



strengthening bioethics committees in lusophone african region

## Angola convenes national bioethics forum



**Sharing ethical practices in health research.** EDCTP LusoAfro Bioethics project leaders, Professor Maria Rosário Oliveira Martins (upper left) and Professor João Schwabach (below) share the experiences of Portugal and Mozambique, while panelists actively engage in the consultative workshop held in Luanda, Angola on 15 December 2021.

On 15 December 2021, the Faculty of Medicine of the Universidade Agostinho Neto (FMUAN), as an integral part of the LusoAfro Bioethics Project, organized a consultative workshop to encourage an exploratory dialogue to recognize the Universal Declaration of Bioethics and Human Rights. It also aims to raise awareness on the imperative need to create a national bioethics body to ensure the greater benefit in the advances in medical care, biology, biomedical and biotechnological science. The event gathers esteemed members of the Health Bioethics Committees in the national territory, university professors who have courses in health and law, religious institutions, students, and the general public through a hybrid combination of in-person and online engagement.

Considering the rapid development of research in health, it is necessary to observe solid ethical principles and to protect the exploitation of vulnerable populations in their rights. This is also in direct response to the growing need of coordinating the structure for ethical, political and consultative processes. The forum envisions to have a national committee that brings together institutional committees, promotes strict adherence to ethical standards in research, harmonizes policies and procedures, create solid foundations, and serves as a platform for deliberations focused on the correct use of biological and biomedical technologies in Angola. **Story continues on page 2...**



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In the process, the synergy of efforts between the Ministry of Health (MINSa) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESCTI) promote the establishment of a comprehensive agenda for health research priorities, and find better ways on how to effectively realize them within the agreed political deliberation mechanisms. Highly committed to a truly north-south collaboration, FMUAN, and its Independent Ethics Committee, has invited established bioethics experts to share and learn from different country experiences. Among them are the National Bioethics Commission of Mozambique (CNBS) of the Faculty of Medicine of the Eduardo Mondlane University (FM-UEM) by its Committee of Institutional Bioethics (Mozambique), the University of Cape Verde (UnicV), the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (IHMT) and the Faculty of Law (FL) of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

### ***Professor Schwalbach attends Cape Verde's 2<sup>nd</sup> Health Research Congress***

Professor João Schwalbach, LusoAfro project coordinator, took a major part as plenary discussant in the field of bioethics at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Health Conference in Cabo Verde last 15 December 2021. Before a crowd of educators, scholars, and practitioners, he emphasizes the multidisciplinary and independent, role of review ethics committee in achieving Sustainable Development Goals, which is the overarching theme of the conference. He particularly hinged his talk on how rigid revision process of protocol submission can hasten sound health research, as proven from his experience as Chair of Chair of Mozambique's National Bioethics Committee.

Professor Jose Antonio dos Reis, President of Cape-Verde National Bioethics Committee, discussed the current situation on the institutional capacity for health ethics review. The legal basis and institutional framework are already in place to gradually achieve an independent, multidisciplinary, and competent research ethics committee. He also bared the five-year agenda (2020-2024) for ethical review in different thematic areas of health research, including policy imperatives for its effective implementation.



**Information exchange.** Professor Schwalbach shares the policy journey of Mozambique's National Bioethics Committee, its challenges and recent gains, while bares the research agenda for robust ethical research practices in Cape Verde.



# LUSOAFRO BIOETHICS

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Stakeholders

- North-South collaboration
- 5 Luso-African Countries
- 5 Research Ethics Committees



Activities

- 4 nationwide workshops
- 182 students reached



Milestones

- 1 book project
- 1 Ethical Framework Guidelines



## **LusoAfro Bioethics Team wraps up project delivery for 2022**

During a meeting in Lisbon last 02 December 2021, the project steering committee has finally lined up the activities for 2022, bearing a sheer of optimism on its timely target delivery. Among the highly anticipated deliverables is the conduct of the online training program, which is slated to run on 14-16<sup>th</sup> March 2022. It was also decided that the last LusoAfro Bioethics project seminar will tentatively take place in Maputo on 15 April 2022. Finally, the book project is also in the pipeline for publication with Professor Helena Pereira de Melo as the task leader. The book will be a compendium of different thematic areas in bioethics like the legislation ethics for health research, comprehensive overview bioethics committees, and guidelines for protocols submission and revision, with spatial focus in LusoAfrica.

**All systems go:** Core project team members and staff held its meeting at the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in Lisbon

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