



PEDRO SILVA:

Mozambican Companies with Global Ambition

GORETI FREITAS

— The art of reinventing her own story



At 41, after 15 years of a career in banking, Goreti Freitas decided to exchange the security of an established career for the uncertainty of a new beginning. Today, as CEO of Best Advisors and through her involvement in tourism with Azores Five Project, she is building a career defined by leadership, entrepreneurship and a vision that seeks to transform the Azores into a destination of experiences capable of touching people.

There are decisions that change a career, and there are decisions that change a life. For Goreti Freitas, leaving banking at the age of 41 was both.

After 15 years in a sector that had given her experience, discipline and an established career, the entrepreneur realised that stability was no longer enough to answer the restlessness she carried within her. A simple but decisive question began to take shape: "What if I am capable of doing more?"

That question marked the

beginning of a new chapter.

The change did not, however, represent an attempt to erase the past. Quite the opposite. Goreti carried into entrepreneurship everything her years in banking had taught her: discipline, management skills, responsibility, decision-making and, above all, the importance of human relationships.

"I was not starting from zero," she explains. "I was starting a new chapter with all the experience I had gained up to that point, with all the falls, all the skills, all the relationships and all the scars."

The statement helps to understand a journey that was not built through absolute ruptures, but through successive reinventions.

Long before the businesswoman and leader known today, there was a girl who grew up in an environment where hard work and responsibility were part of everyday life. It was in that environment that Goreti began developing a perspective that remains present in her

professional life: circumstances may shape a person's challenges, but they do not have to determine what that person can achieve.

Her childhood left her with lessons that, years later, would prove fundamental in facing the challenges of leadership and entrepreneurship. The value of work, perseverance and the ability to seek solutions became defining characteristics of her personality.

"I learned that there are doors that do not open because someone gives us the key. There are doors that we have to learn to open ourselves," she recalls.

It is a perspective that helps explain her relationship with obstacles. Goreti does not romanticise the difficulties she has faced, but acknowledges that many of them contributed to shaping the woman she is today. The skills she would later use in business management began, in many ways, to develop long before she knew what it meant to lead.

Leaving banking marked one of the greatest changes in her professional life. At 41, when many might consider a career to be already established and predictable, Goreti chose precisely the opposite: to start again.

The decision was neither immediate nor free from fear. There was a career she had built, a familiar structure and a comfort zone. But remaining where she was also began to represent a risk — the risk of no longer growing.

It was at that point that she realised that change could be less risky than remaining in a place that no longer matched her ambitions.

Reinvention thus became a conscious choice.

For Goreti, starting again does not mean starting with nothing. It means recognising the value of accumulated experience and using it to build something different. This philosophy became particularly important in the way she began approaching professional challenges.

Rather than viewing her previous years as a completed chapter, she transformed them into a foundation for the future.

It is within this context that Best Advisors emerged, a project Goreti leads as CEO. The company was born from a desire to put knowledge, experience and strategy at the service of people and organisations, while maintaining a concern that runs throughout her professional vision: not losing the human dimension.



For Goreti, a company should not simply sell services. It should be capable of building relationships based on trust, supporting decisions, seeking solutions and creating sustainable value.

With this perspective, she sought to build Best Advisors'

difficult decisions, facing risks and being present even when results do not meet expectations.

It also means recognising that a leader does not need to have all the answers. This awareness led her to advocate a form of leadership based on continuous

place in her business vision.

For Goreti, no organisation can build truly sustainable success if it ignores the people behind the results.

Her business activity eventually led Goreti into ano-



identity around competence, proximity, trust and commitment.

Leadership, in her view, cannot be reduced to the title of CEO. Being a leader means taking responsibility, making

learning and the ability to listen.

At the centre of this approach are people. Human potential, emotional intelligence, behaviour and the ability to develop teams occupy an important

ther territory: tourism. Through Azores Five Project, she found in the Azores an opportunity to develop a different vision of how a destination can be experienced.

More than promoting



places, she is interested in creating experiences.

A visitor may see a landscape, photograph it and return home. But they may also live an experience capable of creating an emotion, provoking reflection or even generating personal transformation.

It is this second possibility that captures Goreti's interest.

In her view, the Azores offer unique conditions for this. The archipelago brings together nature, the sea, volcanoes, lagoons, thermal springs, gastronomy, cul-

ture and traditions. But, for the entrepreneur, there is an even more valuable element: authenticity.

In a sector where many destinations seek to reproduce successful models, Goreti advocates valuing Azorean identity.

It is not about importing concepts and artificially adapting them to the territory. It is about starting with what already exists.

Nature, culture and local communities therefore become essential parts of the tourism experience.

It is from this perspective that the concept of emotional tourism gains strength, one of the ideas guiding Goreti's vision for the future of her projects.

The proposal begins with a simple question: what can a journey make a person feel?

The answer lies not only in the destination, but in the experience.

Climbing Mount Pico can be a physical activity, but it can also represent an experience of overcoming challenges. Entering a thermal lagoon can mean relaxation, but it can equally provide a moment of silence and reconnection. A walk by the sea can become an opportunity to slow down and hear oneself again.

For Goreti, the Azores possess precisely this ability.

In a world defined by speed and an excess of stimuli, the archipelago can offer something increasingly rare: time to stop.

This is where tourism ceases to be merely consumption and begins to take on an emotional dimension.



"People may forget what they saw in passing, but they rarely forget what they felt," she argues.

The intention is to create experiences that continue after visitors return home. Because, in her view, some journeys end the moment the visitor returns, while others remain in the memory and influence the way a person sees themselves.

Goreti's strategy for the Azores also involves valuing local identity. For the entrepreneur, the archipelago's greatest luxury lies precisely in what cannot be reproduced elsewhere.

Hotels can be built, sophisticated services can be created and international models can be imported. But volcanoes, landscapes, the relationship between communities and the sea, traditions, gastronomy and stories passed down through generations cannot be copied.

It is this authenticity that she wants to place at the centre of the experience.

The intention is for visitors not simply to see the Azores, but to understand the territory and establish a connection with it.

Behind every landscape there is a story. Behind every product there is a person. And behind every tradition there is a community.

From this perspective, tourism can also become a tool for economic, cultural and human appreciation.

Building a leadership career has also brought challenges related to being a woman in a business environment where there are still contexts in which women feel the need to constantly prove their competence.

Goreti, however, prefers to respond to this reality through work and results.

"I never wanted to occupy a position simply because I am a woman. I want to occupy it because I have competence, I work hard, I have vision and I have the ability to add value."

At the same time, she rejects the traditional idea of leadership according to which authority requires toughness or emotional distance.

The entrepreneur advocates leadership that is demanding yet empathetic; firm yet human; ambitious yet conscious.

For her, sensitivity does not diminish the ability



to lead. On the contrary, it can contribute to leadership that is closer and more aware.

