

## Portrait of Franck NZOLANI MAVAMBU



Is there anyone in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) who can say he or she doesn't know Franck Nzolani Mavambu? No, no, no, don't raise your hand for this would mean you have never taken part in any of the compulsory training sessions that UN staff are supposed to undergo. Let me put the same question again: who does not know Franck? No hand has been raised! So, I am not exaggerating when I say that, at least during the training on UMOJA (this complex monster that we lose sleep over), everyone saw Mr. Mavambu, ( yes, one refers to a teacher as Sir, please) spreading himself too thinly, trying hard to communicate to our exhausted brains the basics of the practical handbook on the new operation of the UN Administration. Let Franck take us through his function and role within the Integrated Mission Training

Center (IMTC) ***"I have been working as Senior Training Officer for 14 years. My job consists in organizing training courses for the UN Peacekeeping Mission staff in DRC as well as for the staff in other UN Missions. This job made me to travel to different Missions' locations including UN Offices."***

Judging from his secondary and university education, I understand our colleague did take his studies seriously. Let us hear that story from himself. ***"I engaged in the academic background after I got my secondary degree. I went first to "Institut Supérieur Pédagogique in Mbanza Ngungu where I undergraduated in English and African Culture; then I went for graduation in Sciences of Education at Université Pédagogique Nationale where I dealt with English teaching techniques. Didn't I tell you? Quickly done, well done, our friend Franck did not waste any time or should I say, has not become one of those whose ID card reads " Function : student", for ten years. After achieving this brilliant step, he began his professional career as an English***

teacher at Institut Tomisa Luzingu, in Matadi. ***“After a short while, I was promoted to the rank of Director of Studies before I reached the top of the school as the Principal. After some years, I sought to become a language consultant, and so I approached language school of the British Embassy. It was while working there that I was informed, through a job opening announcement, of a vacant call system operator position within the United Nations. And can you guess what happened next! “I applied and was selected. That was the beginning of my career within the UN. Two years after, I moved from the Switchboard to the Billing Unit where I spent two other years. Then came the positions of national professional officer in the training area; I applied and was selected as Training officer.*”**



*Franck standing in front of his colleagues during a training session*

Franck Mavambu was recommended to us by many staff members as a candidate who perfectly meet the criteria set out for a staff to qualify as the ***Portrait of the Month***. When we approached his line supervisor about it, she promptly replied “I am sending you an e-mail”. This is what his supervisor Maria Cecilia Icaro wrote about him: ***“Franck is an effective member of our team whom we trust a lot for through his steady dedication to communicating***

***knowledge to the staff members to help them***

***acquire supervisory skills, with his interaction with other trainers across the Mission, our team achieve great results. His integrity is demonstrated in his commitment and dedication to the core values of the United Nations. He demonstrates professional competence and***

*collaborate effectively with team members and clients which help him to achieve his goals. He has been very generous with his opinions towards achieving the team's objectives, He plans and organizes his training deliveries accordingly, ensuring that identified clients are targeted in his training activities. He makes sure the UNLPE and the UN YPP candidates are well informed of the procedures and processes of the examinations, IMTC assistance and support. Franck inspires confidence in his team mates, partners and clients by allowing them to perform accordingly and offering guidance when needed. With Franck's ability to listen carefully, team mates can talk freely and express their ideas confidently and feel valued."*

This testimony alone is worth a " **Portrait** " isn't it? Let us listen to our colleague Mr Mavambu once again. He told me, from his early professional experience, he felt the need to work in an international environment, which led him to apply for a position within the United Nations. " **From outside, I was much impressed and considered that the UN was that big machine that brings together people from different countries and nationalities. It was not really a choice, nor a coincidence if I found myself working for the UN.**" Then I asked him about his perception now that he is in this big family. " **I am very much involved in my colleagues' concerns. I must frankly tell you that I do keep good relationship with all the team, and even all MONUSCO staff members as my role always obliges me to be connected to others. As a trainer, I am used to sharing point of views with others. My colleagues always tell me openly they are never tired of working with me.**" Well done but let us now listen to the different testimonies from his colleagues; will their stories be different? Well, let us start with Georgine Nkokori Kuta: " **Mr. Franck Mavambu deserves this portrait for the month. He has been deputizing for the different chiefs when they are absent for a long time and whenever he plays this role, he does it professionally. We feel secure with him as we trust his supervisory abilities. He encourages us for our professional development and provides guidance to the team. I have personally learnt many things from him in everyday work and in our co-facilitations. You can rely on him when you have a problem. In addition, he is a strong-minded and positive person, and this helps him to overcome the many challenges facing IMTC challenges in its interactions with the staff**" The next testimony is from Richard Sivi who further says: " **Franck Mavambu is the most senior training staff member in IMTC. He is a hard-working and dedicated staff who is always respectful of others; he has been acting as the Officer-in-charge of IMTC for long periods since 2001. He has always been ready to kindly assist, advise and support IMTC as well as other sections' staff members whenever he**





*Franck in the center (dressed in white) addressing his colleagues about the implementation of a training session*

***is solicited.***” Patricia Selo, in turn, made this comment about Franck: “ **I found Franck training in 2004 as 1st NPO of the section, he served us as a model guide. Franck knew how to build his image on a daily basis by focusing on exemplarity such as punctuality, his involvement and dedication in training and his interest in capacity-building which are one of the assets to achieve the objectives of the section and the organization. To better achieve the section’s goals, he obtained several certifications and training of trainers. His combative and positive force allowed him to set up several training projects.”**

As we can see, Franck is highly appreciated by his colleague. However, the multicultural environment in which we work is not that easy. Franck does not see any problem with that “***I must confess that the interaction I have had with other cultures in an environment that upholds multiculturalism has enriched me. I have learnt to respect the people from different backgrounds and their culture and to have them respect my culture as well. UN has exposed***

*me to a multi-cultural environment that has got much positive impact on my living style. In the course of the exchanges and interactions, I have learnt how to make the most of our differences. Once again, I appreciate this environment that made me a difference in my life; I am now able to understand the others and to share with them. "*

Speaking of the Gender Balance in the society, I told him UN upholds men-women parity. Then I asked him about his perception of the gender balance and how he translates this into action in his daily activities. **" I always consider having a gender balanced team a high potential for the office success. I always ensure that our working environment is attractive for everyone who works in. When I am out of the office, I generally delegate my responsibilities to a female colleague, of course based on their competence."**

Franck is Congolese, I tried to get his read of the overall situation in his country with all the hardships it is going through as well as his views about the UN presence, does it bring relief to the population? **" In some parts of DRC, UN presence means salvation for the population. The work done by the UN through its peacekeeping mission within this country is robust. UN is doing a great job through the protection of civilians and assistance to the DRC army to regain control of the entire territory. "**

To learn more about him, I asked him the question to know about his hobbies. His response made me question my own hobbies. **"I spend my time reading books dealing with my job."** This substantiates the saying that best trainers are the first to ignore relaxation...Let me put the question one more time and very clearly: beyond the office hours, do you have any ...Repeating is part of the education, am I right! **" I spend most of my time preparing the different training activities. Reading manuals on how to improve my trainer's work, and better interact with adult learners. "** There is nothing much I can actually do to change the trend, the gentleman does not want to relax, I will no longer insist; I believe he needs a trainer **" to train him on how to relax. "** Unfortunately, he keeps on with stories like: **" I also listen to Radio Okapi which broadcasts objective news about what is going on across the country. "** Is that what you refer to as relaxing? I would rather call it working! It is true for Public Information Division, listening to the news on the radio is like working. Maybe not for you but, anyway, just to tease him, I know two or three people at Radio Okapi, namely (members of Radio Okapi music band) whom I would refer you to. Incredible, isn't it! or else is it Madam who tightened the screw much harder ? **" Oh no, he**



confides to me, ***Indeed I live together with my family, wife and children; It is just a personal choice that I should rush home to meet my wife, Pauline and my four children: Divinei, Divinette, Divin and Divincy.*** I see, I see, I see... (Let me pause for a while to think...but I cannot find anything to say; I let him proceed) ***When I am home during the weekends or days-off, I work with my wife in the kitchen. I like, from time to time, to participate in her work, bringing in some additional points that I consider could help what we are doing together. When involved in cooking, for instance, I suggest additional spices for a better tasting of our food...*** Is that all? Two or three spices and he calls it a help...No I should stop you Franck, I can't agree with you on that! A real help would be like going to the market for her, making the sauce while she is cooking the Foufou, letting her continue to rest in bed and cleaning the house! That what helping means in a house...Do you see what I mean - Also fixing tables and much



*Franck, applauded by his colleagues at the end of a training session*

more...Come on, tell me Franck, am I daydreaming!

On a much more serious note, I remind Franck that MONUSCO will leave DRC one day, when the country has reached the level of pacification expected by the International community and when the latter would see that the country can effectively do away with the presence of a Peace-

keeping Mission. What memories would you keep about this presence “ *I have lots of memories for MONUSCO. The Mission made me a powerful trainer. I have gained an international stature as a trainer. I don't think I will forget my career in such a multicultural environment which taught me how to love my culture and to respect other people's culture.*”

Franck, we believe you now when you say your colleagues like to work with you and I would further add it was a real pleasure to share this moment with you. I should further say I was very impressed by your kindness, your patience and your sense of listening demonstrated during the trainings I received under your supervision. You really give me the impression of belonging to the category of men of integrity. Keep up with the good job please!

**By Aïssatou Laba Touré**

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