



## Panel 4

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**SRC in Switzerland:** Andreas Bircher (Head of Respite Services, H&I Department), Annemarie Ramseier (Deputy Managing Director, Basel Red Cross)

**SRC International Cooperation:** Alexandra Papis, Fortunat Büsch, Programme Coordinators for Europe/CIS and Africa

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## Health for the elderly

**The SRC's work helping the elderly focuses on the same things in Switzerland and other countries: integration and participation.**

When health is seen from a holistic perspective that takes account of physical, mental, emotional and social well-being, then good health means considerably more than simply an absence of illness. Good health is what makes life worth living – preferably free from pain and suffering. Good health also means belonging and taking part while feeling needed and integrated.

The SRC's services in Switzerland promote the integration and participation of the elderly and support family carers. These services are designed to enable elderly people to live well for as long as they can and if possible in their own homes in familiar surroundings. In this context, the Red Cross volunteer driver service and Red Cross SOS service are similarly intended to guarantee mobility and security. The home visit and assistance service also enables beneficiaries to take an active part in society. While for the relatives of elderly people, the SRC provides support and respite services to give them a welcome break from daily stress. All these SRC services are provided for the beneficiaries in their own homes.

The services provided by the SRC's International Cooperation Department concentrate on the most vulnerable. The focus is on health in old age, community development with elderly people, capacity building and organizational development in partner organizations. The emphasis is on access to affordable health services, their quality, and the integration and participation of the local population.

The SRC supports its partners in the health sector by helping them to set up new home care and assistance services so that the elderly, the chronically sick and the handicapped can keep living in familiar surroundings for as long as possible.

- In *Bosnia Herzegovina*, the SRC trains nursing auxiliaries.
- In *Moldova* the SRC is helping a non-governmental organization to set up a home care service.
- In *Bulgaria* and *Belarus*, it trains professional nurses and domestic helpers who look after thousands of elderly people at home.
- In *Armenia* this service is currently being planned and set up.
- In all of the above countries and in *Kyrgyzstan*, volunteers are trained to provide assistance and psycho-social support for elderly people in their homes and help them combat loneliness.

To promote active ageing, the SRC is helping set up community groups for the elderly, informing them about local, national and international agreements to protect the rights of the elderly, and helps the groups to carry out campaigns, raise awareness of injustices, and gain the attention of the authorities.

"Helping people to help themselves" is an important aspect of working with partner organizations and elderly people and sends a signal in countries that are heavily affected by labour migration and a disproportionately ageing population.