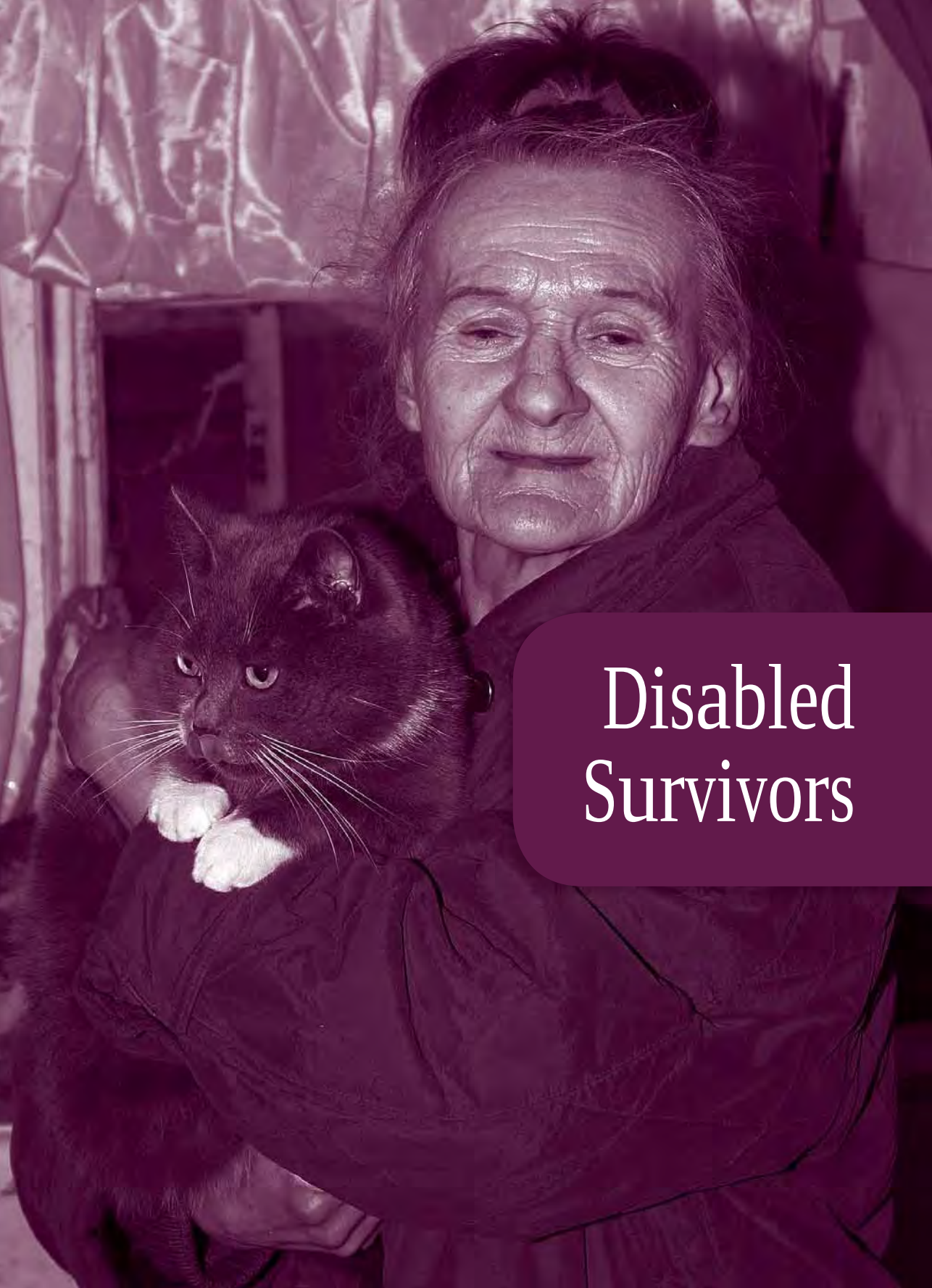


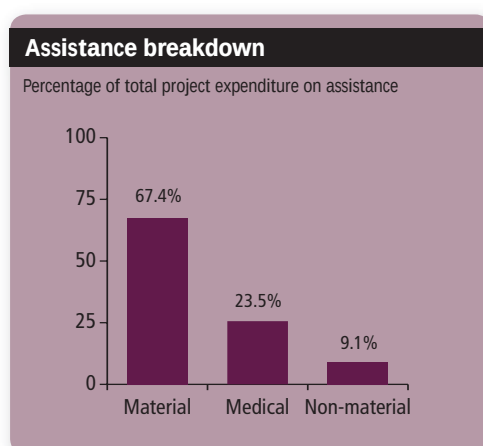


Disabled Survivors

IOM's concerted search for disabled survivors of the Holocaust began in June 2002. Despite nearly 18 months of extensive research and subsequent outreach to national and international organizations for the disabled, very few eligible victims were located. In total, over 360 disability organizations were contacted. Not until HSP began its systematic investigation at the community level did IOM begin to gain access to promising sources of information.

Projects and beneficiaries assisted						
Country	Total beneficiaries	% men beneficiaries	% women beneficiaries	Service providers	Projects implemented*	Average project length (months)*
Czech Republic	5	40	60	1	1	10
Moldova	40	25	75	1	1	4
Poland	922	40	60	1	1	18
Russian Federation	894	33	67	7	7	7
Total	1,861	36	64	10	10	10

*Initial project and extensions count as one.