Vulnerability, she argues, does not make a person less strong. It makes them more human.

This is also why she believes respect should not be imposed. It is built through consistency, preparation, reliability and the ability to take responsibility.

And when a woman gains ground, she believes there is an additional responsibility: to help other women understand that they can get there too.

Despite her business responsibilities, Goreti does not define herself solely through the positions she holds.

Businesswoman, leader, entrepreneur, mother, daughter and woman are dimensions that coexist within the same person.

This multiplicity, she explains, is also one of the reasons why she seeks to preserve authenticity.

Management, coaching and tourism may appear to be distinct fields, but they share common ground in her vision: caring, serving, creating value and inspiring.

And despite the experience she has gained, Goreti admits that she still feels fear.

The difference lies in how she now interprets it.

If fear could once have been understood as a signal to stop, today it may represent precisely the opposite: an indication that something new lies ahead.

Something that may require growth.

Something that may once again force her out of her comfort zone.

Perhaps this is the essence of her reinvention.

It is not about ceasing to be afraid. It is about refusing to allow fear to make the decisions.

The future of her projects appears to point towards an even closer connection between tourism and human development.

Goreti is working towards a vision that seeks to position the Azores not merely as a nature destination, but also as a destination for transformation.

The ideas currently being developed bring together tourism, emotional wellbeing, self-awareness, leadership, emotional intelligence, personal development, nature and identity.

The aim is to transform the territory into a space where people can disconnect, breathe, re-

flect and reconnect with themselves.

At the same time, this vision extends to management and hospitality, seeking to combine service excellence, authenticity, sustainability and the development of local talent.

These are projects that are still taking shape and which Goreti prefers not to fully reveal. But one thing is certain: the journey will continue to be built according to the same logic that has shaped her own story — experimenting, learning, adapting and moving forward.

Perhaps no answer from Goreti reveals more about her journey than the one she gives when imagining an encounter between the woman she is today and the girl she once was.

If she could look at herself through that child's eyes, she believes the girl would not necessarily be impressed by positions, companies or titles.

Perhaps she would look for something else.

To know whether that girl managed to keep believing,

Whether she was able to fall and get back up.

Whether she was afraid and moved forward.

Whether circumstances failed to decide for her.

And, above all, whether difficulties failed to take away her ability to continue believing in people and in life.

Goreti's answer is revealing: "I believe she would be prouder to realise that I did not give up on her."

It is in this sentence that her story perhaps finds its greatest summary.

Because professional reinvention was also a way of remaining faithful to the girl who learned early on to fight.

When she imagines that girl asking her, "Did we make it?", Goreti does not answer that she achieved everything. She answers that she had the courage to try.

And she believes that changed everything.

Goreti Freitas's story is not only about entrepreneurship, leadership or tourism. It is about

The answer is not completely defined.

And perhaps it never will be.

Because reinventing oneself means accepting that we will not always have the complete map before we begin.

It means moving forward despite uncertainty.

It means understanding that accumulated experience does not tie us to the past — it can be precisely what gives us the strength to build the future.

For women considering a new beginning, Goreti leaves a message born from her own experience: there is no need to wait for fear to disappear.

You have to begin despite it.

Age does not determine when a person can change. Circumstances should not define the limits of what they can achieve. And the starting point does not have to determine the destination.

Goreti Freitas's journey is still being written.

Between management, leadership, entrepreneurship and a form of tourism designed to create meaningful experiences, the



the possibility of changing one's life without erasing what brought us here.

At 41, she left an established career to pursue a new possibility. She built a company. She entered the tourism sector. She developed her own vision for the Azores. And she continues to imagine new paths.

At every stage, the same question seems to return: is it possible to do more?

entrepreneur continues to write new chapters of a story that began long before the positions she holds today.

A story of work, courage, doubts, choices and reinvention.

A story that shows that, sometimes, the most important decision in life begins with a seemingly simple question:

"What if I am capable of doing more?"

POMME GAGNAUX:

From the “dream factory” to sexual therapy

There are professional journeys that follow a predictable path. Others are built through different experiences, interests and new beginnings. At 45, Pomme Gagnaux, born in Xinavane, represents a journey marked by diversity and by the ability to transform different experiences into parts of the same identity.

Trained as an agricultural engineer, although she never pursued the profession, she built an 18-year career in Procurement and, since 2022, has worked in Contract Administration. Alongside her corporate career, she found in Cake Design, an activity she has pursued since 2016, a form of creative expression. Today, as a sexologist and specialist in Cognitive Sexual Therapy, with training also focused on childhood and adolescence, she adds a dimension connected to sexual and emotional education and the prevention of sexual abuse among these age groups.

But Pomme's relationship with expression and creativity began even earlier. From the age of five to 17, she practised dance, an experience that allowed her to explore the body, movement and discipline. Years later, confectionery would emerge as a new creative language. In what she calls the “Dream Factory”, ingredients are transformed into cakes, celebrations and memories.

The transition from confectionery to sexual therapy may, at first glance, seem like a radical change. For Pomme, however, there is a clear connection: caring for others and creating meaningful experiences.

“There is something very beautiful about transforming ingredients into something that will make

someone smile, celebrate, be surprised or create a memory. In sexuality, I work with something even more intimate: what a person feels, thinks, desires and experiences within themselves and in their relationships,” she explains.

It is from this perspective that creativity, listening and attention to detail run through different moments of her life. They are distinct languages for what she considers to be the same desire: to care, create and contribute to people's wellbeing.

Her training and contact with clinical reality, however, led her to understand that sexuality cannot be reduced to physical intimacy. The body, personal history, education, relationships, beliefs and emotional experiences are often interconnected. A sexual difficulty may be merely the visible part of a deeper issue.

Behind a difficulty related to desire, for example, there may be shame, anxiety, low self-esteem, previous experiences, relationship difficulties or a disconnection from one's own body. It was from this understanding that Pomme began to view sexual therapy as an opportunity to help people rebuild a healthier relationship with themselves.

Taboos, however, continue to occupy a significant place in the way sexuality is experienced. Among the issues she believes need to be discussed is female pleasure and women's right to know their own bodies without guilt or shame.

For a long time, she explains, female sexuality was presented mainly in terms of reproduction,



relationships or partner satisfaction. Issues such as desire, masturbation, orgasm, menopause, pain during intercourse or the right to say “no” have often remained outside open conversations.

There is also another silence: admitting that one does not know exactly what one likes.

For Pomme, this lack of knowledge should not

be a source of shame, but an opportunity for education and discovery. When information is insufficient, myths tend to take its place, leading some people to believe that there is only one correct way to experience sexuality.

Beliefs acquired throughout life can also act as filters. Ideas transmitted through education, culture, religion or relationship experiences can influence

behaviours and emotions without a person realising that they are, in fact, following a learned belief.

