

UNIQLO CLOTHES DISTRIBUTION IN LÓVUA



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[Click here to watch a short video on the UNIQLO distribution in Lóvua.](#)

Introduction

Almost 60 million people around the world have been forced from home and needs are rising fast. But there is a growing gap in the funds available to protect them. Support from the private sector injects new and vital energy into finding responses to refugee needs. Some of the world's leading companies are already helping UNHCR to maximize our impact and improve our capacity to make a difference by delivering lifesaving assistance and sustainable solutions for millions of families worldwide.

Lóvua Context

In 2017, political and military instability in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) forced more than 35,000 people to seek refuge in the Lunda Norte Province of Angola. Most of these Congolese refugees now live in a large settlement in Lóvua municipality, where more than 50% of the inhabitants are under the age of 18.

UNIQLO in refugee context



Figure 1: a UNIQLO distribution space at the General Food Distribution © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

UNIQLO is a Japanese casual wear designer, manufacturer and retailer that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fast Retailing Co., Ltd. Fast Retailing started collaboration with UNHCR in 2006 and by the end of 2015, this partnership was strengthened to support forcibly displaced people around the world.

An important component of this partnership with UNIQLO is the distribution of donated clothing to refugees. As of December 2018, Fast Retailing has, using its All-Product Recycling Initiative, collected and, through UNHCR, distributed more than 26 million items of clothing to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) across 47 countries.

UNIQLO in Lóvua

In early 2018, UNIQLO offered to send almost **60,000 pieces of clothing to aid refugees in Lunda Norte**. This included bottoms and tops for women and men as well as autumn & winter/ spring & summer clothes for under 17-year olds. The clothes arrived in Lunda Norte at the beginning of November 2018 and after consultation with distribution partner, World Vision (WVI), UNHCR decided that the clothes would be distributed to refugees during the General Food Distribution, where partners distribute monthly rations of food as well as during relocation from urban areas of Lunda Norte to Lóvua settlement. Every refugee would receive a top and a bottom piece of clothing. Moreover, school children would receive extra clothes during their Portuguese exams. The remaining stock would then be distributed to members of the host community in the ambit of peaceful coexistence.

Distribution to school children



Figure 3: a school child looks at a shirt he was given during UNIQLO distribution © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Education is primarily delivered in **four temporary schools** that have been constructed in the settlement, with a capacity of 3,000 children and teenagers. The four schools, which were funded by the governments of China and Japan, have **16 classrooms**. The school curriculum is informal at present but based on the Angolan education system with the aim of preparing children for full integration into the formal Angolan education system in 2019. As such, Portuguese language classes are prioritised. However, children and teenagers also learn history, mathematics, civic education, geography and environmental studies. Three permanent schools are nearing completion.



Figure 2: a school child poses with his UNIQLO shirt © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Between 28 and 29 November, clothes were distributed by UNHCR and UNHCR partners (Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and WVI) to over 3,500 children between the ages of 6 and 18 as well as school pupils between 19-21. Many children were particularly happy as it was a welcome gift after a long school year and a year in the settlement with worn clothing.

Distribution during General Food Distribution

From 13-19 November 2018, more than 31,000 pieces of clothes were distributed to families during the General Food Distribution in Lóvua settlement.

Refugees received UNIQLO clothes before their food rations, based on their family size with each family member receiving a top and a bottom. Afterwards, many families spent time to assess the clothes that they received to try them on.



Figure 4 an opened UNIQLO bale ready for distribution © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe



Figure 5 a refugee poses after receiving UNIQLO clothes for his family during the food distribution © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Distribution during relocation

There are currently more than 7,000 refugees who live in the province of Lunda Norte, with the majority living in the capital of the province, Dundo. UNHCR, with the help of partners and the government, is relocating them to Lóvua settlement. This is a process that will continue until 18 January 2019 and as these refugees arrive, they receive UNIQLO clothes in addition to non-food items such as buckets. At the end of the process, some 15,000 pieces of clothes will be provided as part of a welcome package to refugees who will begin a new phase of their lives.

Distribution to the host community

The host community is an important stakeholder in the assistance UNHCR and partners provide to refugees in Lóvua municipality. Members of the host community have aided in both the development and maintenance of the Lóvua settlement. Moreover, there are constant interactions between the

refugee and host communities. Lóvuá municipality is an underdeveloped community in Angola with a significant amount of development needs. As part of a strategy to foster peaceful co-existence, UNHCR and partners provide several villages near Lóvuá settlement with a weekly ration of treated water. Solar lamps have also been installed in four villages as well as three school tents in three villages. Lastly, UNHCR and UNICEF have started the construction of four boreholes.



Figure 6 Angolan ladies from Naginga in joy as they receive their UNIQLO clothes © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

On 10 December, UNHCR and UNHCR partner, Lutheran World Foundation (LWF) distributed approximately 900 pieces of clothes to the host community in four separate villages in Lóvuá municipality, Bumba Tembo, Samussuia, Sacatangui and Naginga. An official from the local government, the Director of Social Welfare, Family and Female Empowerment assisted in the distribution. The local government was pleased to be part of another project that UNHCR and partners are implementing to aid the host community and the locals were very happy as they received high quality clothing. In 2019, there is a plan to distribute UNIQLO clothes to a further four villages that are located near the settlement.

Conclusion



Figure 7 a short that could not be distributed to neither the refugee nor the host communities © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

UNHCR Angola is appreciative of the donation as in Lóvuá settlement, 60,000 pieces of clothes were distributed to refugees and members of the host community. Clothes from UNIQLO were well received by both refugees and locals alike. However, in any distribution it is always important to consider the cultural traits of the beneficiaries. It should be noted that Angolan and Congolese communities from these regions (Kasai in the DRC and Lóvuá in Angola) are socially conservative communities.

In the case of women from both the refugee and host community, it was not possible to give them shorts. Many women preferred at least three-quarter length bottoms and/or full-length skirts. UNHCR appreciates UNIQLO’s continued support through All-Product

Recycling Initiative considering the cultural contexts of the beneficiaries in Angola. Traditionally in these rural communities, women maintain more clothes than men and as such, it would be helpful for women to receive a larger variety and quantity of clothes.

The distribution of clothes to school children who completed their exams was particularly rewarding as UNHCR and partners could witness the joy the children displayed after a long school year. Indeed, through its All-Product Recycling Initiative, UNIQLO continues to raise awareness about refugee issues through the power of clothing.

With special thanks to:

