



Mission members tell their stories

“Being a woman embracing a technical career, it’s waking up every day with a challenge to overcome”

European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic

2023 is the European Year of Skills and the theme for International Women's Rights Day is "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality". One of the main initiatives is to highlight women working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

EUAM RCA is fortunate to have talented and inspiring women in its midst. One of them, Laurette - Information and Communication Systems Assistant (CIS) - helps her colleagues on a daily basis to stay “well connected”.

As for the day-to-day challenges of being a modern, working woman from the Central African Republic in a European, male-dominated mission, she simply explains that "being a woman embracing a technical career, it’s waking up every day with a challenge to overcome. I always have this desire to prove to myself and to others, this feeling of wanting to do better and to be up to the task."



How does "DigitALL" work in a country where Internet penetration rate is 11.4%^[1] and where access remains a luxury?

Laurette : First of all, a distinction must be made between the capital city, Bangui, which is well connected, and the provinces, where people often have no access to the Internet at all. In my opinion, in order to generalise digital technology, we need to act on several levels: we need to reduce or cancel taxes on the import of computer/electronic equipment into the country, so that everyone can own a digital tool. Secondly, the cost of the internet connection needs to be reduced, because not only is it high, but the speed is very low for a country like ours.

And why is women's access to the digital world so important?

A woman is the basis of education in our culture. She takes care of the family and the house, she makes sure that the children study and do their homework. A well-educated woman in general, and in particular one who is educated in new digital technologies, is therefore a major asset to her family. The precondition for dealing with digitalisation is of course to be able to read and to write^[2]

How do you manage to stand out against about 200 male candidates in the application procedure for the position of CIS assistant?

I prepared myself based on other selection procedures that I had failed in the past. I gave my best in the written test and in the interview. I believed in my skills ... and God did the remaining.

Could you tell us what key skills you have to fulfil your position?

I'm very versatile and I don't hesitate to learn new things every day. Otherwise, managing IT tools and supporting users is no secret to me, as my first jobs in companies were in this field. And I was very lucky to work in large IT parks and also to have good trainers.

What is your message to the women around you?

Technology, science and other so-called 'men's fields' are actually very exciting for women too. The biases are never going to stop, have a mind of steel to overcome discouragement and external pressure, set yourself goals and go for it...

[1] Oubangi media 2021

[2] only 25% of women can read and write (UNDP, UN Women 2022)