In therapy, this process often involves questioning what has been internalised. “Do I really think this, or did I learn that I should think this way?” she asks. From there, it becomes possible to distinguish what truly belongs to the individual from what has

been shaped by other people's expectations.

Pomme also draws attention to a reality that can easily go unnoticed: a person may consider themselves to have a satisfying sex life and still feel emotionally disconnected from themselves. Experiencing pleasure and feeling connected are not necessarily the same thing.

Being on “autopilot”

during intimacy, having sex mainly to please a partner or avoid conflict, finding it difficult to express desires and boundaries, or feeling guilty about saying no may be signs that there is a difference between what a person demonstrates and what they actually experience.

For this reason, she believes the question should not only be, “Do I experience pleasure?”,

She wants to understand the person, their story and the context in which the difficulty appears.

For someone who arrives at therapy carrying shame, guilt or fear, the first step is to create a safe space. “That person is not there to be judged,” she says. Listening, respecting boundaries and allowing each person to move forward at their own pace are, in her view,

Contract Administration, which began in 2022, form part of a corporate career built alongside her other passions. Agricultural Engineering represents her academic background; dance, an experience from her youth; Cake Design, a creative form of expression; and Sexology, a field in which she found a new way to contribute to human wellbeing.



ce in someone's life.

Today, she wants to continue contributing to a reality in which people no longer experience sexuality dominated by fear, guilt or shame. She advocates for a more responsible and informed conversation that does not begin only when a problem arises, but forms part of education for life, respect for the body, boundaries, con-

sent and relationships.

Her own journey has also left her with one conviction: it is never too late to reinvent oneself.

The woman who began with dance, trained in Agricultural Engineering, built an 18-year career in Procurement, found her “Dream Factory” in Cake Design and now works in Sexology demonstrates that a professional life does not

have to be a straight line.

It can be made up of different chapters, seemingly distant from one another, yet united by the same purpose.

And, in the case of Pomme Gagnaux, that thread seems to have been present from the beginning: to create, care, understand and, in different ways, help others find the space to live more freely as who they are.

but also: “Is this pleasure connected to me, to my desires and to what I truly want to experience?”

In relationships, communication also plays a central role. A difficulty with desire may be related to resentment; difficulty with arousal may be associated with anxiety; differences in desire between partners can become conflicts that eventually affect intimacy itself.

This is why, when someone comes to her with what they identify as a “sexual problem”, Pomme seeks to look beyond the symptom.

fundamental. Before any technique, there is trust.

Sexual and emotional education therefore occupies an important place in her work, particularly in the prevention of sexual abuse during childhood and adolescence. For Pomme, talking about sexuality responsibly and in an age-appropriate manner also means teaching about the body, boundaries, consent, respect and safety.

Her journey, however, is not limited to the clinical field. Her 18 years of experience in Procurement and her work in

Rather than choosing between these different dimensions, Pomme seems to have found a way to integrate them. Each stage has added a skill, a perspective or a new way of understanding people.

In the “Dream Factory”, she learned to transform ingredients into moments of happiness. In sexual therapy, she works with stories, emotions, relationships and deeply personal experiences. In both, she finds the same principle: creating something that can make a differen-



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SANDRA JARDIM FERNANDES:

35 Years of Law, building bridges between people, Investment and new beginnings



international clients were looking for far more than a visa or residence permit.

Behind many immigration cases lies an entire life transition: a change of country, a family, an investment, a business, the acquisition of property, tax considerations, assets and plans for the future.

It was precisely within this complexity that Sandra found an area capable of bringing together several of her professional interests.

Immigration became not merely a legal

matter, but an opportunity to accompany people through some of the most consequential decisions of their lives.

"I found in this field the combination of what has always interested me professionally: law, investment and strategy together with a very strong human dimension," she explains.

For Sandra, immigration is not simply about procedures. It is about people in transition and decisions that may shape an entire future.

That is why every client is assessed individually, taking into account their objectives, family circumstances, financial

and professional position, and what they intend to build over the medium and long term.

More Than Cases: Life Projects

The responsibility becomes even greater when working in immigration.

Behind every application there are expectations, concerns, investments, families and, often, years of preparation.

Even when the objective is primarily financial or entrepreneurial, there is always a human dimension.

There are careers shaped by professional choices, and there are careers shaped by a broader vision of life. Sandra Isabel Trindade Jardim Fernandes belongs firmly to the latter.

At 59, born in Lisbon and with 35 years of experience in the legal profession, Sandra Jardim Fernandes has built a career defined by law, entrepreneurship, adaptability and, above all, a profound understanding of people and the projects they entrust to her.

A lawyer, entrepreneur and founder of SJF Immigration & Investments, Sandra has spent more than three decades developing a professional path that extends well beyond the traditional practice of law. Her experience in Real Estate Law, Corporate Law, management,

immigration and international investment has given her a broad perspective on the challenges faced by individuals, families, entrepreneurs and investors in an increasingly globalised world.

Yet behind the professional recognised for her legal knowledge and international presence is a woman deeply connected to people, family and the freedom each individual should have to build their own path.

Determined, intuitive and resilient, Sandra believes that technical knowledge is essential, but never sufficient on its own. Good professional advice requires the ability to listen, understand what is truly at stake and find solutions that make sense within the reality of each client.

"Behind the lawyer is a woman deeply connected to people, family and the freedom of each person to build their own path," she says.

That human dimension has accompanied Sandra since the beginning of her career. Over 35 years in law, she has moved through different areas of practice and different stages of life, each contributing to a broader understanding of the role a lawyer can play when someone seeks professional guidance at a decisive moment.

When Law Began to Look at the Bigger Picture

Sandra's specialisation in immigration emerged naturally from a career already closely connected to Real Estate Law, Corporate Law and investment.

From 2013 onwards, she began focusing more intensively on immigration and soon recognised that



Sandra considers one of the central responsibilities of her profession to be providing clarity and reassurance at a time that may otherwise be marked by uncertainty.

In her view, a client should never feel that they are simply handing documents to a service provider. They should feel that there is a team that understands their project, knows their objectives, anticipates potential challenges and accompanies every stage with care and responsibility.

This philosophy has become one of the foundations of SJF Immigration & Investments.

ning for a family's future.

For this reason, Sandra advocates an integrated approach.

Obtaining a residence permit is not enough if the underlying corporate structure is inadequate. Making an investment is not enough without properly assessing its legal framework and protection. And selecting an immigration route is not enough without understanding its potential tax, family and financial implications.

This broader perspective is precisely what SJF seeks to provide, working alongside specialised professionals and trusted partners whenever a client's project requires expertise across different areas.

born in Brussels in 1917, moved to Portugal after falling in love with a Portuguese university student. Independent and entrepreneurial, she forged her own path at a time when such a journey was far less common for women.

Sandra's mother was also an entrepreneur.

Today, Sandra and her sister represent the third generation of this female entrepreneurial legacy.

