

An update on our work in Ukraine and Afghanistan



Ukraine

Vital support for older people caught up in the heart of the crisis.

Afghanistan

Giving older people the means to buy what they need.

How we are helping older people who may otherwise be forgotten

Ukraine
1 in 4
are 60+

Situation inside Ukraine

Ukraine has the largest percentage of older people affected by conflict in a single country anywhere in the world. Yet older people and their needs are being overlooked in the response to the crisis.

We found that 91% of older people need help getting food, 79% say they don't have access to clean drinking water and 34% report that they need urgent medication for their chronic illnesses.

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Married couple Leonid, 71, and Galina, 70, from Lysychansk, Luhansk region.

“It’s crowded here but we don’t have to be afraid of the bombing.”

Galina said: “Our city has been heavily bombed and shelled with rockets from the very beginning of the war. For many days there was no water, no electricity, no heating. We hid in the basement with the neighbours. We had to queue to get water. It was distributed by tank trucks and it was dangerous because we never knew when the next attack would come. My husband used to go to town for groceries and I was always worried if he would ever come back alive.”

They had to evacuate with only a couple of suitcases and their documents. Galina and Leonid are now staying in a shelter in Lviv, where we are providing older people with hot meals and other essentials.

“I dream of meeting my children and grandchildren.” Galina, 63

Older people in Ukraine must face the heart-breaking decision of whether to stay home and face the dangers of the conflict, or uproot their lives to become a refugee. Either way, it often means being separated from loved ones. We met with Galina, 63 who has decided to stay at her home in the Donetsk region of Ukraine, after her children and grandchildren moved further away from the conflict zone.



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“A volunteer helps me, she brings me food. There are no ATMs, so I can’t withdraw my pension, and there’s no way to pay for groceries. Fortunately, the shop allows you to borrow. A volunteer often buys food, especially bread. She helps.”



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What about older people who have fled Ukraine?

Moldova
14% of
refugees
are 60+

Those who have left Ukraine have had to undertake physically and emotionally challenging journeys. We are providing food, hygiene kits and medical assistance to older refugees who have made the difficult journey to Moldova.

Our colleague Tatiana Sorocan visited one of the many refugee centres. She reported that many people are worried about families left behind, and that there’s a huge need for psychological counselling for older people. Aliona, a psychologist at one centre told her, “Older people are very traumatised and not ready to talk about their situation.”

Viktoria was born during World War II and never imagined she’d be forced to leave her home 80 years later. She’s now staying at the refugee centre in Moldova with her daughter Gelena. Here, thanks to your support, older Ukrainian refugees and their families are getting hot meals and other vital support from our partner HelpAge.

She said: “My neighbourhood in Kharkiv was destroyed by the interminable bombing, and I took refuge in the basement of my apartment block with my daughter Gelena. We were just trying to survive.”

After three weeks they travelled across Ukraine to Chisinau in Moldova. Viktoria explains: “At the refugee centre we receive all necessary assistance. We are both very happy with the conditions of the centre and are very grateful to the volunteers for their dedication and involvement.”

But Viktoria worries about family in Kharkiv. “My younger sister, who is 75, stayed behind with her daughter and granddaughter, and I now have another niece who was born just a week ago. How sad it is that this child was born under bombs – just as I was 80 years earlier.” Viktoria told us.



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Viktoria, 80, and her daughter Gelena who are taking refuge at a centre in Moldova.

What we have achieved

Thanks to our supporters, we are providing life-saving aid to older people and their families who may otherwise have no one to turn to.

Inside Ukraine we have provided:



35,000
food kits with items like pasta, canned meat, and rice



2,000
hygiene kits including absorbent pads and PPE



4,000+
older people with cash payments to cover their basic needs for three months

In neighbouring Moldova we have provided:



2,500
food catering or vouchers in 49 refugee accommodation centres



5,000
hygiene vouchers or kits at 45 refugee accommodation centres



35
refugee accommodation centres received hygiene kits, with mops, hand sanitiser and more

Our plans for the coming months

- Set up five community safe spaces in Liviska oblast where older people can meet, reconnect and seek support from their peers and our partners.
- Distribute 2,000 kits for older people with incontinence, as well as assistive products such as walking frames and toilet chairs for people with mobility disabilities.
- Provide cash grants to 37 local community organisations to help older people buy items like kitchen equipment or pay utility bills.
- Support over 4,000 older people, who are unable to leave their homes, by providing homebased care from trained HelpAge staff.

How we make a difference



We are distributing aid to older people based on the most pressing needs. It follows an assessment to hear from older people the best way to help them.

100%
prefer cash payments*



Over half
of the people we spoke to had struggled to get enough food in the last 30 days.

