

EDUCATION IN LÓVUA SETTLEMENT



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

Introduction

Education provides us with knowledge about the world and the skills that are needed to have an impact. It can also lay the foundation for a strong society. Indeed, a good quality human resource capacity is considered a critical part of a nation. There are different social benefits of education such as greater civic engagement, better employment opportunities and access to networks.

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 in Southern Africa. Most of these refugees now live in a large settlement in Lóvua municipality, where more than 50% of its inhabitants are under the age of 18.

Education in refugee context



Figure 1: a temporary school in Lóvua settlement © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

According to the latest [UNHCR education report](#), there are more than four million refugee children, who are out of school. This represents an increase of 500,000 children in one year. Unfortunately, only 61% of refugee children attend primary school, compared to a global average of 92% and this drops significantly to 23% who are enrolled in secondary school, compared to 84% globally.

The importance of education in a refugee response has been recognised by several documents such as the [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#), which aims to deliver “inclusive and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning”.

There are many practical benefits of having a strong educational element in a refugee response such as educating refugees with the knowledge and skills to live productively and independently. Additionally, education can mitigate the risk of child labour, sexual exploitation and child marriage.

Education in Lóvua

Education is primarily delivered in the **four 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 but based on the Angolan education system with the aim of preparing children for full integration into the formal Angolan education system. As such, Portuguese language classes are prioritised. However, children and teenagers also learn history, mathematics, morals and civics, geography and environmental studies.

School classes are for children and teenagers between the **ages of 5 and 21**. Additionally, as the categorisation of school classes is based on the Angola school system, the school structure starts from the first class (1^a) until high school (Ensino Médio). The school timetable is also structured on the class structure so that school begins with the youngest children in 1^a and ends with the oldest teenagers in Ensino Médio (see table).

There are generally **26 classes per day** in Lóvua and each teacher teaches approximately **4 hours per day**.

Time	Classes
8:15 -10:15h	1 ^a
10:30 -12:30h	2 ^a
	3 ^a
	4 ^a
	5 ^a
12:45 -15h	6 ^a
	7 ^a - 9 ^a
	Ensino Médio



Figure 2: Local teacher delivering a history class
UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

19 local teachers, like Tomás Kiako and a coordinator were hired by JRS in July last year to deliver the informal curriculum. Moreover, as part of a commitment to assist skilled refugees in the settlement, **20 “auxiliary teachers”** were hired.

Auxiliary teachers are refugees, usually with a teaching background, like Augustin Tshiwala-Ngandu who taught [English and Literature in DRC](#). They usually assist local teachers, particularly with any language issues that they may have with students (Lingala and Tshiluba are the main languages in the settlement) or they take classes when local teachers are unavailable.

“Local teachers who did not speak Lingala or Tschiluba are learning from the auxiliary (refugee) teachers.”

There are other benefits that exist in a teacher – auxiliary teacher relationship, for instance in language learning. As local teacher Silvia Benjamin stated, auxiliary teachers receive on-the-job training in how Angolan teachers conduct their classes as well as how the Angola education system is structured. Moreover, “some of the local teachers who did not speak Lingala or Tschiluba are learning from the auxiliary teachers”. For refugees, particularly skilled refugees, the opportunity to be able to utilise their skillset is very important for their mental welfare and identify.



Figure 3: Children wait outside school before classes begin. Usually there are queues for both boys and girls. © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Current situation

Although the school project was developed for 3,000 children in 2017, the monthly average number of children attending schools in 2018 is 3,800. However, it should be stressed that this figure regularly fluctuates for many reasons.

During events such as food distribution, many children skip school to help the family. Moreover, for families that have shops or another business, children may help with logistics when goods arrive. Additionally, older teenagers may be involved in construction work, work outside the settlement and other commitments.

Due to the number of children in the settlement, classes can be oversubscribed and pass the 100:1 teacher pupil ratio.



Figure 4: a student at a school in Lóvua Settlement © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Future of education in Lóvua

As part of the plan to improve school infrastructure, three permanent schools are planned to be constructed in the settlement by the end of the year. There is also a hope that these refugee children and teenagers will be able to start formal education next year. Moreover, as there is a possibility that they may return to DRC, funding would allow for the introduction of French classes in addition to Portuguese classes for adults.

Profiles of teachers

Silvia Benjamin



Figure 5: Silvia Benjamin © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Occupation	Teacher
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Silvia believes that it is important for Congolese students to learn Portuguese as it facilitates and improves their interaction with Angolans. This is especially as they could remain in Angola for a while.

Tshimanga Kidd



Figure 6: Tshimanga Kidd © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Occupation	Assistant Teacher
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Tshimanga thanked the Angolan government for giving refugees the opportunity to be in Lóvua. Tshimanga is learning Portuguese and is grateful for having the opportunity to be a teacher in the settlement as he is a teacher by trade from DRC.

With special thanks to:



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