That influence has accompanied Sandra throughout her professional life. Even while practising as a lawyer, she never viewed a law firm simply as a place in which legal services were delivered. For her, an organisation requires

strategy, management, innovation, processes and the ability to understand the market and anticipate clients' needs.

With the creation of SJF, this vision acquired a new dimension.

The challenge became transforming a personal vision, developed over decades, into an organisation capable of growing through a team without losing what she considers fundamental: quality, trust and human connection.

Growing



Without Losing Proximity

Building a business also means learning not to do everything alone.

For Sandra, one of the most important stages in SJF's development has been learning to delegate, train people, establish procedures and create a structure capable of operating beyond her direct involvement in every single matter.

Today, she increasingly focuses on strategy, complex cases, international relationships and guiding her team.

Yet there is one thing she has no intention of sacrificing: proximity.

Sandra seeks to remain accessible to clients and partners and values maintaining direct communication, including through WhatsApp.

It is a choice that reflects one of the defining characteristics of her approach to professional life: the human dimension.

A Brand That Has Crossed Borders

Sandra's international career did not emerge overnight.

Since 2014, she has participated as a speaker at international conferences focused on immigration and foreign investment and, since 2015, has regularly taken part as a speaker in initiatives organised by the International Bar Association.

Her presence within international professional networks, recognition among professionals from different countries, referrals and invitations to speak at conferences became signs that her work had already moved beyond the boundaries of traditional legal practice.

It was within this environment of relationships and trust that SJF found the foundations for international growth.

For Sandra, a brand is not created simply through a name or visual identity. It is built through the way an organisation works, the relationships it develops and the values it consistently demonstrates.



An Integrated Vision of Law and Investment

Sandra's extensive experience in Real Estate and Corporate Law has become particularly valuable for clients who see Portugal not simply as a place of residence, but as a country in which to invest, establish a business and build a new chapter of their lives.

An immigration decision may involve establishing or acquiring a company, negotiating contracts, purchasing or renting property, making financial investments, managing assets and plan-

Entrepreneurship as a Family Legacy

Sandra's entrepreneurial identity also has deep roots in her family history.

Born into an entrepreneurial family, she is part of the third generation of women entrepreneurs in her family a particularly meaningful legacy considering the era in which the previous generations established themselves.

Her maternal grandmother, a Belgian woman





When clients and professionals across different countries begin to recognise not only a lawyer, but a particular way of working, reputation begins to emerge.

And from reputation, a brand is built.

Brazil and Nigeria: Building an International Strategy

SJF’s current growth strategy includes international expansion through partnerships with trusted local organisations.

In Brazil, the company has established a partnership with Santo Global Advisory, creating a bridge between Portugal and Brazil in areas including immigration, investment, planning, taxation, real estate and corporate structuring.

In Nigeria, SJF has established a partnership with Zenith Travel Group, which acts as the company’s exclusive representative in the Nigerian market.

For Sandra, these partnerships represent far more than geographical expansion.

They provide an opportunity to bring SJF closer to new clients through professionals who understand local realities, cultures,

markets and the specific needs of the people they serve.

Internationalisation, therefore, is not simply about establishing a presence in new territories. It is about building relationships based on trust.

The United States is also among the strategic markets Sandra identifies for SJF’s next stage of development.

She has observed growing interest among American citizens, families and entrepreneurs in establishing a connection with Europe often as a way of diversifying assets, increasing international mobility or creating what is commonly described as a “Plan B”.

Not everyone intends to relocate to Portugal immediately.

For some, the objective is simply to establish a European connection while maintaining their personal and professional

lives in the United States.

Within this context, the ARI Portugal’s Residence Permit for Investment Activity, internationally known as the Golden Visa may be relevant to certain investor profiles, always subject to eligibility requirements and individual assessment.

Sandra nevertheless emphasises that there is no universal solution.

Any strategy should begin with a thorough understanding of the client’s profile, objectives, financial structure, family circumstances and medium- to long-term intentions.

Immigration, Investment and Taxation: Decisions That

Cannot Be Separated

As economic and professional borders become increasingly fluid, Sandra believes immigration, investment and internationalisation must be considered together.

An individual may change countries, establish a company, purchase property or make an investment and each decision may have legal

from a tax perspective and coherent with the client’s life project,” Sandra argues.

The Future of a Woman Who Continues to Build

At 59, Sandra Jardim Fernandes looks towards the future with the same willingness to learn, create and transform that has defined the

for the future is not simply about expanding a company.

It is also about preserving and passing on a way of practising law.

A form of legal practice that combines knowledge with strategy without losing the ability to listen. A company that expands internationally while preserving personal connection. A professional who has built a remarkable career, yet remains conscious that every client represents a different story.



and tax consequences.

That is why she considers it essential that professional advice is sought before major decisions are made, rather than after the key steps have already been taken.

Where does the person intend to live? Where will their economic interests remain? How are their income and assets structured? What are their objectives for their family? Which country do they intend to integrate into their long-term life plan?

These questions can determine whether a particular strategy is truly appropriate.

“The real value of professional support lies in bringing together, from the outset, the different areas of expertise required to build a strategy that is legally secure, carefully considered

past decades of her career.

Over the next five years, she aims to consolidate SJF Immigration & Investments as a Portuguese brand with international recognition in immigration, investment and global mobility.

But she is not pursuing growth at any cost.

She wants to build a strong, technologically prepared and, at the same time, deeply human organisation one capable of delivering personalised solutions while maintaining a relationship of trust with every client.

She also intends to dedicate more time to strategy, international relationships and sharing the knowledge accumulated over 35 years, contributing to the development of her team and to the growth of younger professionals.

Ultimately, her vision

Sandra Jardim Fernandes began her journey in law 35 years ago. Today, her work crosses borders and connects several dimensions of contemporary life: immigration, investment, mobility, assets, entrepreneurship and family.

Perhaps it is precisely her ability to recognise that behind every case there is a person with dreams, concerns and plans for the future that best defines her professional legacy.

Because, for Sandra, crossing a border is not simply about moving from one country to another.

It can mean beginning an entirely new chapter of life.

And it is at that moment of change that she has chosen to be present: helping individuals and families transform complex decisions into safer, more structured pathways towards new possibilities.



Márcia Djama Pinto launches the signature book experience and prepares for first Major Literary Event

Márcia Djama Pinto is transforming her relationship with education, culture and project creation into a new area of activity. An Angolan entrepreneur based in the United Kingdom, where she works as an international education consultant, she is now introducing The Signature Book Experience, a new brand dedicated to literature and to creating experiences that bring people, books and culture closer together.

The new initiative emerges as a second brand within Márcia's entrepreneurial journey and is driven by a vision that seeks to go beyond simply promoting books. The Signature Book Experience has been conceived as a meeting platform for authors, publishers, bookshops, readers, artists and different cultural stakeholders, creating space for sharing, discovery and the recognition of talent from different backgrounds.

