

Unaccompanied minors in the Czech Republic

Social inclusion and the best
practices of integration

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Organization for Aid to Refugees (OPU)

Organization for the Aid to Refugees is non-profit non-governmental and humanitarian organization founded in Prague in 1991. Main goal is providing legal and social counselling for free to foreigners and also through educational programmes fight against racism, xenophobia and nation intolerance.

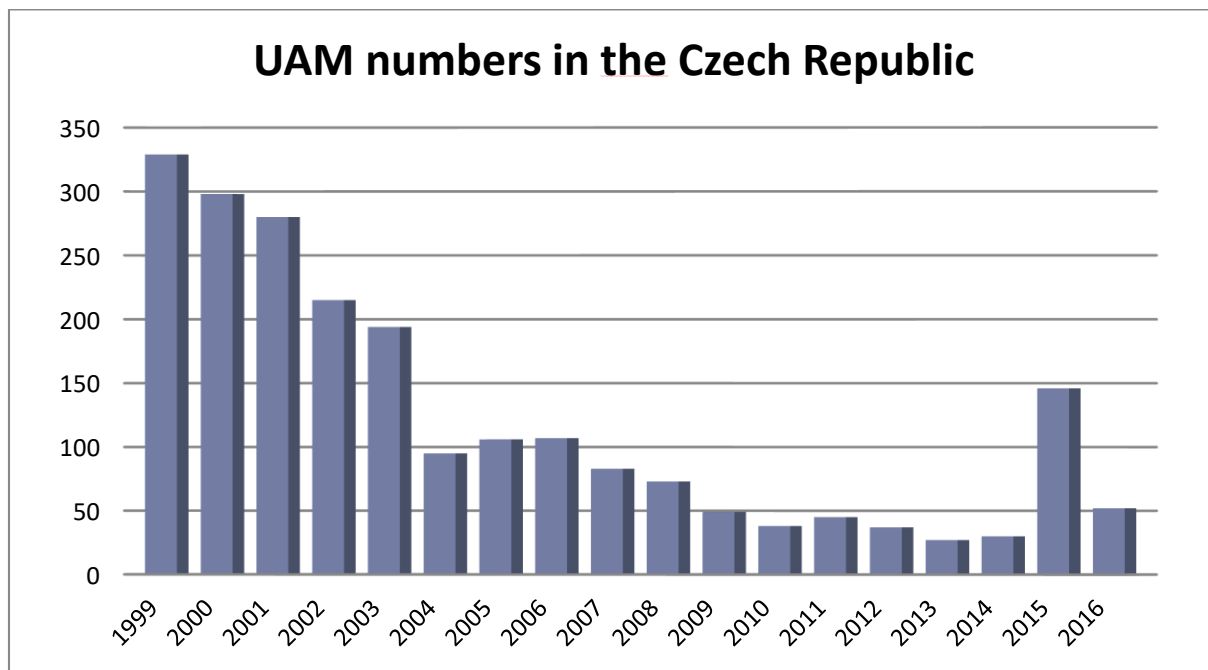
In regards to necessity of particular treatment of UAMs, a special UAMs team consisting of a lawyer and a social worker was created in 2003. OPU also assisted the creation of the Facility for children of foreign nationals ("ZDC"), established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Czech Republic in 2004, where all UAMs residing in the Czech Republic are now being placed. The OPU team cooperates closely with the facility – OPU workers come to the facility once a week and they provide free-of-charge social and legal counselling and deal with accommodation search for its clients, among others. At the moment, OPU is the only non-governmental organisation that systematically dedicates to this specific group of clients, responding to the current system of UAMs care and its drawbacks and attempts to fill in empty space in the system of care for unaccompanied minors with its activities.

What the UAMs team of OPU offers to its clients?

- Provides free-of-charge social and legal counselling to unaccompanied minors
- Offers assistance with accommodation situation in Czech Republic
- Organises free-time activities in the Facility for children of foreign nationals, thanks to volunteers of OPU
- Tries to secure financial means for language, practical or sports courses, textbooks or tools thanks to donations and projects
- Realizes workshops preparing UAMs for an individual life after they've reached 18 years of age
- Arranges psychological assistance, according to clients' needs
- UAMs team has a 24/7 helpline for UAMs where clients are encouraged to phone in case they need assistance with their problem.
- If needed, we arrange interpreter service.

Statistic data about UAM

Basic information about statistic data of UNM in the Czech Republic. As you can see, there is graph of UNM numbers in the Czech Republic trough the past years.



In 2016, almost half of unaccompanied minors came from Afghanistan, a total of 53 of which only one woman

Project Home in the new country

Project Home in the new country is focused on underage children without their parents or other relatives and are allocated to some of the specialized foster facilities. Project offers third countries underage children counselling and informing them about their rights and duties, about their status and possibilities in the Czech Republic, assist them with solving problems related to their situation and facilitate their integration into the Czech society. Also helping and assist target group members prepare to leave foster facilities. Project offers social counselling, which includes information on the possibilities of study, work, assistance with communication with offices etc. Trough legal counselling are UNM informed about information about their stay, residence possibilities, family reunification, assistance with the proceeding related to the international protection application etc. Another part is the possibility of using Educational and socio-cultural activities, Leisure time activities and also Individual and collective tutoring. If necessary, psychological counselling can also be used.

The best practices with UNM

Unaccompanied minors can benefit from foster care, but they face procedural as due to language and cultural differences, traumas, lack of foster care and residential issues. Through foster care, better integration can be ensured and the child is ready for real life without the help of an institution. Beyond foster care it is possible to use the host care system. Host care is a form of volunteering that can be offered by an individual or family. There are currently 4 host families.

Unaccompanied minors from the very beginning are joining a Czech school and from the beginning, they are part of the Czech educational system, making their integration easier than it is for adults. They are learning Czech language, they make friendship, they spend free time with another children.

Another beneficial activity leading to better integration of UNM is to work with volunteers. There are pairs between the volunteer and the child, who are cooperating together.