

Local government officials learn about the concept of mixed migration during a 2-day workshop.

The workshop

Mixed migration is an inclusive concept that affects the work of several organisations including the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Therefore, together with the Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (CEPAMI), a workshop was held at the University of Lueji A'Nkonde in Dundo, Angola. The workshop presented an opportunity for more than 60 participants to learn about the overall concept of mixed migration movements, including definitions of refugees, asylum-seekers, victims of human trafficking, irregular migration, and smuggled migrants. Participants also learnt about different protection needs of the aforementioned categories of migrants. As such, the concept was split into three main axes: international refugee protection, human trafficking, and vulnerable migrants.



Figure 1: Participants learning about international law ©UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

The workshop was opened by the Vice Governor of Lunda Norte for Social and Economic Affairs, Ms Deolinda Satula Vilarinho, who explained why refugees flee and reaffirmed the importance of helping refugees, especially in the case of a neighbouring country such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). There were speeches from Father Colm Reid of CEPAMI and Guy-Rufin Guernas, head of the UNHCR Office in Lunda Norte, introduced mixed migration from a UNHCR perspective. The day also included a moving testimony from Etienne Kabakela, a Congolese refugee who was born and grew up in Angola but moved to The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) when he was young.

Protection

The UNHCR Protection Officer in Dundo, Elodie Lemal, gave an interactive lecture on the basic concepts of protection and mixed migration. In this context, there was an explanation of key aspects such as non-refoulement. Non-Refoulement is a fundamental principle of international law that forbids a country from returning asylum seekers to a country where they would likely face danger of persecution. She also briefly described achievements that have occurred in the Lovua Refugee Settlement and plans for next year such as a focus on safety against violence and durable solutions.



Figure 2: Vice Governor Vilarinho delivers her speech to the participants @UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

There were lots of interesting questions on mixed migration during the Q&A session including a member of the police, who used a fictional case to ask about the non-refoulement principle. There were also questions on potential sanctions for countries who do not adhere to international legal instruments.

Participants also gained an appreciation for the concept of human trafficking through an esteemed panel that included Professor Dr. Evaristo Agosto Tchikomo from the law faculty at the University of Lueji A'Nkonde and the IOM consultant, Lerena Pinto. During this section of the workshop, key international instruments such as the Palermo Protocol were explained. The Palermo Protocol aims to prevent trafficking, especially of women and children.

One of the highlights from the second day involved the screening of a movie entitled Escudo (literally, Shield in Portuguese). Escudo is a simulation of a human trafficking situation that occurs between Mozambique and South Africa.

Participant Profiles

Leopoldino Ndemupandula | Police



Specialist in Civic and Moral Education (7 UPG)

Leopoldino believed that these workshops are important especially for civil servants who work with this topic on a regular basis. The concepts of mixed migration and non-refoulement were key takeaways that Leopoldino will use to implement possible trainings and activities.

Elizandra | Migration and Foreigners Service (SME)



Migration Specialist Assistant

Elizandra was impressed by the workshop and understood the importance of treating refugees as human beings. Indeed, refugees also have inalienable rights and a sense of dignity. Elizandra would like to transmit this knowledge to her colleagues. She also found the Q&A session very interesting, especially questions on violations of Angolan law and the possible impact on non-refoulement.

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