The launch of the brand will be accompanied by the initiative's first literary event, scheduled for

The Signature Book Experience therefore aims to place the book at the centre of a broader cultural experience. Authors meet readers, artists engage in dialogue with literature, publishers and bookshops connect with new audiences, and different talents can find a space to present their work.

Márcia's international experience, built between Angola and the United Kingdom and connected to international education consultancy, con-



tributes to a vision that seeks to connect different contexts and people. Now, through the coordination of literary projects, she is also taking on the challenge of building bridges within the cultural world.

The first event in Luanda represents only the starting point. The ambition is for the brand to grow consistently and develop its own identity within the literary landscape, valuing not only the books, but also the people and stories behind each work.

Between authors, readers, artists, publishers, bookshops and culture, Márcia Djama Pinto opens a new page in her entrepreneurial journey. And this time, the challenge is to make that page the beginning of a legacy.

The Signature Book Experience. The book as legacy. Culture as the future.

29 October at Instituto Sapiens, in Luanda, from 17:00 to 21:00. The gathering aims to bring together authors from different parts of the world, as well as writers, artists, publishers,

booksellers and other professionals connected to the cultural world.

For Márcia, the project represents the beginning of a broader vision. The intention is to build an experience with identity, curation and continuity, capable of establishing itself as a reference space for those who produce, promote, sell or simply appreciate literature. More than organising an event, the proposal is to create a platform capable of generating connections, opportunities and

new ways of bringing together the different protagonists of the sector.

The choice of literature as a new field of activity also reflects an understanding of the book as an element of memory and legacy. "I believe that a book does not end when we close the last page," says Márcia, summarising the philosophy that guides the brand. For her, each work can carry stories, knowledge, identity and experiences that continue to exist long after the reading is over.



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PEDRO SILVA:

Mozambican Companies with Global Ambition



At a time when Mozambique seeks to transform its economic potential into tangible opportunities for its citizens and businesses, Pedro Silva argues that small and medium-sized enterprises should occupy a central place in this transformation. As an entrepreneur and President of the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises of Mozambique (APME), he understands the challenges facing the sector from two complementary perspectives: that of someone who experiences the business reality on a daily basis and that of someone who institutionally represents

thousands of companies.

For Pedro Silva, the growth of Mozambican SMEs continues to be constrained by a set of obstacles that reinforce one another. Financial strain, the high tax burden, interest rates and bureaucracy create an environment in which many companies struggle to invest, recruit, innovate and grow in a structured manner.

In his view, the current tax system should better recognise the differences between the various levels of business. Requiring virtually the same bureaucratic and financial effort from a micro-enterprise as from a large corporation can restrict precisely those businesses that should be growing.

Pedro Silva's direct experience as an entrepreneur

profoundly influences the way he approaches his leadership of APME. The problems that reach the association are not, for him, merely statistics. They are situations he knows at close hand: payment delays, currency fluctuations, difficulties in accessing finance, a shortage of skilled labour and barriers in import and export processes.

"When we negotiate with the Government or with international partners, we do not bring statistics alone; we bring the practical reality of meeting payroll at the end of the month," he says.

It is this close connection with the realities on the ground that he seeks to bring to APME's work. The association, he argues, should be an

active voice in developing solutions and not merely an organisation that identifies problems.

Among the issues he considers most urgent is financing. Pedro Silva advocates the creation of mutual guarantee mechanisms and subsidised credit lines specifically aimed at SMEs. For many domestic entrepreneurs, the problem is not necessarily a lack of ideas or opportunities, but the inability to provide the guarantees demanded by the traditional financial system.

In his view, the State and development partners can play a guarantee role, reducing the risk for financial institutions and enabling companies to access credit at costs compatible with the realities of their businesses.

But a sustainable business does not depend solely on capital. Pedro Silva also draws attention to the need to improve entrepreneurs' financial literacy and develop a culture of planning. Knowing how to manage cash flow, separate personal finances from business finances and prepare for periods of lower liquidity are skills that can determine the survival of a business.

A personal experience reinforced this conviction. During his entrepreneurial journey, he faced a serious cash-flow crisis caused by a significant delay in payment from a major client. The situation forced him to make difficult decisions, reduce costs and renegotiate commitments with suppliers transparently.

It was at that moment that he came to understand, in a particularly tangible way, that a company can have high

turnover and still be financially vulnerable. "Turnover is merely vanity; what determines a company's survival is cash flow and transparency in management," he concludes.

Beyond financial management, Pedro Silva considers it essential to change the way entrepreneurs view cooperation. From his perspective, Mozambican entrepreneurs still often try to do everything on their own, when strategic alliances, partnerships and cooperative models could enable companies to gain scale, knowledge and the ability to compete.

It is precisely the competitiveness of domestic companies that lies at the centre of his vision for APME. The organisation works across three main areas: business capacity-building, facilitating access to markets and policy advocacy for tax simplification.



Another important area is local content. For Pedro Silva, major investments in sectors such as mineral resources and gas should have a deeper impact on Mozambique's business community. National SMEs need effective access to the opportunities created by these projects, not merely as occasional suppliers, but as structured participants in value chains.

The issue becomes even more relevant when comparing the competitive capacity of domestic companies with that of major

he likewise identifies opportunities to modernize traditional sectors and improve the connection between producers and consumers. Technological solutions applied to logistics and distribution can bring rural producers closer to urban centres and create more efficient value chains.

To young people who wish to become entrepreneurs, Pedro Silva offers a message of prudence, preparation and vision. Before investing in an idea, he recommends confirming whether there is a genuine need in the market and whether

there are people willing to pay for the solution. He also advises creating a financial reserve capable of covering between six and twelve months of personal expenses and the business's fixed costs.

For him, networking should begin before the business opens its doors. Building relationships with potential clients, suppliers, partners and mentors can be just as important as raising capital.

The future that Pedro Silva seeks to help build through APME,

however, goes beyond the individual growth of companies. Among the objectives of his mandate are the institutionalization of an effective Local Content Law and the creation of a robust Guarantee Fund for SMEs.

The scenario he considers transformative is one in which a small Mozambican company can obtain certification, secure a contract with a major industrial company and use that contract as a basis for obtaining financing on fair terms.

"If we can create an environ-

ment in which a small company can become certified, secure a contract with a major industrial company and obtain fair financing based on that contract, we will have structurally transformed Mozambique's economy," he argues.

There is also a social and generational dimension to this vision. Pedro Silva wants to see more companies led by women and young people and believes that strengthening the domestic private sector can contribute to greater economic independence for the country.



international investors. Multinationals often arrive with greater availability of capital, access to external financing at lower costs and developed technology. Mozambican entrepreneurs, on the other hand, face high financial costs and limitations of scale.

Pedro Silva does not advocate distancing the country from foreign investment. Rather, he argues that the country must create the conditions for domestic companies to be prepared to compete and benefit from the opportunities emerging within their own borders.

