

LIVELIHOODS IN LÓVUA SETTLEMENT



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Introduction to Livelihoods

After fleeing war or persecution, opportunities to earn a living and be self-sufficient is one of the most effective ways for refugees to rebuild their lives and support their families. Livelihoods ensures that the capabilities, assets and activities of people can be utilised to enhance the well-being of refugees without undermining the natural environment. Moreover, livelihoods can build economic, cultural and social ties between refugee and host communities.

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.

Livelihoods in Lóvua



Figure 1: Inside an informal shop in Lóvua © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Recognising the importance of livelihoods, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) released the Global Strategy for Livelihoods (2014-2018) that outlines several core principles such as protection, equity, diversity, access and sustainability.

The Global Strategy for Livelihoods is guiding the development of a livelihoods strategy for the Lóvua settlement with input from the main livelihoods partners, the government of Angola, World Vision International (WVI), The Lutheran World Foundation (LWF) and World Food Programme (WFP). The strategy aims to develop various livelihoods interventions.

As the livelihoods programme is relatively new in Lóvua, many proposals have been made.

Trade

One of the most popular ways to generate an income whilst also providing a service to the community is through trade. In Lóvua there are many informal shops that are spread across the settlement selling various types of commodities. Land near the entrance of the settlement has been identified to serve as a large market with up to 192 stalls and an open area that can accommodate up to 400 traders. The allocation policy for the 192 stalls will be geared towards refugees who are either already active traders or registered as business entrepreneurs at the time of arrival. Additionally, a leadership committee will be set up to manage the market and its members will be traders who will need to be elected by members. There is also a proposal to have two village representatives on the committee amongst other proposals such as:

- A daily stall fee of 50 Angolan Kwanzas (Kz) that will be managed by the leadership committee.
- A floating stall ownership policy and this means that in the event that a trader is absent for a given period of time without approval, the stall could be reallocated to another trader.
- 25% of the stalls will be allocated to members of the host community in the immediate villages.
- A market policy will be drawn up with the input of the traders and will serve as a guideline.

Involving members of the host community in trade is a way to strengthen cohesion between the refugee and host communities. It is also important, because trade opportunities are scarce or non-existent in the villages that lie between Lóvua town and the Lóvua refugee settlement. The daily fee is a national standard and will facilitate the work of the committee with regard to the maintenance of the market area.



Figure 2: The identified area for the formal market with stall markings © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

To supplement the implementation of the formal market, there are plans to commence with business training that will focus on financial management with courses such as accounting and goods tracking. This series of trainings will lead to a manual that will form part of a business kit. The kit, which will be handed to traders, will also contain commodities that will assist in trading as well as tools, such as canopies for shade.

Other income generating activities

Apart from the market, there are numerous other ways in which refugees generate income such as salons and shoe repair services. For instance, there are two cinemas that, through 100Kz viewing fees, can generate between 2,000 and 3,000Kz per day. The cinemas usually show movies and during the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the cinemas were constantly full especially when favourite nations such as Brazil or France played.

There is also a popular restaurant that is frequently visited by refugees and non-refugees alike. It has been operating since the opening of the settlement in August 2017 and serves local staples for 500Kz per dish.



Figure 3: The local restaurant in Lóvuá Settlement © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

A popular but highly controversial practice is the selling of charcoal. However, refugees are prohibited from selling charcoal under Angolan law. UNHCR and partners have several ongoing campaigns to dissuade refugees from this practice.

But perhaps the most common form of generating income is through humanitarian partners who employ casual labour known as Cash for Work (CFW). Every sector has a CFW team, known as mobilisers, and the duration of assignments can vary. For instance, CFW may be employed on a short term basis to clear

land for a new clinic or be employed for a longer period of time to aid teachers at the school. Generally speaking, long term CFW already have key experience. For instance, refugee assistant teacher, Augustin Ngandu, was a teacher in the DRC and has been able to use his experience with children to support Angolan refugee teachers.

Agriculture

Agriculture forms the largest part of the livelihoods programme in Lóvua. It is important as through agriculture, refugees can generate income, ensure food security and reduce their dependence on humanitarian partners for food assistance.



Figure 4: A nursery bed © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Currently each residential plot is 25x25m in length and width and the livelihoods team have taken advantage of the plot size to promote horticulture, the act of garden cultivation and management. The concept, which the livelihoods team has termed 'kitchen gardens', is already popular in the 3,163 plot settlement. Some refugees produce sweet potatoes, cassava, okra and tomatoes. Five nursery beds have been established throughout the settlement to teach refugees how to manage their kitchen gardens and grow vegetables. The livelihoods team provides seeds to refugees and to date, 360 families have received a variety of seeds such as cabbages, tomatoes, onions, okra and cassava stems for their kitchen gardens.

Currently gardening is difficult, especially for vulnerable refugees. The livelihoods team have proposed the distribution of high yield crops that can lead to a greater harvest as well as smaller areas for vulnerable refugees. However, the soil remains a challenge due to its poor quality and this calls for attention during the planning phase for any agricultural intervention.

Agricultural Space

The livelihoods team have also designated an area near the river for agricultural development. The area is 1,300m by 12 km and, at the time of writing, 240 half hectare plots have been cleared and provided to 480 families. The space will enable them to cultivate for self-consumption as well as for trade purposes. However, the land still needs to be prepared for cultivation and a refugee farmer (see figure 5) mentioned that she has begun to clear the land for cultivation for the coming season. The lady mentioned that it

usually takes two months, with the aid of her children, to clear the half hectare land. This is also due to the lack of appropriate farming technology such as tractors.



Figure 5: A refugee shows off her half hectare plot © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

In front of the agricultural area, there is a large plot of land for experimental purposes and the livelihoods team also uses this land to deliver interactive training on good agricultural practices. Near the agricultural area, there are plots that some active refugees have utilised to grow vegetables such as cabbages and sweet potatoes. For Zamba, a resident, he is able to sell a harvested bed of sweet potato leaves for 2,500 Kwanzas, which he can harvest once every two weeks.

Challenges

The biggest challenge is a lack of funding for livelihoods interventions as well as a lack of skills, technology and basic tools. For instance, some of the refugees who have nursery beds near the river are not able to adequately water their crops. There are refugees who brought their own cans as they crossed over to Angola, however some have resorted to other means to water their gardens. The lack of funding has also limited the types of seeds that can be provided, an introduction of aubergine seeds, for instance, would significantly improve diet diversity and sales. Moreover, the lack of a livelihoods strategy has limited the exploration of diverse projects and, consequently, many refugees have not been engaged. The strategy is in development to solve this and to design possible projects that can engage the refugee population.

Profiles of refugees in livelihoods

Mbuku Didier



Figure 6: Mbuku Didier © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Occupation | Shop Owner |
|-------------------|------------|

Mbuku is happy with his shop and depends mainly on Cash for Work workers as clients. He believes that the formal market is a good idea, especially because he is able to keep his shop and open a new one in the formal market area. His most popular products are sugar and rice.

Zamba Pierre



Figure 7: Zamba Pierre © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Occupation | Farmer |
|-------------------|--------|

Zamba is able to earn a good living by selling his harvest and has many clients. He currently has six beds and can harvest each one up to twice a month. Some of the refugees in the settlement use the harvest to supplement their diet.

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