Late in 2003, certain local social service agencies began to share, for the purpose of beneficiary assistance, extracts from comprehensive databases originating in the communist period. While by now out-of-date, they still provided IOM with basic biodata.

IOM field offices then engaged in meticulous, time-consuming work to verify whether these potential beneficiaries were still living and, if so, where. They assessed disabilities, needs, age and (when possible) gathered personal stories. In total, IOM has been able to assist 1,861 needy, elderly disabled victims of Nazi persecution. They were found living in the Czech Republic (5), Moldova (40), Poland (922) and the Russian Federation (894).

Service providers worked closely with local social care authorities to ensure that survivors received appropriate attention and the full range of available state entitlements. Beneficiaries, typically neglected and lonely, told IOM that while assistance was needed, they most appreciated the chance to interact with others.

Recent consultations with project partners have indicated that there may be, in total, an additional 3,000 unassisted disabled survivors living

Thousands of disabled survivors are still alive, most living in abject poverty.

Assistance breakdown and beneficiaries assisted*

Type of assistance	% of beneficiaries receiving assistance	% of total project expenditure on assistance
Material		
Food (except food packages)	0.6	0.1
Food packages	83.9	16.6
Clothing	7.4	1.6
Winter assistance	82.3	33.1
Emergency financial support	12.3	7.3
Hygienic supplies	79.4	8.6
Medical		
Medical and/or dental assistance	66.0	23.5
Non-material		
Homecare	19.8	2.0
Legal assistance	10.5	0.3
Social assistance	62.2	6.8

*All countries.

in the Czech Republic, Moldova, Poland and the Russian Federation. Should additional funding become available, IOM believes that it could build on its successful strategies and identify several thousand more beneficiaries in other countries.

Czech Republic

Outreach

With information provided by a former official of the “Swiss Fund”, IOM identified five eligible mentally disabled survivors institutionalized at the **Marianum** convent in Opava. Further queries were directed towards the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, municipal offices, social care institutions and health and social care experts. Eventually more than 30 additional disabled survivors were identified but could not be assisted due to the limited time and resources.





Beneficiaries

Although the five disabled survivors residing at the Marianum convent already benefited from basic institutional care, they still greatly appreciated IOM's regular visits, as most of them had no family and very little contact with the outside world. HSP assistance improved the quality of their care and reflected better their individual needs.

Marianum sisters have taught and cared for the mentally disabled at the convent in Opava since 1918. HSP beneficiaries (two women and three men) have lived there since before the war. The sisters recounted one night during the Nazi occupation, with 200 children in residence

at the convent, when German troops removed two busloads “to the camps”. They were never heard from again. The Germans later bombed the convent and mounted a cannon in the entrance to prepare for the Soviet advance. During this period, occupants survived on scarce well water, potatoes and the animals they kept in the garden. One beneficiary, a Marianum resident since he was two, showed IOM staff an underground tunnel where he and his schoolmates slept during those times of uncommon adversity.

Project

This small project provided personalized, material assistance. Beneficiaries received a contribution to daily meals, winter clothes and boots. One beneficiary received a hearing aid. The convent could not have provided this sort of assistance with its own, limited resources.

Republic of Moldova

Outreach

The search for disabled beneficiaries in Moldova was especially time-consuming. In 2003, IOM contacted national NGOs, state and municipal pension offices and institutions for social assistance. Officers of the Salvation Army, who were distributing HSP assistance to Roma beneficiaries, were requested to report any disabled survivors discovered in their work. Despite IOM’s efforts, for over two years no service provider willing to investigate, locate and serve disabled victims came forward.

Only a few months before HSP was set to phase out in Moldova, **Interactiune**, an NGO located in Transdnistria, approached IOM and expressed its eagerness to implement a project. Using information and lists compiled by the local office for social assistance, Interactiune verified individual eligibility. A list of 775 potential beneficiaries was narrowed down to 40 of the neediest.

Beneficiaries

The project was implemented in Transnistria, a particularly remote section of Moldova where elderly disabled survivors live in extremely difficult conditions. HSP identified victims who suffered from polio, dwarfism, bone tuberculosis, blindness, deaf-muteness, as well as mental disabilities.

When interviewed by IOM, disabled persons recalled buried stories of persecution. They remembered having to hide in their homes and cellars when Moldova was occupied by the Germans, in an effort to escape the fate of others who were taken to concentration camps or killed on the spot.

Interactiune assisted 10 male and 30 female most needy disabled beneficiaries.



Beneficiaries described beatings, harassment and abuse by the German army, deportations and executions, medical experiments and forced sterilization.

Project

The service provider's needs assessment revealed that disabled beneficiaries were in dire need of basic material assistance (food, hygienic supplies, clothing and winter assistance). These were complemented with homecare and emergency financial support. Due to the small number of beneficiaries, Interactiune provided individualized assistance. Some received new stoves; others were connected to municipal gas supplies. Beneficiaries living alone were provided with bathing and laundry services.

As the service provider had only five months to carry out the project, delivery of assistance proved challenging. Despite difficulties, the service provider succeeded in delivering complex, personalized assistance, to which elderly disabled survivors responded with great joy.

The former service provider remains in regular telephone contact with the assisted survivors and explores possibilities of using HSP experience to implement a pilot assistance project for elderly disabled in Moldova.