This is also why he sees agribusiness and digital transformation as areas of great potential. Mozambique continues to export raw materials and import many processed products, a reality which, according to the President of APME, creates opportunities for businesses involved in processing, preservation and import substitution.

In digital transformation,





Ultimately, his ambition is for Mozambican companies to cease being seen merely as small

businesses struggling to survive in a difficult environment and instead be recognized as prota-

gonists of an economy capable of competing across borders.

Pedro Silva believes that Mozambique has resources, talent and opportunities. The challenge

lies in creating the conditions to transform this potential into solid, competitive and sustainable companies.

Because having global ambition does not mean ceasing to be Mozambican. It means creating companies capable of being born in Mozambique, growing in Mozambique and, from here, competing with the world.



AMÂNDIO FONDO: “It is not enough to be proud of being mozambican”

For Amândio Eduardo Fondo, talking about youth and patriotism in Mozambique also means talking about responsibility, participation and the ability to turn challenges into opportunities. At 46, the co-founder and Director-General of the Associação Comunitária para o Desenvolvimento Humano (ASSCODE-CHA), born in Maputo and naturalised in Zava-la, has built part of his career around community development, particularly working with children, adolescents and young people.

From his perspective, being young and patriotic goes beyond demonstrating pride in national symbols. Patriotism, he argues, should be reflected in concrete actions, such as contributing to community development, respecting others, participating in civic life, promoting solidarity and seeking solutions to the problems affecting the country. For Fondo, young people also face the challenge of transforming their knowledge, creativity and energy into instruments for development.

This perspective does not, however, mean that young people should be held solely responsible for the difficulties they face. Fondo believes that the State, the private sector, families and civil society organisations all have responsibilities in creating conditions that enable young people to study, work, pursue entrepreneurship and participate in decision-making processes. In his view, one cannot demand a strong sense of belonging without creating genuine opportunities for development.

The search for opportunities outside Mozambique is also analysed by Fondo without automatically associating it with a lack of patriotism. For him, young people who study or work abroad can remain connected to the country's development through the transfer of knowledge, innovation, investment and the sharing of experiences. The challenge, he argues, is to build a country where young people feel that they can

develop their projects and contribute to society.

It is at this point that he attributes what he considers to be a fundamental role to young people. Rather than waiting exclusively for opportunities created by the

State or other institutions, young people can organise themselves, establish associations, cooperatives, small businesses and community initiatives. Agriculture, the digital economy, tourism, cultural and creative industries, the green economy, education and infor-

mation technology are some of the areas he identifies as spaces for initiative and innovation.

Fondo stresses, however, that encouraging entrepreneurship does not mean ignoring the need for decent jobs, accessible

financing and inclusive economic policies. From his perspective, youth participation should also extend to environmental protection, volunteering, monitoring public services, defending human rights and participating in decision-making processes that affect communities.





began in Chamanculo C, in Maputo, Fondo points to education, perseverance, solidarity and community commitment as elements that contributed to his journey.

The message he leaves for young people is marked by hope, but also by responsibility. He encourages young people not to give up on education, to seek training, develop professional skills, learn to manage resources and participate in initiatives within their communities. At the same time, he calls for the preservation of peace, mutual respect, tolerance and solidarity, regardless of political, religious, ethnic or social differences.

At the centre of his reflection is a question directed at every young person: what can you do today to improve your community? What knowledge can

you acquire? What problem can you help solve? What contribution can you make to the country's development?

It is through these questions that Amândio Fondo seeks to frame patriotism as a daily practice. In his view, young people should not be regarded merely as a promise for the future, but as a

force that is already helping to shape the present.

And he leaves a reflection that summarises his perspective on commitment to the country: "It is not enough to be proud of being Mozambican. We need to build, every day, reasons for future generations to also be proud to live in Mozambique."



At the helm of ASS-CODECHA, an organisation established in 2001, he says he has witnessed different community intervention experiences that seek to place children, adolescents and young people at the centre of solutions. Among the areas of activity he highlights are inclusive education, literacy, academic support, life-skills development, sexual and reproductive health, HIV and tuberculosis prevention, family planning, prevention of gender-based violence and the promotion of human rights.

The organisation has also developed youth participation initiatives, including activist training, comprehensive sexuality education in schools and communities, mobile brigades and monitoring of health services, including Adolescent- and Youth-Friendly Services. Fondo also highlights the Jovens-Sustenta: Participação Significativa dos Jovens no Desenvolvimento Sustentável project, which, he explains, incorporates components of inclusive education, community health, active citizenship, life-skills development and climate resilience.

For the organisation's leader, these experiences reinforce one conviction: when young people are given knowledge, guidance, opportunities and responsibilities, they can play an active role in transforming their

communities. Community clean-up campaigns, cultural activities, environmental education and spaces for youth participation are, in his view, ways of developing a sense of collective responsibility.

But his understanding of patriotism goes beyond community work. Fondo argues that being patriotic also means working honestly, respecting laws and the rights of others, protecting public property, preserving the environment and combating practices that harm society. From his perspective, supporting a child's learning, taking part in a community initiative, promoting HIV prevention or developing an economic initiative with local

impact can all constitute concrete ways of serving the nation.

At the same time, he believes that patriotism should not be confused with absolute agreement. The exercise of citizenship, freedom of expression and the presentation of constructive criticism are, in his view, part of a society seeking to improve its institutions and respond to national challenges.

His own journey serves as a reference when speaking to young people who are currently facing difficulties. Recalling the path that



FILIPA SOLANGE: “Prevention is caring for a life that may never know it was protected”

Before being a doctor, Filipa Solange is a woman, mother, wife and a person with dreams, fears, vulnerabilities and challenges. Medicine occupies a central place in her life, but it does not define her entire identity. Throughout a career marked by rigour, continuous learning and a commitment to care, she has developed a professional perspective in which technical knowledge must go hand in hand with humanity.

“Before any diagnosis, there is a person,” she says, summarising one of the ideas that guides the way she practises Medicine. For her, professional competence should not distance a doctor from the human reality of the person standing before them. On the contrary, the greater the knowledge, the greater the ability to understand, listen and respect should also be.

cine. Occupational Medicine eventually found a particular place in her career, especially because of the opportunity to act before a problem occurs.

For Filipa Solange, treatment is only one part of Medicine. Preventing, educating, guiding, listening and identifying risks before they turn into illnesses or accidents are also profound ways of caring.

In Occupational Medicine, this reality becomes even more evident. One of the most important outcomes may be precisely the one nobody ever no-



Her connection with health-care began even before Medicine. The daughter of a nurse, she grew up in a hospital environment and developed a connection with caring from an early age. She first trained and worked in Nursing and later followed the path of Medi-

tics: the accident that did not happen, the occupational disease that was prevented or the worker who returned home without consequences.

“Prevention is caring for a life that may never know it was

protected,” she says.

