

Boosting mental health services for refugees

EPW core priorities and flagships

Moving towards universal health coverage
The Mental Health Coalition 🇸🇰

WHO collaboration

Training and capacity-building
Country cooperation strategy

The war in Ukraine has led to an influx of refugees into Czechia, increasing the population by almost 3%. Many of these refugees face severe mental health challenges; approximately 40% experience issues such as depression and anxiety. The existing mental health system in Czechia, already strained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, was unprepared to handle the sudden increase in demand for mental health services.

In response, the Regional Office worked with Czechia to establish a technical working group to map the mental health needs of refugees and identify the most affected regions. This led to integrating Ukrainian specialists, including psychologists and interpreters, into existing mental health centres across the country. These centres provide multidisciplinary care involving psychiatrists, nurses, social workers and other therapists.

The impact

The project has facilitated over 7000 interventions for Ukrainian refugees in seven regions of Czechia, while more than 215 000 refugees have benefited from wider WHO and partner-supported services, including information campaigns. It has also improved social cohesion by supporting children and adolescents in schools, including through regular visits by psychologists. The inclusion of Ukrainian mental health professionals not only provides culturally and linguistically appropriate care, but also builds the confidence of refugees accessing Czechia's health system.

Lessons learned

- The integration of multidisciplinary teams, including local and refugee mental health professionals, is essential for providing effective care.
- Addressing language barriers and cultural differences is crucial for successful mental health interventions.
- Continuous support and capacity-building for mental health professionals are necessary to sustain services.

Donors and partners

Ministry of Health; Alliance of Mental Health Centres; TRIGON Association; Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the United States Department of State (donor)



European Region



Ukrainian refugees in Czechia take part in a group mental health session.
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“With WHO support, we strengthened regional mental health centre teams to provide tailored services for Ukrainian refugees.”

Ms Hana Bolinová, Project Manager for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Projects, Alliance of Mental Health Centres, Czechia

What's next?

Czechia plans to expand its network of community-based mental health centres and continue supporting the integration of Ukrainian mental health professionals. Efforts will focus on the long-term integration and well-being of refugees, particularly children and older people, to ensure they can live their lives with minimal disruption.