

Uneiza Ali Issufo

**Founding member/Administrator
ConsMoz Limited**

MOZAMBIQUE



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“I promote the participation of women in construction projects, without underestimating the power of men”



Uneiza Ali Issufo is the founder of ConsMoz Limited, a young dynamic construction company based in Nampula, in the North of Mozambique. ConsMoz operates respecting societal values, such as honesty and commitment to quality, with a strong focus on sustainability and environmental protection.

In 2010, Uneiza suddenly lost her mother. With no choice but to move on, she decided to honour her mother's memory by taking care of her siblings, despite her young age. As soon as she finished college, and graduated as a civil engineer, she got a job in a construction company. She then realized that working for a large company did not mean that she could not look for better opportunities and move to get another job in another large construction company, and then another one. By the end of 2013, she was working for three construction companies at the same time. A very active and communicative young woman, Uneiza was appointed President of the contractor's association in Nampula and started to actively participate in sectoral fora. In June 2014, she could finally realize the dream of creating her own company. She started looking for clients who could believe in her capacity to provide top-quality construction services. With a limited budget, the discrimination for being a woman on a "man's position" and the very young age, Uneiza had to walk from door to door to make her company known and trusted. "In our region, we are born with several NO and we need to conquer our YES" she says. For each NO she got she knew she was getting closer to a YES. It took a while until the first small contract came, but immediately after she got a request for the construction of 10 houses, then of 40 houses and after a month VALE – a large Brazilian mining company - saw her potential and asked her to build 100 new houses.

With such a big contract, Uneiza left her job to dedicate to her own venture –ConsMoz. "Managing risk is my natural way of being. You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the pier"- Uneiza says. She also decided to improve her business skills and knowledge, and got enrolled in an MBA master programme. In September 2017, Uneiza participated in the Empretec

Workshop organized by the Enterprise Mozambique Foundation in Nampula. It was a very busy time for Uneiza, but it helped her to strengthen her entrepreneurial talent. Thanks to Empretec, she learned the importance of taking responsibility for her actions. Nowadays, Uneiza is the Vice-President of the construction sector association, with a three-year mandate. She sees herself as an engineer, a manager, an entrepreneur and a dreamer, always willing to innovate, to improve her knowledge and skills, and to transmit her knowledge to others. ConsMoz has now been recognized not only for the quality of its construction services, but also for caring for the health and safety of its workers, and for its attention to cleaning conditions and good customers' services. Vale appreciated these qualities and commissioned a new order of 117 houses. With 5 different areas to manage, and competing against much larger and older companies, Uneiza supervised 17 foremen - one for each construction site. She recalls days without sleeping, without eating and stressed. However, she always met deadlines as no other company was doing and maintained top quality delivery standards. Nowadays, ConsMoz offers a large variety of construction services, from building houses to monuments, roadways, bridges, electrical installations, hydraulic systems, digital communication structures, solid waste management. It also carries out studies on health and safety at work, integrated urban waste, and environmental impact and maintenance. By employing more than 800 men and women from poor villages as construction workers, ConsMoz has stimulated the development of the local communities. It also employs a woman environmental engineer, a woman civil engineer, a computer management specialist, and a technical team of three young, highly motivated staff. ConsMoz also reinvested its profits in two new agricultural companies producing sugar cane and staples, with the hope to have the hunger crises banished from Mozambique. ConsMoz values in all performed activities are: "love for life", humility, ethics and justice, responsibility, self-trust, integrity, accuracy, transparency, excellence, innovation and sustainability. In 2018 two new important projects started: the rehabilitation of the environmental services in the whole Cabo-Delgado province and the construction of a 3-stores multifunctional building in the city of Nampula.