Poland Outreach

In order to locate disabled beneficiaries, **IOM Warsaw** contacted and requested information from hundreds of institutions at the federal, regional and municipal level. Catholic and other non-governmental organizations were also consulted. These helped to identify about 1,700 eligible disabled survivors. Throughout the delivery of HSP assistance, IOM's partner organizations continued to search for additional beneficiaries who were later included in project extensions.

In the absence of a national organization with the capacity to reach more than a fraction of the identified survivors, IOM Warsaw directly administered assistance. IOM would not have been able to identify,

Beneficiary account

Tadeusz was one of five children, and the only disabled. Born deaf-mute, he grew up in Borkow near Kielce.

His house was destroyed during the war, forcing the family to hide in a series of basements. When the Nazis discovered them they were kicked and beaten. Tadeusz still has nightmares and recalls vividly the taunts and insults he received. His mother never recovered and died shortly after the war.

Tadeusz briefly attended school but, without support, he soon had to return to his village. He became homeless and estranged from his family. To this day, he does not know the location of his parents' graves or what became of his siblings.

He was adopted by a family that saw him seeking shelter. Their own son had been lost in the war. His adopted



mother sent Tadeusz to a vocational school. He worked as a shoemaker for 40 years.

Tadeusz indicated to IOM that the most valued benefit for him from HSP was the realization that his sufferings and torments had not been forgotten.

select and deliver assistance to this highly dispersed population without the active involvement and support of disability support organizations and state institutions throughout the country.

Beneficiaries

IOM found that disabled survivors did not concentrate in particular areas. Their housing conditions, particularly in rural areas, were very poor.

In some cases it was difficult to determine whether elderly disabled persons were eligible for assistance, as many of them were either incapable of speaking about their persecution or did not wish to remember.

Beneficiaries who were old enough to recount the war described beatings, harassment and abuse by the German army, deportations and executions, being forced into labour, and being subjected to medical

Beneficiary account

Irena is blind and lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Warsaw, on a monthly income of US\$ 187. She has a daughter.

During the war, before Irena was born, the Nazis destroyed Irena's village and beat her pregnant mother. Irena believes this was the cause of her blindness. She

somehow remembers the constant search for shelter during the war. Later, Irena went to a school for the blind at Laski, outside Warsaw. It was difficult for Irena to talk about her wartime experiences.

Irena worked for 36 years in a library and publishing house working with both Esperanto and Braille languages. She still volunteers as a teacher of Braille and Esperanto at the Polish Association for the Blind. The publishing house is closed and with it the chance of finding work has also disappeared.

HSP provided Irena with sugar and flour, beddings, hearing aids and a prosthesis to aid her recovery from cancer surgery. For the first time in years she could bake a cake without worrying that she was "wasting" her limited sugar and flour unnecessarily. A blind colleague was invited to share the treat.

After receiving the assistance, Irena said she felt like a new person. She now shares her apartment with a new friend, a cat.



experiments and forced sterilization. More often, project beneficiaries spoke of being hidden as children or young adults and living in constant fear that one of their neighbours might turn them in.

The most common disabilities among HSP beneficiaries in Poland were deafness and/or muteness, blindness and mental disability (43%, 18% and 17%, respectively).

Project

IOM interviewed beneficiaries to identify collective needs and individual priorities. This stage already showed particular challenges regarding assistance to this group: mainly a geographically scattered caseload,

a wide range of disabilities and disability levels, as well as access to suitable and efficient communication channels.

The delivery of assistance in such circumstances was slow. The project required a highly individualized approach with frequent monitoring by project social workers in places of assistance distribution to ensure that HSP assistance “got through”.

Initially, only 120 beneficiaries were assisted. Successful outreach and eligibility verification resulted in two project extensions. The project delivered individually tailored aid to a total of 922 persons.

Beneficiaries received medical examinations, medications, dentures, glasses and necessary rehabilitation equipment. HSP assistance included minor home repairs, such as fixing leaking roofs or replacing old and broken windows. Coal, food packages, heaters and stoves were also distributed to many beneficiaries.



IOM coordinated its efforts with project partners and local social care authorities throughout all stages of beneficiary identification and the delivery of assistance. This helped ensure that elderly survivors would be included in the social care system and continue to receive available state entitlements.

Russian Federation

Outreach

In June 2004, IOM Moscow approached several branches of the Russian Red Cross. This organization utilized its extensive experience working with the elderly and its established relationships with local administrators and social protection departments to locate disabled Holocaust survivors. Nine branches of the Red Cross were contacted in regions that had been occupied during the Second World War. IOM approved projects in seven of them.

Projects

The **Pskov Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** contacted the local pensions department and social protection centres in Pskov to locate 161 disabled survivors. Red Cross volunteers and representatives of social protection offices visited potential beneficiaries to collect personal data and to validate whether they had been persecuted during the Holocaust.

Most disabled survivors had been hidden by their parents to escape deportation or internment in a camp. The greatest number of eligible beneficiaries identified in Pskov were deaf-mute or had been crippled by polio before the beginning of the war.

