000 Polish Zloty (173 to 243 USD) to respond to the increasing cost of living in Poland. These grants were meant to last beneficiaries for six months. This programme was funded by DEC, GAC, CUF, Hilton Foundation and GFFO.

- 10 local initiatives were selected by our partner, Association E, and launched in 9 different regions of the country. These partners were selected due to their strong presence in the local community with many working closely with the local government. This project was funded by Hilton Foundation. The total number of beneficiaries reached is 1,103, of whom 1,090 are older people (807 women and 296 men). Out of these, 555 people were direct beneficiaries, while 867 were indirect beneficiaries, who participated to the local initiatives project. In addition, 105 people have benefitted from psychological and legal support and 27 from physiotherapeutic one. This programme was funded by DEC.
- "Everyone has their own story, but it hurts us all the same": Learning from the experiences of older Ukrainian refugees in Poland. This research is a thorough assessment which aims to help the international community to better understand the situation and experience of older refugees living in Poland as a result of the conflict. This research work felt necessary so that as wider humanitarian response evolves into the medium-long term phase, it can be informed with key findings that will facilitate the inclusion of older people in the wider humanitarian programming while capturing learning from this response to guide future responses in comparable contexts. The research was finalised and published in September and presented to the local actors and INGO community in Warsaw in October 2023. It will also be presented to the DEC partners during a DEC visit to Poland in November.

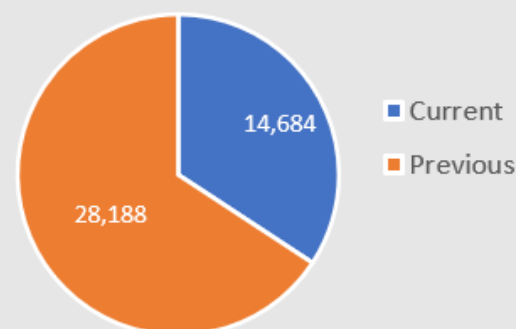
Moldova - Programme delivery since February 2022

Over 43,000 people directly supported
(~40% refugees, 60% locals)

- 15,199 were provided with food. This includes refugees from Refugee Accommodation Centres across Moldova who have been provided with three hot meals a day. These projects were funded by the WFP, CUF and DEC.

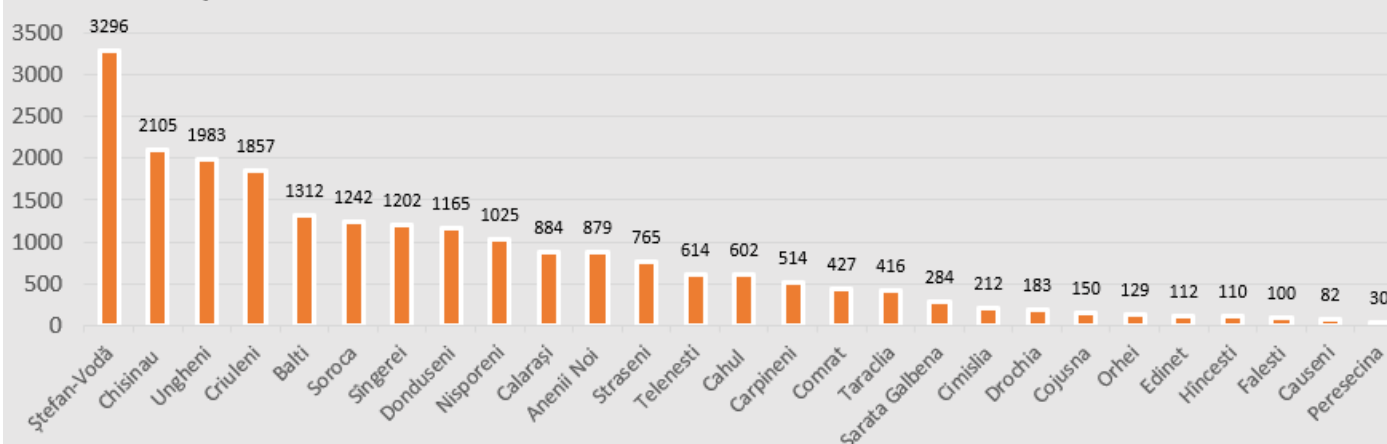
- **2,194 received food packages** including dried fruits, nuts, canned fish, coffee, porridge. This was funded by Islamic Relief Canada (IRC).
- **6,394 received personal hygiene kits.** The content of the personal hygiene kits took into consideration the gender and age of recipients. The individual hygiene kits included items such as cream, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, shower gel, powder detergent, protective masks (sets), wet wipes and socks. This project was funded by the DEC, GAC, CUF, World Vision, and UNFPA.

Current beneficiaries vs previous



- **3,905 were provided with dignity packs** on arrival at the 32 collective centres, which included items such as a comb, manicure scissors, menstrual pad set, razor blades, deodorant, flashlight, bath towel, socks, hand cream and rope bag. This project was funded by the DEC and UNFPA.
- **2,462 were provided with winterisation kits** including blankets and winter clothes. This project was funded by IRC and World Vision.
- **7,002 older people were given access to psychosocial, legal, counselling and socialization services** in several community safe spaces. This was funded by GAC, World Vision, and UNFPA.
- **4,416 received food, hygiene, or medical vouchers.** This project was funded by the DEC, WFP and World Vision.
- **1,261 received multipurpose cash assistance.** This project was funded by World Vision and GAC.
- **1,142 older people benefited from home-based care.** This project was funded by GAC and World Vision.
- **572 older people received assistive devices** such as canes, wheelchairs, crutches, shower seats, toilet seat supports. This was funded by DEC, GAC, and World Vision.
- **2,324 were provided with gender-based violence (GBV) training.** This was funded by UNFPA.

Breakdown by raion (does not include beneficiaries from early 2022)





Lucretia (93) lived all her life in Mogoșești village, Chernivtsi region, Ukraine. To receive care after a surgical intervention on her leg in 2021, she moved in with her daughter in Soroca, Moldova. Despite recovery, Lucretia continues to need support. Because of her osteoporosis, she has to use a walker to move around. She has received medicines vouchers for 2750 Lei, which cover her basic medical needs for one to two months. From the money saved on medicines, she is able to buy fruit and vegetable necessary for healthy nutrition. Lucretia looks forward to the end of the war to safely return to Chernivtsi and reunite with the family left behind. "I want to live a little longer, to enjoy life and see my native places again," says Lucretia.

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; needs assessments; interviews; and new releases.



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**Aktion
Deutschland Hilft**
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