UNICEF Refugee Response in the Czech Republic: Results and Priorities
334,259 refugees from Ukraine currently granted temporary protection in the Czech Republic

93,263 child refugee population

147,530 women refugee population

Key challenges

**Health**: Challenges to access health services due to limited availability of doctors and knowledge about health insurance and ways in which to access public health services.

**Education**: According to the latest data from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 51,281 children from Ukraine are enrolled and learning in Czech schools.

A large share of children 15-17 years are not in education, employment, or training.

Limited spaces in schools, language barriers, shortage of teachers and other staff, and unmet need for psychosocial support.

**Protection**: Heightened risks, especially for women, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, human trafficking, labour exploitation, and child protection risks for children separated from their parents.

**Accommodation**: Three-quarter (75%) living in private housing and 10% in solidarity housing (hosted by Czechs or Ukrainians). 15% are in state-funded collective accommodation due to be discontinued under the Lex Ukraine V as of July 2023, creating concerns for the most vulnerable groups.

* Ministry of Interior: data on refugee population, May 2023; Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports: data on education.
The Government and people of the Czech Republic have demonstrated remarkable solidarity in welcoming over half a million of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. At the same time, the sudden onset of a large refugee wave has put significant pressure on the national system. UNICEF works in close partnership with national institutions to support the delivery of the refugee response, including targeted humanitarian services, policy and systems strengthening as well as enhancement of national and local capacities.

**Strengthening national systems** by partnering with ministries and other national level authorities. UNICEF established workplans with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of the Interior.

**Strengthening systems at local level** to provide services for refugee children and their families through partnering with regions and municipalities. UNICEF established a partnership with the City of Prague, which hosts the largest share of refugees (25 per cent) to provide comprehensive support and services for refugee children and their families. The dialogue is ongoing with other regions hosting high number of refugees. UNICEF is supporting cross-sectoral refugee response coordination at the regional level through dedicated regional coordinators and linking them to the national coordination mechanisms to address the needs of the most vulnerable and hardest to reach refugees.

**Strengthening outreach and services for refugee children and their families** through partnering with civil society organizations (CSOs). In partnership with the Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU), Romodrom, Red Cross and MRIYA non-governmental organizations, UNICEF is supporting the expansion of outreach and provision of basic services to the most vulnerable refugee children and their families, including unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities and children from the Roma community.
Comprehensive Approach

- Child Protection
- Education & ECD
- Health & Nutrition
- Social Protection
- Youth Empowerment

Social Cohesion
Key programmatic principles

**Comprehensive approach**
Providing comprehensive social services from early childhood to adolescence, policy coordination with Ukraine

**Refugee engagement**
The voices and participation of refugees are reflected in programme design and implementation through consultations and feedback mechanisms; building capacities and engaging refugees in response to the crisis

**Sustainability**
Working with and through national systems – strengthening the system to cope with the additional pressures that will be in the long-term benefit all vulnerable groups

**Social cohesion**
Facilitating inclusion of refugees in Czech society through programmatic interventions and partnerships. Expanding services to both refugee and Czech populations in need
Every Child Learns and Develops Full Potential in Life
Results to date and the way forward

Through the partnership with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, UNICEF has supported the Ministry and other partners to strengthen the education system, increase enrolment and ensure quality learning outcomes for all refugee children. Since July 2022, UNICEF has partnered with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the City of Prague, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to support the Czech Government’s inclusive approach for Ukrainian refugee children’s education and development.
By April 2023, nearly **60,500 children and adolescents**, including **369 Roma refugee children**, were supported in their learning through a range of UNICEF-supported formal and non-formal education programmes to facilitate quality learning.

A dedicated **communication campaign** reached thousands of families with necessary information about the Czech education system and schools and the Ministry’s **helpline** responded to **3,463 requests and questions** from both Ukrainian and Czech people.