Material assistance was distributed to beneficiaries based on individual needs. Local social protection offices facilitated the delivery of assistance



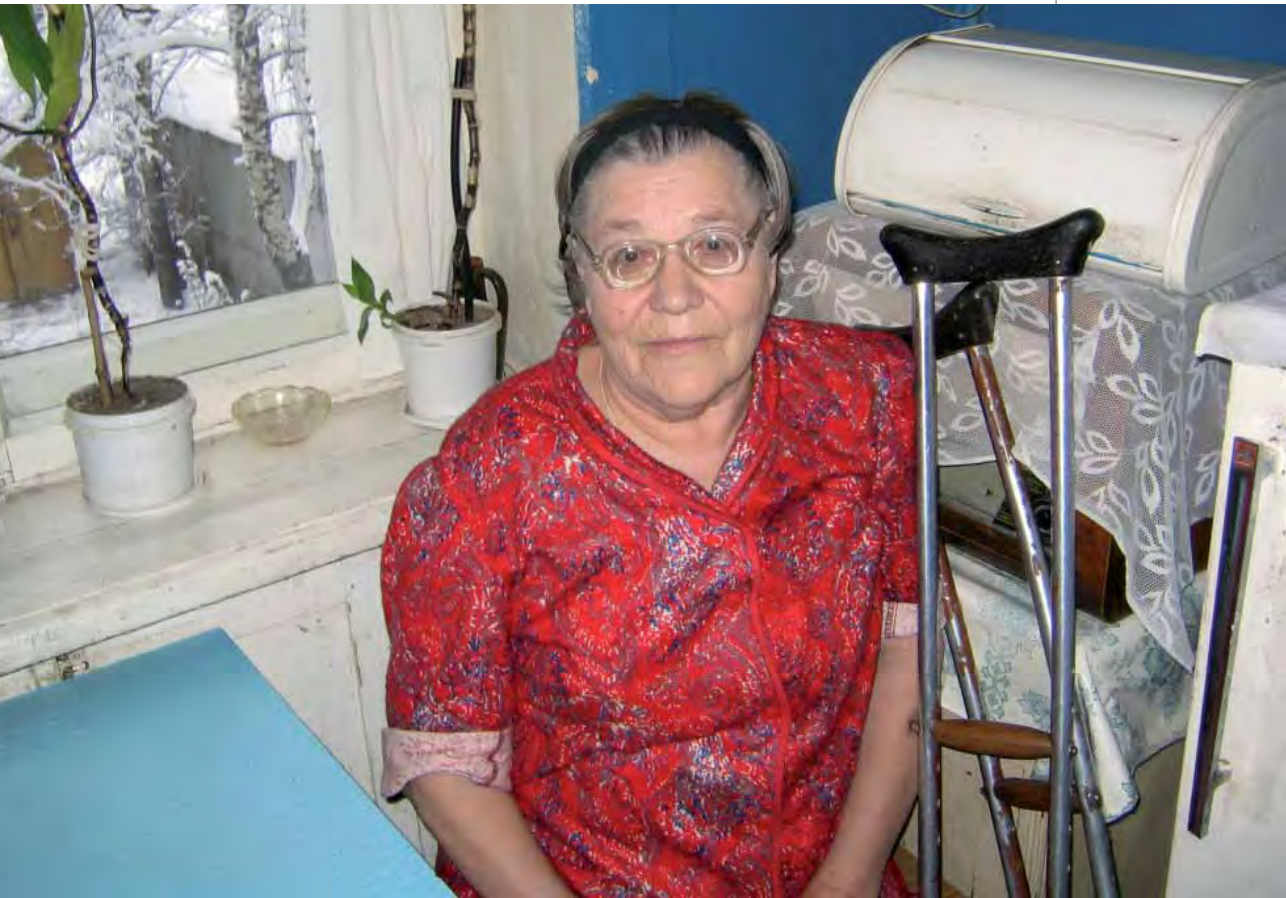
to certain remote areas. Delivery costs were greater than anticipated; more beneficiaries than expected lived in remote rural areas.

Pskov was one of the poorest regions in Russia and disabled survivors lived in dire circumstances. The service provider requested a project extension that included legal assistance. Beneficiaries continued to receive other forms of assistance. The project lawyer discovered that many survivors did not receive the entire range of state benefits to which they were entitled and helped them draft various applications to obtain them.

The **Belgorod Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** administered HSP assistance to 103 disabled victims. The local pension office and social protection centre helped identify potential beneficiaries. The Red Cross contacted them in order to verify their eligibility and assess needs. The project was implemented in eight locations throughout the Belgorod region.

Material assistance in the form of food packages, winter clothing and hygienic sets was individually prepared for each beneficiary. Project staff regularly visited those beneficiaries who were immobile and needed constant care. They helped to clean beneficiaries' homes, pay bills, purchase medications, and provided comfort and company.

As the end of HSP drew near, the Red Cross brought the needs of disabled people to the attention of local authorities. Five beneficiaries continued to receive assistance from the state social protection centre. The Belgorod Red Cross also continued to provide homecare to three especially vulnerable disabled survivors.



Although in the course of project implementation the Belgorod Red Cross identified an additional 100 eligible disabled survivors, these could not be assisted due to funding and time constraints.

The **Orel Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross**, with the help of regional societies for the blind and deaf, was able to identify 105 disabled survivors. Project staff met with disabled survivors to determine their eligibility. In response to identified needs, the service provider delivered food and hygienic parcels, bedding and medicines and provided social and legal assistance.

Delivery of assistance was hindered by the remote location of beneficiaries, who often lived along unpaved rural roads. Further challenges arose when Red Cross staff attempted to communicate with deaf and mute beneficiaries. Several blind beneficiaries refused to let staff into their homes and would not sign for assistance as they were unable to read the receipt form. The Red Cross called beneficiaries to inform them of the time and purpose of each visit in order to overcome these fears.