Our simple, effective solution – cash assistance

Thanks to our supporters we have set up a cash assistance programme. It is delivered on the ground by our partner, Humanity and Inclusion (HI). Together we are supporting 700 highly vulnerable families.

Why cash?

Older people may have specific needs that are not met through traditional aid packages. Cash gives people choice and control to buy what they need.

For example, older people may need food that can be easily chewed and digested or particular medicines to treat healthcare conditions. Cash moves faster than supplies which may get stuck in road blocks or closed airports, so it helps quickly.

How much cash is given?

So far each family received £192 in April, May, and June 2022. As prices are rising, we check that the money holds its value and can adjust payments.

Is giving cash safe?

We rent halls where people safely receive the cash amount, sit and receive refreshments whilst waiting for their turn.

Over 80%
had seen their income fall in the past month.

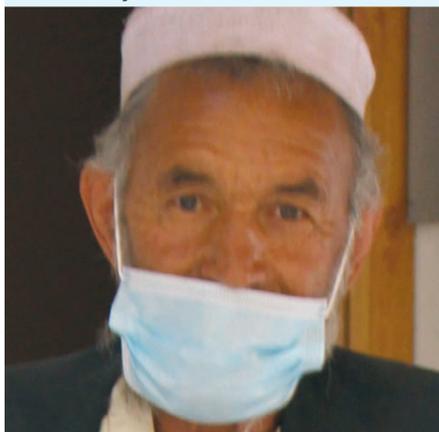



Many struggled
to get the medicines they need in their village.

Who we are helping

“Before receiving your assistance, we just survived. We did not even have rice, oil, flour or wheat.”
Hesamuddin, 65

© Humanity and Inclusion



“Because we could not pay the electricity bill, the government also cut off our electricity and we spent several months without it. We spent nights in the dark. And we lived only through the cow’s milk we had.” Hasmuddin explained.

With his cash payment Hasmuddin bought food, including rice, oil, pea and beans. He said: “Also, I used the money for medical treatments for my wife, my mother and myself. I bought clothes, bags and notebooks for my children who go to school. I paid the electricity bill and now we have electricity”.

He is very happy to have enough food and fuel for several months. “I am happy that my children are going to school and I did not have to take them out from school and ask them to work,” he added.

“If you have not supported us, maybe we would be homeless or without electricity and water.”
Bibigul, 64

© Humanity and Inclusion



“Last winter was very cold and we did not have firewood to heat the house or warm us. We had no money to buy food and fuel,” Bibigul said. She was so relieved to hear that her family were to benefit from the cash assistance programme.

“The assistance we received was in three rounds. That helped us and we are very happy that many of our problems are resolved for few months,” she explained. The cash payments meant Bibigul could pay the rent, water and electricity bills and buy food.

She said: “If I had not received this assistance, I would not have been able to do this.”

“The morning I received the assistance, I cried for joy and thanked all the staff.”
Ghulam Mohammad, 84

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“The situation in Afghanistan has been bad for 40 years and it is getting worse day by day. We all live our lives facing many challenges. I do not have the ability to work and someone must always take care of me. I can walk with difficulty.” Ghulam Mohammad told us.

When he received his cash payment Ghulam Mohammad said: “The assistance provided was the very first help I received in my whole life and it had a good effect on my family living conditions. Many of our problems were temporarily solved and my wife and I could access some medical treatments. I was able to buy flour and rice and a pair of glasses to help me see better.”

What we have achieved

Update from our colleague in Herat Province

“The Afghan people are suffering but donations to the appeal significantly contribute to improving the situation for older people.” Dehzad Gulam Nabi, our colleague at Humanity and Inclusion

Herat had already been hosting around 200,000 people that have been displaced due to the drought in 2020. The collapse of the economic system in the country has led to a further 300,000 internally displaced people in Herat city within the last few months, and the number increases on a daily basis.

As many as 25 million people living in Afghanistan are in need of support. Older people are in the most vulnerable group. Older people often will not have a secure, regular income and are often unable to work due to their age or disabilities.

The money raised is helping to ensure older people are able to meet their most urgent needs like accessing food, fuel for heat, and warm clothing.

What did older people say about their cash payments?



4,900 older people and their families have received cash payments so far

This survey was conducted 30 days following the 1st distribution cash payment on April 2022, according to a 90/10 confidence level and margin of error.

Pulling together in the toughest of times

In times of crisis, Age International joins forces with the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). The DEC brings together 15 leading UK aid charities. Together, we can raise funds quickly and respond more effectively.

Working with our partner HelpAge, we use the funds raised to deliver aid that is tailored to the needs of older people. We are able to help older people who may otherwise have been forgotten in the response.



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