



MONUSCO

Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies
pour la Stabilisation en République
démocratique du Congo

United Nations Organisation Stabilization
Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Portrait of Richard LANKEU TCHATCHEBEU



Daniel Kitcher who is his supervisor confided to us that he was a very good candidate for the "Portrait of the Month." Well, let us do your portrait since we have the greenlight from your chief!

Richard, from Cameroun, must teach me how to pronounce his surname very well (it is similar to the Malagasy; I don't think I would ever be able to do it, why should some people have such a long name? Sorry, what about my own name! I should not forget that English people call me "Essaytaou Taouri", they too find it difficult to pronounce. Well, let us now revert to Richard. How should I better put it, he is the type of the persons who ever keep their teenagers' look, or I should rather say an angel's look. He got to the DRC in August 2014, to join the team tasked to maintain and repair the automobile fleet, engines and to provide support equipment for MONUSCO's aviation, on behalf of the West Region. Would you please tell us Richard what happens when you receive a request for car's repair, do you establish any order of priority? "No, I give equal treatment to all my clients regardless of rank and I make sure that all the staff under my responsibility do the same." Come on, Richard, do you mean when I arrive at your

office with the Special Representative's driver at the same time, you would receive me first...? "Of course, there is a rule that VIPs' vehicles should be given top priority given their ranks and nature of their duties" That's what I expected to hear from you...It is quite normal Richard.

Richard, why did you want to work for the United Nations? "It was quite obvious for me to serve the United Nations one day given the nature of the activities I was involved in, *inter alia*, providing free tutoring to members of associations assisting children from the most destitute families. So, serving as a volunteer in the peacekeeping mission was just a response to my dreams." My dream to serve in the

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UN large family in DRC came true. *“Being able to share my experience and enrich myself based on the cultural diversity promoted by this global organization is something that I cherish so much and if I may, I would even call it luck for me.”* Oh Dear UN, I did not know there were people who love you so much! Yeah, unfortunately, we hear lots of greens...not ripe stories about the UN that sometimes give rise to doubts. Yet, if you did not exist...entire countries could have been wiped out of the face of the earth. As far as I am concerned, I love you and *“you are my best love story.”*

Before joining the United Nations, Richard had a very rich career, after sound education, with automobile aftersales service. *“Immediately after my completing my education, I was hired by a car maintenance and repair firm where I served for two years; then I left to serve in another firm, after acquiring four years’ experience I got a teachers’ training in mechanic engineering, and I returned to the factory to serve as deputy manager before joining the United Nations a year later, currently, I am following a British on-line master degree program in the management of supply chains.”* Our colleague Richard is very dedicated; he always does his best to achieve his objectives, why not his dreams: to run the largest automobile factory or to remain in the United Nations and to serve as chief of transports!! Ho...Please be careful with your answers, it is either Carlos Ghosn who will have you checked after by his “sbires”, or our chief of transport who will give you a funny look. Well, it is not a bad thing to have ambitions; Chiefs go after serving and leave the place to the youngest generation to take over... Sorry, except for politicians!

Richard is a nice “*chap*”, say his colleagues and friends. Here is what one of them, Dramane Darave, Public Information Webmaster had to say about him: *“I met Richard for the first time at Entebbe (Uganda), during the usual check-in procedures for the newcomers to the Mission. We were altogether seven UN volunteers keen to make our contribution to MONUSCO’s noble mandate in DR Congo. Richard acted like a unifying element for the group. In spite of being the youngest of all us, he was the one who would most listen to others and proposed solutions to our concerns. He was the best. Besides, Richard is always available, he is highly dedicated to his work, he lavishly gives his time, attention and energy to others. We are lucky to have such a friend and colleague with whom we daily improve our human qualities. Professional wise, Richard is also a source of inspiration, with the high level of professionalism he displays. This may be confirmed by all the MONUSCO staff who visit the UN garage or who request his assistance in terms of repair. He is always available. Lastly, I would say that Richard is the kind of persons that everyone would need to have in their entourage since he makes everyone feel confident and exert some positive influence on his friends.”* I almost feel uplifted by such a testimony, I wish I could have it immediately in my CV. Dramane, would you have the same inspiration for me or is it just for Richard? I could read “yes” in his eyes, Dramane is very courteous guy. I do understand, one would say, it is not quite easy to compete with Richard. He is really great, handsome, young, sympathetic, hard-working and on top of all that has a “positive aura”. I can’t compare with such a great hulk. I would just yield in; lay down weapons, without any fight!