HSP medical assistance was especially meaningful. The service provider reported that many survivors had not visited a doctor in over ten years. In response to beneficiary requests, the Red Cross also arranged counselling sessions with a neurologist and gerontologist. Many beneficiaries were unable to care for themselves; some were bed-ridden and lived alone. These received more regular visits from project staff and, in certain cases, assistance with daily chores.

A number of eligible, disabled survivors who were not receiving HSP assistance contacted the service provider. 205 new beneficiaries were included in a project extension. Throughout the implementation of project activities, the service provider identified more survivors. Unfortunately, not all persons could be assisted.

After the cessation of HSP assistance, the Orel Red Cross continued to provide homecare, medications and rehabilitative care to a limited number of especially needy beneficiaries.



The **Velikiy Novgorod Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** provided 16 disabled victims with material, winter and medical assistance. Eligible survivors were identified with the help of the regional Committee of Labor and Social Protection of the Population, the Public Organization of Former Prisoners, the Regional Department of the Russian Mutual Understanding and Reconciliation Foundation, and local Red Cross volunteers.

Due to the small number of project beneficiaries, the service provider could offer individualized assistance. For example, a bedridden survivor in a nursing home received a personal anti-bedsore mattress in place of food parcels. Another received a wheelchair; yet another, additional medications. Once HSP project activities were completed, the Red Cross in Velikiy Novgorod identified young volunteers to continue providing basic assistance (house cleaning and running errands) to especially vulnerable survivors.

The **Bryansk Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** worked in cooperation with the Department of Social Protection of the Population, the Society of Disabled People, regional social care departments, the regional pension office, the Former Child Prisoners of War Association and the All-Russian Society of Deaf People to identify potential beneficiaries.

Red Cross staff identified 67 survivors who met the programme eligibility criteria and assessed their needs. More eligible survivors who, however, could not be assisted due to limited time and resources, were identified during project implementation.

Material assistance was greatly needed and received with great appreciation from the beginning. Social assistance, however, proved very challenging at the early stages of the project. A number of beneficiaries, especially the deaf-mute among them, refused to open their doors to project social workers. To overcome this challenge, the Red Cross and the local disability organization organized a group meeting with 30 survivors to explain the aims of the project and introduced the project staff to beneficiaries.

Even after the conclusion of project activities, social workers planned to continue visiting and assisting some beneficiaries identified during the project.

The **Voronezh Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** provided 152 disabled Holocaust survivors with humanitarian aid. A local labour and social services office provided lists of potential beneficiaries. The Red Cross verified eligibility and determined necessary types of assistance. Unfortunately, not all eligible survivors could be included in the project. 200 more were identified after activities had begun.

Municipal social workers worked alongside the service provider to deliver HSP assistance. In order to overcome beneficiary distrust, Red Cross staff invited them and their relatives to discuss HSP activities. Staff informed rural community officials before each delivery. Because beneficiaries were widely dispersed across remote locations, the delivery of assistance proved logistically challenging, costly and time-consuming.

Beneficiary needs were even greater than anticipated. In addition to standard forms of HSP assistance, the service provider met individual requests by using emergency funds to purchase beds, gas stoves, coal and simple washing machines.

The Voronezh Red Cross established good working relationships with local administrators that would prove helpful in future cooperation. Following the completion of project activities, the service provider determined to continue to provide homecare to the most needy beneficiaries.

The **Kaliningrad Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross** faced particular challenges. Because most Russians only arrived in Kaliningrad after 1946, previous connections with relatives and neighbours who might have provided testimony had been lost. Moreover, like elsewhere in Russia, all disability documents were issued after the war. As survivors frequently did not wish to remember or



discuss past painful experiences, the service provider found it difficult to verify eligibility.

Municipal social protection and pension offices, together with a regional disabled association, helped to identify 79 eligible survivors, the majority of which were deaf and mute. The municipal social work department not only contributed to the identification and selection of beneficiaries, but also helped the Red Cross deliver assistance in remote areas throughout the Kaliningrad region.

In accordance with expressed beneficiary needs, medical assistance (prescription medications, first-aid kits and dental care), homecare, beddings and emergency support were provided.

Service providers worked closely with local social care authorities to ensure that survivors received appropriate attention and the full range of available state entitlements.

Conclusion

When IOM began its search for disabled survivors of Nazi persecution, it was still unclear whether any would actually be found. Eighteen months of intensive research and outreach seemed to confirm that very few disabled victims were still alive. However, determination and the involvement of numerous community-based organizations brought surprising results. Thousands of disabled survivors are still alive, most living in abject poverty.

In addition to their great need for assistance and care, disabled survivors of the Holocaust were discovered living alone and without family or friends. Those living in urban areas were occasionally assisted by neighbours; victims living in rural locations were especially isolated. Elderly disabled survivors, particularly vulnerable, had never expected any relief to come. The start of HSP assistance brought not only physical support but also the profoundly moving realization that they had not been forgotten.

Service providers made considerable efforts to cast light on the plight of disabled Holocaust survivors. Several worked to secure state assistance for especially vulnerable victims. However, with the cessation of HSP activities, many disabled survivors unfortunately found themselves once more alone and cut off from all support and assistance.