Capacity-building for **4,800 teachers, school staff and caregivers** has equipped them with skills to provide safe, healthy, and inclusive learning environments to promote mental health and psychosocial support, social and emotional learning, inclusive education, and teaching of Czech as second language. Almost **1,000 Ukrainian and Czech teaching assistants** are enrolled in five-month qualification courses across the country.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and UNICEF launched a **special grant scheme** enabling access to diverse forms of non-formal early learning opportunities for over **4,700 children (including 1,967 children under 6 years of age) in 67 centres** across the country. Over **2,500 parents** of young children benefited from parenting support and consultations, adaptation/integration courses, and parent-child playgroups.
UNICEF will continue to support equitable access to inclusive quality education for refugees and other vulnerable children, including Roma children and children with disabilities, from early childhood to adolescence. We aim at supporting the learning of refugee girls and boys by focusing on the following key interventions:

- **Enhance outreach and communication** with Ukrainian families and students, including through the back-to-school campaign.

- **Increase school capacity and services** such as classroom spaces, facilities, equipment, learning materials, lunch subsidies as relevant to support Ukrainian students.

- **Accelerate capacity-building** of additional teachers and school staff through trainings such as inclusive education and mental health and psychosocial support.

- **Facilitate Czech language** acquisition among students of different age groups through adaptation/preparatory classes.

- **Identify** out-of-school refugee children and adolescents, understand their learning and development needs, and provide **non-formal flexible learning** opportunities, targeting young children under 6 years of age and adolescents over 15 years of age.

- **Generate data and evidence** through surveys and research and facilitate the effective use of data to inform policies and strengthen educational management information systems.

- **Mainstream** the current refugee support programmes/schemes in education and early childhood development into **national systems, policies, and strategies** for sustainability, contributing to the achievement of inclusive quality education for all children in the Czech Republic, in the context of the Education Strategy 2030+.
“We are connectors and build bridges for children who need it”

Ukrainian teaching assistants play a vital role in Czech schools. With UNICEF’s support, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and Educational Institute of the Central Bohemian (VISK) have been supporting capacity-building for teaching assistants, including Czech language education. Yana is a teaching assistant who came to the Czech Republic from the Kharkiv region. In Ukraine she worked as an assistant to a CEO in a large company. Now she is working with children in a Czech school to support their education, communication, and provide psychosocial support.

Yana first started working at the school as a cleaner, while she attended adaptation classes and Czech language courses. She then accepted a position as a teaching assistant and enrolled in the special course organized by VISK on how to work with children and address their special education needs.

The course supports both Ukrainian and Czech teaching assistants to gain skills to support children, including children with disabilities across the Czech Republic. The course proved to be popular, with nearly 1,000 students currently enrolled and 600 students already completing the course in the first half of the 2022/23 school year. Hundreds more students are already enrolled for the next academic year.
Every Child is Provided with Adequate Health care
UNICEF contributes to strengthening the national health system of the Czech Republic to improve the capacity of health services to provide for refugee children and their caregivers, and indeed all vulnerable groups. The Ministry of Health and UNICEF established a joint workplan to respond to the main gaps and needs in access to health care. The following are main areas of the UNICEF response:

**Increased access to primary health care services:** Responding to the increased demand for primary health care services and shortage of general practitioners and pediatricians to register new patients, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health supported six university hospitals to increase capacity by establishing 10 outpatient centres for children and adults and expanded the capacities of 29 pediatrician’s clinics.

**Over 40,500 children and women in refugee and host communities** have benefited from quality health and vaccination services, including from the university hospitals in Prague, Ostrava, Olomouc, Kolín, Stodská, and Příbram and 25 general practitioner facilities across the country.

**Ukrainian health professionals integrated:** In partnership with the Institute for Post Graduate Medical Education in Prague and the Centre for Nursing and Other Healthcare Professionals in Brno, UNICEF is supporting Ukrainian health care professionals to obtain accreditation and support their inclusion into the Czech health system. More than **850 Ukrainian health professionals** have gone through intensive preparation courses on the national health system and medical terminology, health service provision and Czech language courses.
Vaccine preventable outbreaks and other infectious diseases: UNICEF and the Ministry of Health launched a **national campaign on vaccination** to provide practical information on how to access vaccination services, build vaccine confidence and increase demand for vaccination among Ukrainian refugees. Furthermore, UNICEF is supporting the National Institute of Public of Health to provide information and increase the knowledge and skills of Ukrainian and Czech school students across the country on prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. More than **2,700 Ukrainian and Czech adolescents** have been provided with information, knowledge and skills on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).
UNICEF will continue supporting the Ministry of Health and other key stakeholders in providing access to quality services for refugee children and their caregivers and other vulnerable groups in the Czech Republic through the following interventions:

- Support 10 hospitals and 29 general practitioners’ clinics across the country to provide quality health care services to refugee children and women.

