

Portrait of Donat Munyahu

I have many times heard our colleague spoken of highly by Radio Okapi staff as a man dedicated to his duties of ensuring transport is available to them at all hours of the day and night. Indeed all Radio Okapi staff are full of praise for his ability to devise solutions to transport problems. ***"Even when in Matadi, miles away from Kinshasa,"*** said one of them, ***"Donat will still manage to arrange transportation for a news presenter in the capital***



who wouldn't have been able to do her job on time without his help and support." How is it possible, I asked? Does Donat have the gift of ubiquity? ***"No, he is just so invested in his work, that he keeps his phone and walkie-talkie on all day and night"***. This superhero is the Chief Transport Dispatch officer at Radio Okapi, within the Strategic Communications and Public Information Division of MONUSCO. His main task involves organizing and coordinating all vehicle movements, for both pick-up and drop-off rides of Radio Okapi personnel as well as for those going out into the field for reportage. This is in addition to other secondary duties, including planning for his colleagues' annual leave and monthly work rotations, and preparing transportation report, weekly pick-up schedules and daily reports on the use of vehicles for reportage. Looking at all these tasks, we can say Donat really has plenty to do. And this is why when you see him, his face is always serious, and he looks so invested and focused on everything he does.

Léonard Mulamba, one of those who have worked with him at Radio Okapi for years, testifies: ***"Donat Munyahu is a positive-minded person. He always looks at the bright side of things. Since the departure of Fondation Hirondelle from Radio Okapi, the vehicle fleet of Radio Okapi's Dispatch has shrunk considerably. But he always knows how to do what needs to be done even with less. Most, if not all of Radio Okapi's vehicles are old but Donat, being a good***

hustler, has managed with what he has. It's been a long time since he stopped complaining. When you serve, as he does, nearly a hundred staff, and handle 'a thousand and one' transportation requests, each more pressing than the others, from journalists, you must have a heart of gold to deal with the task, and he does. And if there are no vehicles available or there is one sitting in the parking space but no driver available, Donat never hesitates to leave his office, get behind the steering wheel and drive off to collect journalists and technicians, and then drop some off at reportage locations. This is happening more and more often. Despite these difficulties and his Herculean task, not a single staff has ever complained of any inappropriate language on his part. Donat is a big-hearted person who always comes up with a solution, however imperfect". Leonard, you are also a man with a big heart because not everyone can speak of a colleague in such a way.

Let me now ask Donat to tell us about himself. *"It's hard for someone to talk about themselves, but I'll try,"* he says. And then continues: *"I am a Congolese national. I come from the Shi ethnic group in the eastern province of South Kivu. The Shi are mainly cattle herders as well as warriors".* Warriors? You mean your ancestors, I suppose...? *"Yes, that was necessary for them because cattle theft was common occurrence and also they needed to defend their territory".* I understand, Donat; in the past, that was the case everywhere, but today, the responsibility of defending territories lies with States, doesn't it? And so you will agree that the past belongs to the past, won't you. *"Yes, of course; I who speak to you have never touched a weapon".* That reassures me... Now that I'm sure we're on a level playing field, you can carry on, Donat. *"I entered the United Nations by a happy coincidence. A friend had told me about a test to be taken for a recruitment initiated by Fondation Hirondelle, which was then a very active partner of Radio Okapi. That was in 2003. A year later, I entered into contract with MONUC and then MONUSCO and have worked for the organization for 14 years now. Serving the United Nations has become a passion for me. "*

Prior to this admirable trajectory, our colleague had received secondary literature education with a focus on Latin and Philosophy. Surprised? You see somebody walking down the street and you think he's not smart. Well, you're wrong. Latin and Philosophy! Hats off to the Artist! And he did not stop there. *"I have a degree in Applied Commercial Sciences, obtained in 1987 and finally I hold a master's degree in Economics and Management, with specialization in Business Management, awarded in 2010. After my studies I worked as a manager at the Trade Pavilion "PACO", a private general trading company in Kinshasa. I was subsequently employed as an accountant at ASHAMAK / Import-Export, a Kinshasa-based Lebanese company dealing with the import and export of the various products, and worked with them until 1990. Then, looking for a change, I accepted a job offer for itinerant trade delegate (itinerant vendor) at the Margarinerie, Savonnerie et Cosmetic au Congo (MARSAVOCO), a company of the UNILEVER*

GROUP in Congo. Outside of Kinshasa, I worked in Goma, North Kivu, in Gemena, Equateur, and in Mbuji-Mayi, Eastern Kasai, as regional sales manager for MARSAVCO for 11 years, from September 1990 to November 2001".

Let's get back to the present if you will. At MONUSCO, we work alongside colleagues from different



Donat (2nd from right) with some of his Radio Okapi colleagues in Kisantu botanical garden

nationalities. Isn't that too difficult? ***"I have very good relations with my colleagues despite socio-cultural constraints and also certain behaviors related to foreign customs. I accept others as I think they accept me too. The multicultural environment is for me a chance because it is an opening to the world. During travel between home and work, I listen to others colleagues as they tell me about their country and their distinct cultural and religious practices. Sometimes I am surprised how much these are different from our local practices,***

but I learn and talk about it around me, to my family and to friends who do not have the opportunity to rub shoulders with other cultures. In the course of these conversations, I always stress that my country, the DRC, has a lot to learn from other countries, if only our leaders wanted it. The UN cannot do everything because there are far too many things amiss, and only a patriotic awakening can fix these problems".

I can see the philosopher in those words. But tell me dear Donat, you do not spend all your free time philosophizing, I presume? What else do you do outside of work? ***"I do not have a lot of free time because you know better than I that radio is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year business. Fortunately, I'm not the only one handling the Dispatch but I have a hard time letting go. Still, I do some evening or weekend outings with my family or friends, and***

also some reading. I do not have time to get bored as I have a happy life with family. I am married and the father of three adult children: two girls and a boy". You know me, I can but jump at the occasion. Er...Two girls...So you are sensitive to gender balance in the society? ***"I am for a society that goes on merit, not favors. However, it is clear that girls have always faced disadvantages in terms of access to education, employment and so on. So obviously there is something that has to be rectified. You know, my daughters are educated and so I wouldn't like them to be considered less productive than men of equal educational qualifications".*** That's well said. Here is one more feminist joining our ranks! But I may have spoken too hastily. For when I ask Donat what household chores he shares with his wife and children, his answer is: ***"No specific task except on very rare occasions when I assist my wife and children".*** I think there is a great deal of work yet to be done, my dear sisters!

A dream for your country, Donat? ***"My dream for the DRC is that we put an end to demagogic speeches and that we concretely get out of our lethargy to embrace responsible management practices and achieve effective and efficient use and enjoyment of our material and human resources".*** This is not a dream, Donat; it's a cry of the heart! May all the Gods of Heaven hear you!

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