Project overview

HSP project*	Beneficiaries	Assistance types	Start	End
Czech Republic				
Marianum	5	Food, except for food packages, food packages, clothing, winter assistance, medical and dental assistance	Nov 03	Oct 04
Moldova				
Interactiune	40	Food packages, clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, hygienic supplies	May 05	Aug 05
Poland				
IOM Warsaw	120	Food (except for food packages), food packages, clothing, winter assistance, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Aug 04	Oct 04
IOM Warsaw (1 st revision)	250	Food packages, winter assistance, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Nov 04	Jan 05
IOM Warsaw (2 nd revision)	759	Food packages, winter assistance, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Mar 05	Jan 06
Poland, total**	922			
Russian Federation				
Pskov Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	161	Food packages, winter assistance, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Sep 04	Apr 05
Pskov Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross (1 st revision)	155	Food packages, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	May 05	Jul 05
Belgorod Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	103	Food packages, winter assistance, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Jan 05	Jul 05
Orel Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	105	Food packages, winter assistance, homecare, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Nov 04	Mar 05
Orel Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross (1st revision)	310	Food packages, winter assistance, homecare, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Mar 05	Aug 05
Novgorod Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	16	Food packages, winter assistance, medical and dental assistance, hygienic supplies	Jan 05	Jun 05
Bryansk Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	67	Food packages, winter assistance, homecare, medical and dental assistance, hygienic supplies	Jan 05	Jul 05
Voronezh Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	152	Food packages, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, hygienic supplies	Mar 05	Aug 05
Kaliningrad Regional Branch of the Russian Red Cross	79	Winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance	Apr 05	Aug 05
Russian Federation, total**	894			
All locations, total**	1,861			

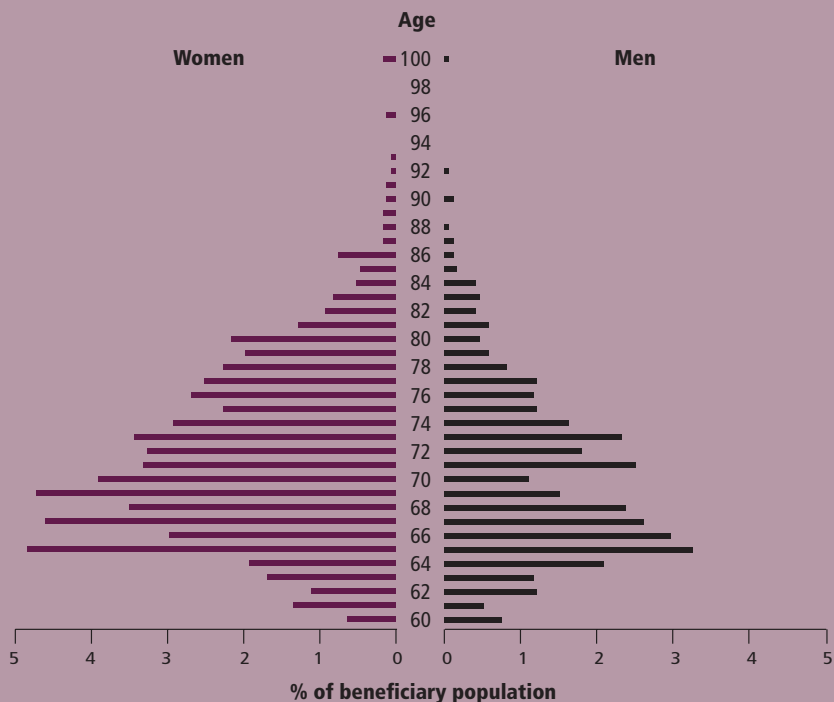
* Initial projects and project extensions are listed separately.

** Beneficiaries assisted under more than one project or extension are counted only once.

Note on project names: "Revision" denotes extension of an existing project.