There is another testimony that backs up my analysis, the one of Jane Mukere, a colleague who works in the Communications section *“What I like the most in Richard is his composure when dealing with nervous drivers and those in a great hurry. His job is very sensitive for everyone would like to have a vehicle in good repair. He always manages to extricate himself from very difficult situations*

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due to his sense of organization and calmness. No matter how serious the problem may be with the car, he would always try hard to sort it out and to avoid letting down the staff in need." Moreover, he almost performs miracles...if I may say so; His performance is just matchless for me, I cannot compare with him!

Richard, MONUSCO is working in a country faced with serious ordeals including political and social tensions. How do you view the overall situation? *"Let me start by congratulating the Congolese people who, in spite of the ordeals facing the country, continue to work for peace. They spare no effort to achieve it as I can see. I hope, DR Congo, a huge country in Africa, would definitely achieve peace and prosperity in a near future through transparent elections. I am a bit disappointed to note that such a rich country with lots of human and natural resources prey to protracted and endless conflicts and subjected to militias and a political leadership that cannot get along for the well-being of their people."*



Is the UN performing well or poorly according to you? *"UN is doing a great job. I am of the opinion that UN support to the DRC through peacekeeping, human rights promotion, education and protection against discrimination and violence to women; police reform, logistic, technical support and collaboration with armed forces in the fight against militias, child protection and education, eradication of hunger and development projects are all a clear indication of the International Community's determination to bring the change and lay the foundations for development; I believe UN is doing a great job."*

Lately, the issue of Men/Women parity and women being involved in all areas of activities as well as in decision-making institutions were the main topics of conversations. What's your stand? Do you believe: *"women have to cope on their own?"*, others might think a lot has been achieved in favor of women in terms of positive discrimination with those who call themselves staunch defender of the cause of women? *"It would be too selfish to deny any credits and relevance to women's contribution for the advancement of our society. With regard to educational achievements, it is clear that women are increasingly active in almost all the areas. So, I give a special attention to the gender equilibrium and I support women's struggle."* What are your other concerns about the social situation, I understand, flying to the rescue of those who in trouble is something you like to do passionately? *"If my voice can be heard, I would like to see the people with disability who risk their lives every day on the road to seek some money be mentored and fed."* But of course your voice can be heard. The appeal is launched...

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Well, life is not just about jobs or voluntary work; by the way, my perfect man, what else do you do? *"I practice some sports, especially jogging and swimming, I enjoy visiting parks with my daughter, accompanying my charming spouse to do some shopping and enjoy games such as bowling and 5D video projections".* Okay, I am keen to know the rest of the story...How do you manage to help your spouse with house cores? *"I like cooking, especially making cakes (I am unbeatable at that) and I also like keeping the house tidy."* Well, well, well...I am obliged to take your word for it, anyway, you look as if butter wouldn't melt in your mouth!

You are young, do you like going out? (I don't like to go out late at night, there is a curfew, but I would not tell anyone) *"It is very difficult not to afford good things, it is an open secret that Congolese people are very musical and can easily win hearts, and inspire the greatest African artists who dominate the African music scene. Yes, from times to times, I go out to concerts with friends for the fun of it."* You would have certainly noted like me that it is "with male friends" that he goes out, not with female friend. And lastly a flaw to slip in. He spells out: "from time to time, the couples need some relaxing for short spell, They have their hobbies, but generally speaking, we do so many things together" Op pop pop...I don't care about the other things! Ouf I nearly missed it, he was going to do some drawings...

What is your fondest dream about the DRC? *"I would reveal it to you with closed eyes as it flows from my heart. The dream I cherish the most in my prayers for the DRC is to see peace and stability restored in DRC, which will precede growth through tourism, and investment. I dream of a Great DRC in which poverty and hunger are eradicated. I dream of a DRC that will take back the reins of the sub-region through massive agricultural production of electricity with its hydraulic potential and lastly I dream of a flawless governance that would boost the country's prosperity."*

What recollection would you keep about the DRC? *"My stay in DRC is an opportunity to have fruitful sharing of experiences both at professional and individual levels; I would also remember the warm relations of friendship and the wonderful local language I cherished so much Lingala which I love to practice, not to mention the warm spirit that spur the Congolese people, the breathtaking natural landscape and the variety of foods that is for me an added value that makes this country so special."*

As you can see Richard, I would never grow tired of making the most of your "positive Aura." I was like in a bubble, with all my chakras in levitation, during our interview. Please let as many people as possible take full advantage of it. The world does need it now.

By Aïssatou Laba Touré

Translated by Alphonse Yulu Kabamba

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