



UN

Volontaires

l'inspiration en action

May-June 2013 - Issue 11

DRC *in Focus*

**Mens sana in
corpore sano...**

**... Or how to ensure the well-being of all
in peacekeeping missions!**

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*Title: "A sound mind in a healthy body"

Editorial

**United Nations Volunteers,
at your service!**

Volunteers are at the service of others; it's a bromide. It becomes a "mise en abîme" when volunteers are serving other volunteers. This is what Jennifer, John and Himalaya are doing, and we feel honored to tell their story. They are moving behind the scene, play their role with great attention in this shadow theatre, whirling with a constant eye on the clock, so the people on the stage, under the spotlights, can act with serenity and confidence.

Many people, discreetly and silently, organized the Tshukudu race that enthused the entire city of Goma on 16 March, 2013. While some people were merrily striding across the city, some others were making sure that nothing would disturb the event. They did an amazing job and we take this opportunity to thank them.

Lastly, to conclude this edition, we will go back in time in the footsteps of Paul Panda Farnana, the first Congolese graduated from university.

Enjoy the reading!

**by Marc Spurling
UNV Programme Manager**



UN peacekeeping missions are volatile and stressful by nature. This stress can be detrimental to staff as well as to the organization. While it is difficult to reduce the stressors linked to the security situation on the ground, we can take a number of measures to ensure staff's well-being and stress management. This is Jennifer Cuario's mission. UNV Welfare Officer from the Philippines, Jennifer takes care of our well-being with enthusiasm and energy.

DRC in Focus - Jennifer, why do we need a Unit to take care of MONUSCO staff's well-being? After all, it's our own business...

Jennifer Cuario - Actually, ensuring staff's well-being in UN peacekeeping mission is essential. Not only because it is the responsibility of the organization to ensure its staff is happy but above all because it is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of the mission mandate. Mission life - working and living 24/7 in a hardship post-conflict/conflict area - can be challenging. Without a doubt, many of us are repeatedly exposed to extreme situations, suffering and violence, which generate significant levels of stress. Harsh living conditions, heavy workload and lack of social

Interview

Jennifer Cuario
UNV Welfare Assistant

Well-being on mission, it is possible!



Jennifer Cuario, right, is the dynamic organizer of MONUSCO walks, which offer a unique opportunity to UN staff to walk in the streets of Kinshasa.

life, security instability, separation from family and cultural uprooting can contribute to employee's stress and ill-being. A staff under pressure is more likely to make poor decisions or to behave in ways dangerous to themselves or others. To distract staff from stress, sadness and tedious routine and to ensure a healthy, lively and stress-free environment, it is therefore important to provide welfare and recreational opportunities.

What type of activities and services Welfare Unit offers to MONUSCO staff?

We offer a wide range of activities and services which provide staff with a good work-life balance. Among the activities

“ I get a lot of fulfillment from my job especially when I see my colleagues smiling. Thanks for the support and encouragement - it makes a project successful.”

we organize, I could mention the happy hours, our MONUSCO walks, our cruises on the Congo River, long weekend outside the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), interagency tournaments, and all kind of other activities. We also facilitate the access to the PX, the library in Kinshasa and sport facilities in almost every field office. Finally, we also take care of the guest houses and the cafeteria in Kinshasa as well as on the ground, to ensure they serve quality food.

As a Welfare Officer, how do you manage to ensure staff members' well-being, especially those deployed in remote duty stations?

My work mainly consists of encouraging staff on healthy use of discretionary time. The organization of welfare and recreational activities is only one part of my job; the other part is to support the local Welfare Committees in the field offices. Those Committees are made of staff members who are committed on a volunteer basis to carry out welfare and recreational activities for colleagues on the ground. For that matter, I regularly conduct assessment visits to field offices to assess local needs and the available facilities. By the way, one of the greatest achievements I consider so far is the release of funds for the entire Western Region of the DRC. This is really a big deal for each and everyone in their part of the country. They get their share of the funds through the Local Welfare Committee – and utilize the money to purchase equipment they need to stay active.

Report

Eating and drinking
in the field

They are taking care of us

Let's imagine....

Drinking a good chai in Ntoto, eating a Kurd Salad in Mbuji-Mayi, enjoying an Ice-cream in Kisangani, drinking water in Dungu; these are subtle and easy pleasures for the visitors of MONUSCO bases and offices. But, what's behind the scene? Nobody is growing tea in Ntoto, you hardly find saffron in Mbuji-Mayi, you'll be lucky to find a nice cone in Kisangani, and you do not use water purification pills in MONUSCO water.

Making sure that safe and good products arrive on time all over the country is not an easy task. Unless the meat arrives three days late or the water is spoiled, we barely imagine the logistic making this possible. John and Himalaya's mission is to make sure that civilians and peacekeepers are happy and in a good shape. Dealing with food and water is taking care of our minds and bodies... we do not want them to mess it up, do we?

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...eating at MONUSCO

Imagine a yellowish and roundish big seed joyfully jumping from a dry plant to a nice Turkish wooden basket. A couple of hours later, a beautiful brown hair – blue eyes woman is selling the basket to an international retailer. And the long journey starts in the darkness of a container. From here, it doesn't have the chance to enjoy the ever-changing African coastline from Istanbul to Mombasa. Squished by millions of his homologues, our dry friend will probably not notice that he moved from the languorous undulations of the Indian Ocean to the rickety roads going to Kampala where it will see sunlight for the first time since it had been picked from a bush.

When he was in Kampala, it was John's task to check the quantity and the quality of food items - such as this traveller chickpea - before shipping them to the DRC.