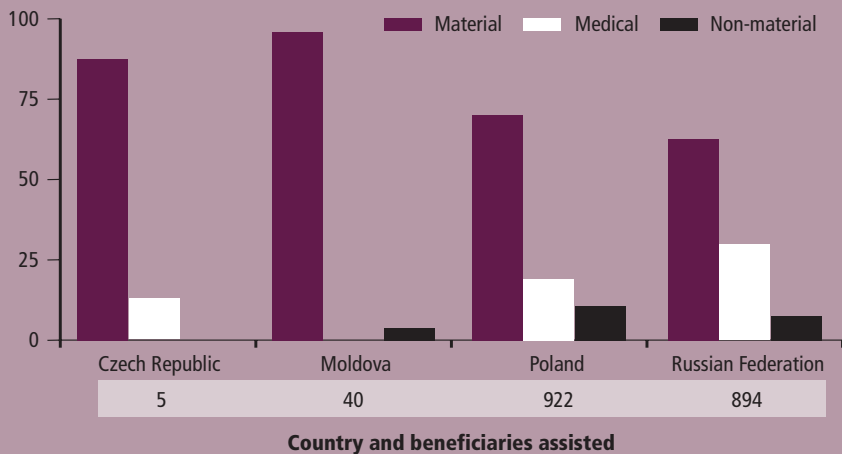
Disabled beneficiaries: age and gender

All countries, December 2005



Disabled beneficiaries: assistance breakdown

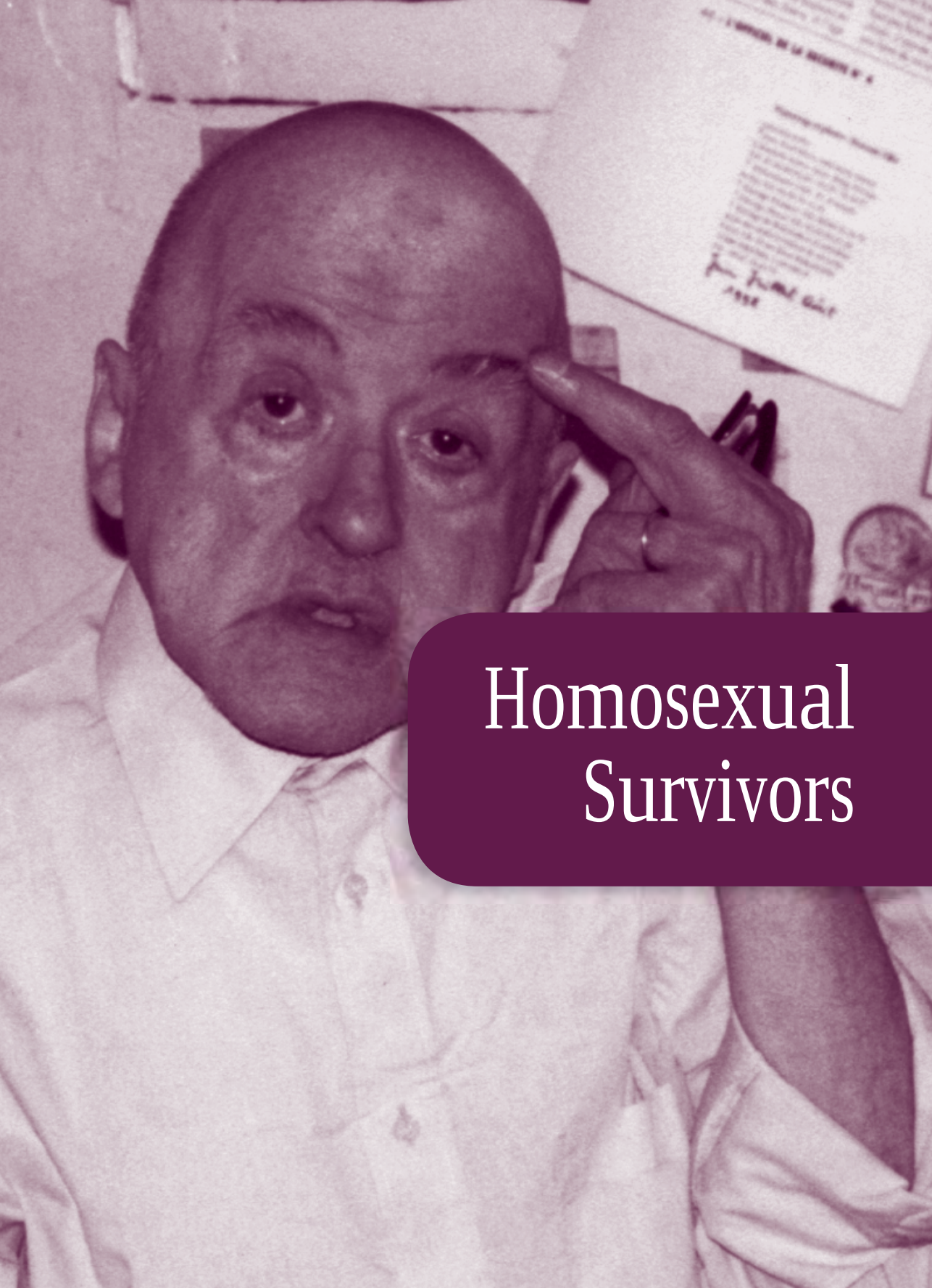
All countries, percentage of total project expenditure on assistance



Working with disabled survivors

Some lessons learned

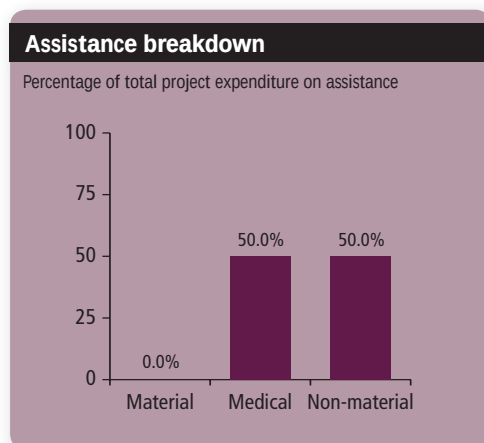
1. For more than 60 years, thousands of blind, deaf, mentally and physically disabled Holocaust survivors have had only limited contact with the world outside their immediate communities. They live on low pensions, often unaware if they do not receive their full social entitlements. While some may have received disability aids and equipment through state support services under former communist regimes, these are now mostly obsolete, inadequate for persons of advanced age or in a poor state of repair.
2. Outreach efforts to disabled former victims were successful only after IOM began working directly and intensively with local state agencies. Under communism, these entities gathered detailed information on disadvantaged groups, distributed benefits and ensured care.
3. National and international pro-disabled associations did not, at first, prove to be a useful source of information. Their help was valuable later in programme information dissemination and in locating additional beneficiaries.
4. The verification of biodata and potential beneficiary eligibility required considerable time, resources and individual staff effort due to the diffuse nature of the target population and the wide range of their disabilities.
5. For survivors who remembered the Holocaust period, their recollections, often not shared for decades, evoked much pain and sorrow.
6. While there is a substantial historical record concerning the Nazi extermination of the disabled, on account of the communication challenges facing disabled individuals many of their stories of persecution remain untold. Individual disabled survivors were often unaware that others had received similar treatment.
7. Some of the disabled survivors assisted by IOM were prone to unrealistic flights of expectation once HSP began and became despondent when it came to an end.
8. Delivery of assistance often required special arrangements, including support from family, neighbours, local social workers, sign interpreters, etc. Beneficiaries often reacted with suspicion to a change in assistance delivery staff. Regular contact and frequent visits by project staff helped reassure survivors, also to anticipate and overcome obstacles to aid delivery.
9. Individually selected and packaged material assistance was important for beneficiaries who did not have the means to locate or purchase the clothing or special foodstuffs they needed.
10. HSP played a lasting role in drawing the attention of many local social service agencies to the needs of elderly disabled persons. It helped them update records and rectify deficiencies in benefits.
11. Social assistance systems in Central and Eastern European countries are in transition and moving away from institutionalization. Alternative forms of care remain rare. The limited assistance now available to the disabled is provided mainly by overstretched charities.
12. Support from civil society for the disabled is a new phenomenon in Central and Eastern Europe. What exists is poorly funded and concentrates on younger generations.