- Support provision of health, nutrition and mental health programmes at community level through 14 regional community health promotion centres across the Czech Republic, targeting Ukrainian refugees and children from the Roma community.

- Invest in capacity-building for Ukrainian doctors and nurses to get recognition of their qualifications and start practicing in the Czech health system.

- Support capacity-building for Czech health care providers through training on culturally sensitive communication skills for the provision of health care, in partnership with the Institute for Postgraduate Medical Education.

- Conduct situation analysis and monitor, document and present trends on access to vaccination programmes to better inform interventions for Ukrainian refugees, through the partnership with National Institute of Public Health.
Ukrainian health care professionals

Since July 2022, the Ministry of Health and UNICEF have supported Ukrainian healthcare professionals to obtain accreditation to provide health services in the Czech health system. Tamara, a paediatrician from Ukraine, is one of 520 healthcare professionals who benefited from UNICEF-supported programmes. Soon after she arrived in the Czech Republic, Tamara started looking for opportunities to practice medicine to respond to the increased demand for health services for both Ukrainian refugees and Czech citizens. Tamara underwent a thorough training programme to facilitate her accreditation process to start practicing medicine in the Czech Republic. She is now part of the team that provides healthcare to refugees and the host community at the paediatric outpatient centre supported by UNICEF in University Hospital Olomouc, in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The centre is currently providing care to over 2,300 children.
Every Child is Protected and has a Fair Chance in Life
The **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** and UNICEF undertook the assessment of the social and child protection system of the Czech Republic. Building on existing mechanisms, systems and services provided by national and local level institutions and NGOs, Ukrainian refugee children and their families have been supported through the following interventions:

- More than **57,000** children and caregivers were provided with mental health and psychosocial support (**MHPSS**) through service provision and information on access to services.

- **30,793** children and adults were provided with access to safe spaces, protection, and support hubs.

- **492** unaccompanied and separated children (**UASC**) were identified, and of them 120 were provided with alternative care and **959** children received individual case management.

- Nearly **800 Ukrainian Roma** refugee children and caregivers accessed MHPSS, social services, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse risk prevention, and response interventions. Of this number, **343 Ukrainian Roma refugee children** received individual case management.

- **5,138** women and children were provided with access to gender-based violence risk mitigation and prevention interventions.

- Nearly **2,000 refugees (55 percent women and 26 percent children)** benefited from support on housing, enrolment in education, provision of legal, protection and health related counselling and referral through the Refugee Follow Up Support Center in the City of Prague.
UNICEF will continue to support the strengthening of child protection and social protection systems in the Czech Republic focusing on enhanced inclusion of refugees to ensure their specific needs are met:
Support the child protection **reform process** with a view to guarantee the inclusion of refugee and migrant children, strengthen preventive services and family support, increase gatekeeping mechanisms, support the alternative care agenda, and strengthen the capacity and efficiency of municipal social services to meet the identified needs of vulnerable refugees with 13 Municipalities of the Czech Republic.

Deliver **Humanitarian Cash Benefit** and provide access to services to **refugee children with disabilities** in partnership with the Red Cross and in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Expand child protection services to refugee children, including vulnerable and at-risk children and families, UASC and Roma through the provision of **MHPSS** and **access to safe child- and youth-friendly spaces** for children and caregivers.

Provide **gender-based violence** prevention, mitigation, response services and **protection of sexual exploitation and abuse** for refugees.

Strengthen the capacity of **social service workforce professionals** to adequately respond to the specific needs of refugee children and families.

Provide the most vulnerable and hardest-to-reach refugee children with community-based integrated services through **18 integration centres** across the country, together with the **Ministry of the Interior**.

Contribute to the provision of enhanced **individualized case management** for vulnerable refugee children.
Strengthen mechanisms for the identification of UASC and expand temporary foster or other community-based care solutions and provide them with alternative care.

Strengthen inter-sectoral coordination between key line ministries and between national and regional level for comprehensive and tailored support to refugees.