Now, John is in Bunia and receives four hundred different kinds of food items. For all of them he has to make sure that the product delivered matches to what has been ordered. Are these onions spoiled? What's the temperature of this truck transporting raw beef? Is this rice basmati or Thai? John has to control and certify that both quality and safety meet the standards. You don't want an entire contingent to be unhappy with their food, and you really don't want all of them to suddenly get sick.

What about the chickpea? You may ask. Well, I can personally witness it became a wonderful, tasty, and healthy humus.



John MUNENE

Nationality: Kenyan

Age : 43

Family : One six-years-old daughter

Function: Food Inspector

Time with MONUSCO : 5 years

Duty station : Bunia... and before that: Bukavu, Uvira, Goma and Kampala

Food inspection : "Food is a sensitive issue. We are responsible of thousands of men's health. There is no room for mistakes. If somebody is sick, you cannot reverse."

Volunteerism: "Being a UN volunteer is just an extension of what I have always been doing: jobs you cannot equate with money, jobs that are invaluable."

In 10 years: "I'll be settled somewhere and take care of my family."

...drinking at MONUSCO

An omnipresent sun, an infinite green bush, slippery red roads, hundreds of students with white shirts and blue skirts and trousers, two big rivers; welcome in Dungu. Providing drinkable water to MONUSCO staff throughout the DRC is a difficult and sensitive task. In Dungu, it is a daily challenge.

Where is our dirty water going to? Where are the bottles in the office coming from? What about the water used in kitchens? Himalaya's job is to help you forget these questions with three big installations:

Water Plant. Under a big bridge of sunset-like bricks, close to some rapids and hippos, a black pipe pumps in the muddy river and brings the raw water to a tank. From this tank the water is filtered and purified by a brand new machine. The quality of this water which is going to be used by MONUSCO's kitchens in Dungu is checked every day.

Bottling. Nowadays, Dungu staff are relying on bottles of water from Bunia; a long, precarious and costly process. This is why Himalaya is working on the installation of a bottling system. Thanks to this new arrangement growing at the bottom of a colonial castle, Dungu will be able to produce its own bottles at the end of the month.

Septic cleaning system. A UN mission doesn't have the luxury to waste dirty water. In order to do so, the Water and Sanitation Unit in Dungu is putting in place a system which is going to recycle all kinds of dirty water. Yes, all kinds. Put 1000 Liters of insalubrious liquid at the beginning and you'll get 800 liters of clean water at the end of the process!



Himalaya GAUTAM

Nationality : Nepalese

Age : 43

Family : One boy (11) and one girl (4)

Function: Water and Sanitation Supervisor

Time with MONUSCO : 8 months

Duty station : Dungu

Water and sanitation : "You cannot live without water... Think about it and you'll understand how much I care of doing a good job."

Learning : "I am not going to leave the DRC before I: speak French, fully understand the UN, and discover local cultures."



Race for peace in North Kivu

Clara Padovan/MONUSCO

The UN Volunteers celebrate Congolese solidarity with a tschukudu race, a festive and sporting event for peace in North Kivu.

On Saturday, 16 March, 2013, no less than one hundred and ten cyclists took part in a 6.25 kilometer long race through the main streets of the city. Unique in the world, Tshukudu is a wooden-made bicycle traditionally used as a heavy cargo-carrier in the region. The riders or Tshukudists, both amateurs and professionals, had no fear of rising to the challenge and giving their time and energy to raise money for victims of Kitchanga, a town in North Kivu recently beset by fighting between the Congolese army (FARDC) and the Armée Patricienne Pour un Congo Libre et Souverain (APCLS) militias.

The race was a way to pay tribute to the Tshukudists for their vital role in the socio-economic development of the city of Goma and the North Kivu region. This was also an opportunity to raise awareness about volunteerism and solidarity, both deeply incorporated in Congolese society, no matter the social background or the economic condition. This fundraising event was organized and held by the Tshukudists

who are among the poorest. "I am very proud to have participated in this race, not just because I won, but because by participating, I also helped those in greater needs," said Emmanuel, a professional Tshukudist and winner of the race.

"It is heartwarming to see Goma in a festive light despite the surrounding conflicts. It is a memorable day for all of us," said Guillaume, Coordinator of the Goma Youth House, "positive volunteer-based initiatives of this kind are very important to draw youth out of idleness and encourage them to reject armed groups." This point was echoed by the Head of MONUSCO in Goma when he addressed the public, "You have preferred to earn your living by the sweat of your brow rather than to engage in armed groups. You have chosen to invest in a legal and important activity for all 'Gomatrachians'. You made the right choice. The future lies in your hands."

A DAY IN DRC...

Paul Panda Farnana

Paul Panda Farnana, born in 1888 near Moanda (Bas Congo) and raised by a single Belgian artist, is the first Congolese to be graduated from higher education in Belgium in 1907 and known as the first Congolese nationalist.

Agronomist by training, he came back to Congo in 1909 as the first Belgian black-skin official. He endured a real segregation and was obliged to gradually renounce several positions. He returned to Belgium in 1914 and when the war broke out, became a volunteer in the Belgian army. Made prisoner, he spent 4 years into captivity until 1918.

Throughout his life, Paul Panda fought for recognition of Congolese rights and pleaded for the equality between blacks and whites under the Belgian colonial rules. He laid the foundations for a Congolese nationalist movement, which he intended to be participatory, reformist and peaceful, but neither anti-European nor anti-Belgian. In the 20s, he became an active militant for the pan-Africanism, including participating in the Pan-African Congress and advocating for the Africanisation of executive positions in the colonies.

Panda died in 1930 a few months after his return to Congo.