Behind a risk situation, there is often much more than a worker. There is a family, responsibilities, projects and people waiting for that person to return home. This awareness has taught her, throughout her professional experience,

never to look at a risk merely as a number or a statistic.

The doctor therefore argues that prevention cannot be limited to documents, procedures or formal requirements. It is necessary to understand whether what is planned is actually protecting

people on the ground.

This perspective also leads her to question the way some organisations approach occupational health. For Filipa Solange, there is still a need to move beyond the view that reduces Occupational Medicine to a legal obligation or a

business cost. An organisation is made up of people and, when those people are not well, the structure itself feels the consequences.

Caring for workers' health means reducing risks, but it can also contribute to quality of life, trust, commitment and a sense of belonging. The worker, she argues, should not be seen merely as someone who produces, but as a person who has a life beyond the workplace.

Her experience in Aviation Medicine and as a bodily injury expert has broadened this perspective even further. These are areas that require rigour, responsibility and a deep understanding

coexist with issues such as stress, burnout, harassment, isolation, excessive workloads and difficulties in balancing professional and personal life.

For the doctor, truly preventive Occupational Medicine needs to keep pace with this transformation. It is necessary to listen more and create environments where workers can speak about their difficulties without fear of judgement or penalty.

Technology and data intelligence can play an important role in this process. Data analysis makes it possible to identify patterns, monitor indicators and recognise



of human capabilities and limitations. While Aviation Medicine requires careful assessments, expertise in bodily injury has brought her closer to the consequences that illnesses, accidents and injuries can leave in people's lives.

Two people may face a similar condition and experience completely different consequences. For this reason, Filipa Solange believes that assessing someone does not mean looking only at the body, but understanding that person's story, abilities and the impact a particular situation may have on their existence.

"We do not assess only a body. We assess a person, their story, their abilities and the impact that a particular condition may have on their life."

In an increasingly complex professional world, the very notion of risk has also changed. Physical, chemical and biological hazards remain present, but they now

certain risks with greater precision. However, Filipa Solange believes that innovation should serve to expand the professional's capabilities, rather than replace the human relationship.

An algorithm can identify a pattern, but it cannot completely replace a conversation with the worker, observation of the professional environment, clinical experience and medical judgement. For her, the future of prevention lies precisely in the combination of technology, knowledge and humanity.

Building a career in such specialised fields has also meant learning to reconcile different dimensions of her own life. Being a doctor, mother, wife and professional has required discipline, choices and the ability to recognise that not everything can be done perfectly.

This experience has also changed her definition of excellence. For Filipa Solange, excellence does not mean perfection. It means



commitment, consistency, the ability to learn and the courage to recognise what can still be improved.

Over the years, challenges have also taught her not to fear starting again, learning new things or stepping outside her comfort zone. Each experience has added a new dimension to the professional she has become, but also to the woman behind the white coat and titles.

To companies, she makes an appeal to care for people before they are obliged to do so. To healthcare professionals, she reminds them that routine should never take away their ability to recognise the person standing before them. And to young women who dream of building an impactful career, she leaves a message of courage.

"Do not be afraid to occupy your space."

Filipa Solange believes that it is not necessary to stop being sensitive in order to be strong, nor is it necessarily a choice between career and family. Each woman will find her own way of creating that

balance. What matters, she argues, is to study, prepare, work, maintain ethics and perseverance without losing one's essence.

In her view, a truly suc-

cessful career is not measured only by the positions held or the titles achieved, but also by the people who are better because of the work we do.

It is this vision that sustains her journey: a Medicine that does not begin only when illness appears, but much earlier, through prevention, education, listening and the identification of risks.

Because, for Filipa Solange, caring for health also means protecting families, preserving life projects and ensuring that a person can continue returning home every day to those who are waiting for them.

And perhaps that is precisely where one of the quietest and most profound ways of practising Medicine lies: preventing today what tomorrow may never have to happen.



MAIMUNA CUTANE CRUZ

GROWING TO HELP OTHERS GROW

There are professional stories that begin with a business decision. Maimuna Cutane Cruz's began much earlier, when she was still a 23-year-old young woman looking for an opportunity that would allow her to work, pay for university and build her own independence. Today, an entrepreneur, mother, wife and professional with more than a decade of experience in logistics, international trade and management, she looks back on her journey with the awareness that much of the company she built began taking shape long before Cruz Trading existed.

"Beyond being an entrepreneur, I am a mother and a wife. I love my family; they are the centre of everything," she says. Family occupies a central place in the way Maimuna understands her own journey. She lost her mother at the age of seven and was raised by her maternal family, in an environment that, as she explains, taught her from an early age the value of work, responsibility and independence.

Watching her uncles work and face life with dignity became a quiet reference point in her upbringing. Maimuna learned not to wait for perfect circumstances before moving forward because, as she acknowledges, "they rarely were". Instead, she learned to adapt, keep moving and build with the resources available at each moment.

This is also where her curiosity and constant desire to learn come from. She enjoys philosophy, nature, music, documentaries and films based on true stories. She practises high-intensity sports, enjoys cooking with her children, listening to podcasts and has a particular fondness for old motivational videos. Between a good cup of tea and some chocolate, she also finds room to explore new interests and discover just how far she can go.

This pursuit of personal growth is directly connected to the way she approaches leadership. For Maimuna, a company cannot be separated from the person leading it. "I firmly believe that our personal growth influences the way we lead and build our businesses,"

she explains. For this reason, her ambition goes beyond building a successful company: she wants to create something meaningful for her children, her team and the community in which she operates.

Her professional journey, however, began quite differently. While still young, she worked as a sales promoter and shop cashier,

experiences that allowed her to understand the labour market and begin gaining independence. At 23, an opportunity emerged that would change the course of her career.

Maimuna needed to work to pay for university when she received a job opportunity at LAB, offered by the late António Lourenço

Buque. It was there that she truly entered the world of logistics and started from the foundations. She learned how to calculate taxes on goods, manage import and export processes, documentation, container collection, transport management, unloading coordination and operational follow-up.

The experience became

a true professional school. Later, she participated in a project linked to Anadarko, through the Italian company Pellegrini and the Mozambican company Mozway, at a time when logistics required a constant presence on the ground. Between Nacala and Pemba, she followed cargo, documents, transport and customs clearance, often under intense time pressure.



She recalls situations in which she had to travel by motorcycle taxi with documents in hand to get cargo cleared, or finish a process at the port, catch a flight to Pemba and arrive in time to inspect and deliver the goods to the person responsible for the project.

“It was intense. There was pressure, unexpected situations, deadlines and problems to solve constantly. But I loved it,” she recalls.

clients and management.

It was, however, in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, that she began questioning the professional path she was following. Pregnant with her second child, she began working from home because she was part of an at-risk group and, for the first time in a long time, found herself away from the intense routine that had always characterised her professional life.

that period: “Why don’t you use this time to work on something you genuinely enjoy?”