Collect, analyze, and use data and information at central, regional, municipal and OSPOD levels to inform programming, improve coordination and avoid duplication.
Including and empowering refugee Roma children and families

UNICEF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and NGO Romodrom, has been supporting the inclusion of Roma refugee children and their families by improving access to health, education, social and child protection services, as well as fighting discrimination. Together with Romodrom, UNICEF identifies challenges faced by refugee children and families from the Roma community in the Czech Republic and addresses them through the national social and child protection, education, and health services.

Nearly 800 Ukrainian Roma refugee children and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support and other protection services with UNICEF support (including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse risk prevention and mitigation). Over 340 Ukrainian Roma refugee children received individual case management. Over 300 school-age children have been supported with play and learning activities as well as inclusion into local Czech schools.

Five localities hosting Roma refugees from Ukraine have been supported with education support. An interdisciplinary mobile team provides enhanced protection and other services through social workers and child psychologists. UNICEF will continue to focus on identifying and responding to the needs and vulnerabilities of the most vulnerable Roma children and families, while addressing discrimination and barriers thus contributing to the inclusion and empowerment of the Roma refugee population.
Every Adolescent is Skilled and Empowered
UNICEF seeks to include the voices of youth into policy and programming. UNICEF has hired and trained adolescent Ukrainian refugees who arrived in the Czech Republic without their parents. These young people are working with other youth to ensure strategies and plans implemented by the government and civil society partners are informed by young refugees’ needs, challenges and aspirations. In particular, UNICEF supported:

- Development of an outreach strategy which combines online and offline modalities to engage youth around challenges they face.

- Engagement of **over 10,000 Czech and Ukrainian children and adolescents** to connect and build bridges across cultures and collaboratively develop projects to benefit their local communities in collaboration with the City of Prague and CSOs such as the Scouts, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Junior Achievement.
In collaboration with the 18 integration centres and two community centres, UNICEF continues supporting the development of a network of youth-friendly spaces. The spaces provide case management services for adolescents, non-formal education opportunities, and referrals to extracurricular activities or formal education services in the area. They will also act as platforms to foster youth-led outreach and youth-led programme design, putting youth in the lead of designing the services that target them. The adolescent programming will specifically focus on the following interventions:

Provide **skills-for-employability training** and support **pathways to decent employment** for youth. Training targeting youth will focus on entrepreneurship, job search and CV development, as well as soft skills and technical trainings. Some training will take place through schools and will include Czech youth, and some will take place in a network of 19 youth-friendly spaces across the country.

Expand **youth-led participation** work. This includes fostering participatory approaches through the 18 regional integration centres, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs Participation Clubs in every region. It also includes providing opportunities for youth to engage directly with policymakers and civil society organizations around the policies and programmes that impact them.
Co-creating social cohesion programmes with the Municipality of Prague

Through UNICEF’s partnership with the Municipality of Prague and other partners, over 2,500 adolescents and youth participated in nonformal education and activities focused on promoting social cohesion between host community and refugees. To scale those efforts further, UNICEF and the municipality offer grants for partners focused on fostering social cohesion in Prague.

Ukrainian and Czech youth were engaged in a human-centered design process to understand the barriers and opportunities to social cohesion in the city. Two co-creation workshops brought together youth and 47 CSOs to develop programmes and solutions to youth-defined challenges. Organizations used those ideas to inform their proposals for the municipality’s grant scheme aimed at youth and social cohesion.
UNICEF expresses its appreciation to the Government of the United States for their generous support to UNICEF refugee response in the Czech Republic. We also thank the people and private sector in the United States, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom, Sweden and others who made a contribution to support Ukrainian refugee children and families who fled the war to the Czech Republic. Our appreciation goes to all our UNICEF government partners at national and municipal level as well as civil society organizations. Thank you for helping to advance our shared commitment to support children, women and families displaced by the war in Ukraine, and to protect the rights and improve the well-being of refugees in the Czech Republic.
For every child

Whoever she is.
Wherever he lives.
Every child deserves a childhood.
A future.
A fair chance.
That’s why UNICEF is there.
For each and every child.
Working day in and day out.
In more than 190 countries and territories. Reaching the hardest to reach.
The furthest from help.
The most excluded.
It’s why we stay to the end.
And never give up.

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