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a serious expression, pointing his right index finger to his forehead. He is wearing a light-colored, button-down shirt. The background is a wall covered with various papers and documents. One document in the upper right corner is titled "RECEPTE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ N° 4" and contains some text and a signature. Another document below it has the word "Mortification" visible. A small circular object, possibly a coin or a small clock, is visible on the right side of the wall.

Homosexual Survivors

IOM identified and assisted four homosexual survivors of Nazi persecution living in Austria, France and Germany.

Beneficiaries assisted	
Country	No. of beneficiaries
Austria	1
France	1
Germany	2
Total	4



Outreach

Since HSP's inception in 2001, **IOM** sought to locate eligible homosexual survivors of the Holocaust. Extensive outreach efforts were directed towards international homosexual NGOs and the media. IOM also made substantial attempts to contact service providers with access to the homosexual survivor community. IOM's intensive search proved unsuccessful.

In August 2003, IOM contacted the Programme Coordinator for Europe of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. He provided IOM with the names, contact information and persecution accounts of four homosexual survivors living in Western European countries.

Beneficiaries

The four identified victims were on average older than members of HSP's other target groups. As young adults, gay survivors suffered persecution such as deportation, forced labour, torture or castration.

IOM received an assessment of beneficiary needs from the Museum Coordinator following his individual consultations with each survivor. Homosexual survivors were infirm and had suffered greatly. All indicated that they needed help with medical bills, homecare, rental payments and heating costs.

Projects

The dispersal and small size of this victim group, as well as the absence of an institutionalized intermediary, required a unique approach; privacy issues and the urgency of aid delivery supported this. IOM determined to act as service provider, directly assisting each survivor.

IOM contacted the four survivors and informed them of programme benefits. It transferred project funds to beneficiaries' bank accounts and requested receipts for aid received. HSP assistance paid for medical and homecare needs.

Beneficiary account

Pierre was the last known French homosexual survivor of Nazi persecution. Only 40 years after the war did he find the courage to tell his story.

When the Nazis reviewed French police files, they discovered a secret. Pierre was gay. He was arrested, interrogated, beaten and tortured for two weeks in a Gestapo prison before being transferred to the Schirmeck-Vorbruck concentration camp west of Strasbourg.

Homosexuals were relegated to the bottom of the camp hierarchy and suffered not only at the hands of the SS guards but from humiliation by their fellow prisoners. Pierre was subjected to medical experiments that often consisted of painful injections to the chest.

In November 1941, the Nazis released Pierre, his "re-education process" considered successful. Several months later he was drafted into a workforce of the German



Reich, forcibly conscripted into the German army and sent to the eastern front. When the war ended Pierre, like many other homosexuals at the time, married and built a family.

After 40 years of silence and 28 years of marriage, in 1981 Pierre decided to tell his story. He lost his marriage and his family. He died in November 2005.

Conclusion

For many homosexual survivors of the Holocaust, isolation and persecution continued well after the end of the Second World War. Until recently, homosexuality was still stigmatized and even criminalized in some countries. IOM found very few survivors willing to identify themselves as members of this victim group. Most homosexual survivors were already young adults during the war. Those still living are quite elderly.

Following extensive research and contacts with international and local homosexual organizations, IOM identified and assisted four needy members of this survivor group. Given the advanced age of most survivors and the lack of contact information, it is unlikely that much more may be done to assist this victim group.

Project overview

HSP project*	Beneficiaries	Coverage	Assistance types	Start	End
IOM Geneva	4	Austria, France, Germany	Homecare, medical and dental assistance	Mar 04	Jun 04

Working with homosexual survivors

Some lessons learned

1. This beneficiary group is small, scattered and extremely hard to reach. Survivors of the Holocaust persecuted for homosexuality are generally at least ten years older than members of other groups assisted by IOM.
2. Homosexuality was illegal in many states under communism. Having to spend most of their adult lives in fear of exposure and persecution contributed to the very low level of self-identification by survivors once HSP began.
3. IOM's concerns for survivor privacy and confidentiality guided its programme at all stages. IOM worked through a mutually trusted intermediary and kept monitoring to a minimum.
4. All beneficiaries identified by IOM now live in Western Europe. As social safety nets in this region are currently more reliable than services in ex-communist countries, assistance is more likely to have been perceived as recognition than as life-saving support. IOM found, nonetheless, that HSP addressed basic needs, such as medications and homecare, that beneficiaries could not have met without its intervention.