The question led her to revisit her professional history. When she asked herself what she truly knew how to do, she realised that the answer lay in an area she knew deeply and missed: logistics.

She remembered the ports, cargo, documents,



transport, deadlines and, above all, the satisfaction of solving complex problems. “I know how to do logistics. And I love this field,” she concluded.

During that same period, the first steps towards creating the company began.

Cruz Trading was born in the middle of the pandemic, in a particularly challenging environment and without a large structure. The beginning was simple: one client, who imported medicines, and a determined team focused on solving problems.

The company grew from accumulated experience, mistakes, learning and the trust earned from clients. For Maimuna, however, looking at Cruz Trading simply as a company created in 2020 would be to overlook the project’s true origins.

After working for a heavy mineral sands mining company, Maimuna decided to explore another professional environment: banking. She worked at two banks, an experience she considers fundamental to her development, particularly because of her exposure to processes, organisation, responsibility,

She did not feel fulfilled. She knew she needed to change, but had not yet found the answer.

Then a question from her husband changed the way she looked at



“The company did not really start in 2020. It began being built many years earlier,” she explains, referring to the 23-year-old who began learning logistics from the ground up without imagining that the experience would eventually provide the foundation for her own business.

Today, Cruz Trading operates in a sector that Maimuna considers strategic to business competitiveness. From her perspective, logistics is not simply about transporting goods from one point to another. It means ensuring that a product reaches the right destination, at the right time, within the expected costs and in compliance with legal requirements.

A logistics failure can compromise an entire commercial operation. For this reason, she argues that logistics should be regarded as part of business strategy. A well-planned operation makes it possible to reduce costs, avoid delays, manage stock more effectively, honour commitments and increase competitiveness.

“Our work is not simply about moving cargo. It is about removing complexity from the client’s path so that they can focus on growing their business,” she says.

It is precisely within this complexity that she identifies some of the greatest challenges in international trade. Many difficulties that arise at ports, borders or airports, she explains, begin long before shipment. An incorrect tariff classification, incomplete documentation, a licence that was not requested in time or a poorly calculated cost estimate can quickly turn into losses.

For this reason, she considers one of the biggest mistakes entrepreneurs make to be buying first and seeking logistics guidance afterwards. Before an import, she argues, it is necessary to know the goods, their origin, tariff classification, applicable taxes, licences, transport costs and delivery conditions agreed with the supplier.

The purchase price, she warns, should not be analysed in isolation. The true cost of a product can only be understood when all expenses up to its arrival at the warehouse are taken into account.



At Cruz Trading, this preventive approach is part of the way the com-

pany operates. The team

seeks to understand the operation before it takes place, assessing the goods, documentation, authorisations, routes and potential risks. It then follows each stage and maintains active communication to respond quickly to any

challenges. For Maimuna, solving problems is part of logistics, but anticipating them is even more important. Her relationship with the field has also become a defining feature of her leadership. Although she trusts the team she has built, she does not intend to distance herself from operations. When necessary, she follows cargo, opens boxes, checks goods, discusses tariff classifications, follows up on truck breakdowns and seeks to understand problems personally until a solution is found.

“I do not believe that leading means being distant from the operation,”

she says.

It is also on the ground that she has built much of her experience as a woman in a sector still marked by a strong male presence, particularly in operations, transport, borders and major cargo movements.

Maimuna does not view gender as a limitation. She prefers to respond through knowledge, preparation, technical ability and results. Throughout her career, she believes she has also developed an intuitive ability to recognise when a particular operation may encounter difficulties, combining that perception with rational thinking, technical knowledge and decision-making.

The first challenge, she acknowledges, is often earning the client’s trust. But she believes that trust is strengthened through practical experience. One of the signs she values most is the fact that much of Cruz Trading’s client portfolio has come through recommendations from other clients.

For Maimuna, this trust is one of the most important forms of professional recognition. “Credibility is not demanded; it is built.”

Building

the business also taught her some of the hardest lessons of entrepreneurship. One of them was realising that revenue does not necessarily mean financial health.

During the early years, she was focused on selling, winning clients and growing the company. Over time, she realised that growth without financial control, appropriate margins, processes and discipline can become a problem.

The experience taught her about cash flow, negotiation, people management, trust and, above all, the importance of knowing when to turn down certain business opportunities. After six years of entrepreneurship, she considers one of her greatest lessons to be understanding that working hard is not enough.

“You have to stop, analyse the figures, correct the course and make sure that the business is genuinely creating value,” she says.

It is with this perspective that she also looks at the opportunities Mozambique can explore in international trade. From her perspective, the country’s geographical position, logistics corridors and connections to landlocked countries create room for businesses linked not only to imports and exports, but also to distribution, warehousing, procurement and trade facilitation.

Maimuna argues, however, that the discussion should not focus solely on what

Mozambique imports. It is equally necessary to look at the country’s export capacity, products, raw materials and domestic production that can find markets beyond the country.

For this to happen, she considers it essential to transform potential into structured businesses capable of ensuring quality, consistency and compliance with the requirements of international markets.

“Mozambican entrepreneurs need to start looking at Africa not only as several separate countries, but as a market where there can be customers, suppliers and partners,” she argues.

At the helm of Cruz Trading, the ambition is now to consolidate a company that can grow in a structured way and be recognised for service excellence. Maimuna wants the company to be more than a logistics operator: she wants it to become a reference point for entrepreneurs facing important, complex or urgent operations and looking for someone they can trust.

At the same time, she wants to develop the team and build an organisation capable of growing beyond its own founder.

But the legacy she envisions does not end with the company. Her personal story has also become part of what she wants to convey to other entrepreneurs: it is possible to start small, learn, make mistakes, correct course and build something meaningful.

After a childhood marked by the loss of her mother, a career built across logistics, banking and international trade, and a company launched in the middle of a pandemic, Maimuna looks to the future with an ambition that goes beyond individual success.

She wants her name and her company to be associated with excellence, trust and impact. Excellence in the work delivered, trust in the relationships built and impact on the people who grow alongside her and on the community around her.

“Success is no longer just about what we manage to build for ourselves. It is also about what we manage to transform in the lives of other people.”

Perhaps it is in this idea that the essence of Maimuna Cruz’s journey can best be found: a woman who began by learning to build with what she had, transformed experience into expertise, expertise into a business, and the business into a platform through which she can continue to grow and help others grow.



“Before paying the supplier or authorising the shipment, speak to your logistics partner or customs clearing agent,” she advises. In her experience, a conversation before the operation can prevent days of delays and unnecessary costs.

pany operates. The team seeks to understand the operation before it takes place, assessing the goods, documentation, authorisations, routes and potential risks. It then follows each stage and maintains active communication to respond quickly to any



SANDRA JARDIM FERNANDES:

**35 Years of Law,
building bridges
between people,
investment and
new beginnings**