

At just 30 years old. Lizandra Cassia Caposso Cristovao da Costa is the Deputy General director of the Ministry of Health in the South West African country of Angola. She is also an NSLS alumna. Lizandra joins me today in a discussion about her impressive Journey, resilience in the workplace and leadership with compassion. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, your host, and this is Motivational Mondays.

**Corey Andrew 00:00:29**

I am so honored to be joined today by... and I'm going to pronounce your name, your full name and I've been practicing. So tell me how I do. Okay? I'm joined today by Lizandra Cassia Caposso Cristovao da Costa. How did I do?

**Lizandra 00:00:49**

That was perfectly fine. You nailed it!

**Corey Andrew 00:00:49**

Okay, perfect. I was like, I'm not gonna butcher this woman's name today when she joins me.

**Lizandra 00:00:55**

You did it great

**Corey Andrew 00:00:55**

Thank you so much. Well, it's an honor to have you here because not only are you an impressive person who has done so much in your young years to achieve great success in business, but you're also an SLS alumnus. And so we're really, really excited to have you here. So, thank you and welcome to motivational Mondays.

**Lizandra 00:01:12**

Thank you. Thank you so much, Corey. I'm the one that actually is very honored to finally be part of Motivational Mondays. I'd like to say that since 2014 I've been actually listening and today I'm part of it. So that is to me a huge accomplishment and thank you so much. I'm the one that has a lot to thank for it.

**Corey Andrew 00:01:36**

Your current position is the Deputy General at the Ministry of Health in Angola. And what people should know, I want to make sure we give a background of Angola. Angola is in the west coast of southern Africa. The second largest Portuguese speaking country, after Brazil. About 33 million in the population, which is up about 3%, I believe from 2019, so you are in control, or you manage I guess it's the healthcare system for that entire population. Please explain to us what your job entails.

**Lizandra 00:02:07**

Right now, I am the deputy General Director. I will explain what that stands for. That is actually the public Institute that is responsible for the whole supply chain management. It's responsible for the procurement, and distribution of medication and medical equipment in Angola. So we are obviously through the Ministry of Health. And that's my, my position that I've been so far. We're responsible for buying the medication, distributing it in the whole Supply Chain management, regarding it. The logistics process that's also our responsibility. So it's a big responsibility. That's a little bit of what I do.

**Corey Andrew 00:02:51**

Yeah... Well, that's a lot. I mean that's a lot of people to sort of be responsible for. To make sure that they get the medical supplies that they need. But what's most impressive though is that you're at quite a young age. Typically, I guess women don't discuss their ages. But in your case, it was in your bio notes. So, can we share your age with the public?

**Lizandra 00:03:13**

Yes, I'm just 30 years old.

**Corey Andrew 00:03:18**

And you look much younger, by the way, because people can't see you, but I see you on camera. But yes, that is still a young age to have such a big position and you started with the Ministry of Health, years ago though. So you began as a younger, I guess, applicant, in this role or candidate in this role and then, quickly though you Rose up into some senior positions. So tell me about the time you spent there, how you began and then how you got to where you are.

**Lizandra 00:03:48**

I'm actually very fortunate to be part of our healthcare system here in Angola. I've held multiple senior positions within our ministry. So obviously, I started much younger because I only turned 30 this year. But I started up as the administrative director at maternity Lucrezia buying- and that is the biggest maternity hospital in the country, With over 400 beds.

**Lizandra 00:04:15**

And as I grew up within my role, I was appointed and promoted to the consultant for the hospital area at the Ministry of Health. And I did that for about three years. And then I was again promoted and appointed by the Minister of Health to be in the position that I am today—that is the Deputy General director for the central. That is the public Institute that is responsible for the purchasing the procurement, and the distribution of the medication. I like to say that it's through work, resilience that I've reached where I am today, at a such a young age. I try to do everything obviously, before any and everything, my spirituality. But second, I like to consider myself a natural born leader. But I also like to have everybody around me in a supportive environment, in

a way that we can all grow together within the role that I am in today. And that is actually a part, besides obviously, those great opportunities that I was having was about a lot of resilience.

**Corey Andrew 00:05:27**

Yes. I know that's a big thing for you resilience and leading with kindness and with heart. Those are two of your biggest attributes I have gathered from researching about you and you've just really nailed it with one of the big things we always talk about at the NSLS which is great leadership, is not just about leading yourself. It's also about bringing out the best in the others around you. Right? And establishing giving people what they need also to excel and you mentioned when we first begin or I mentioned I guess, that you are an NSLS alumnus. So, tell me a little bit about how being an NSLS member helped shape your leadership vision and success for the future.

**Lizandra 00:06:10**

I've been a part of the society since 2014. I believe that leadership isn't just about motivating and influencing other people, but what the society actually did to me that I now like to do with the people that are around me is setting a goal, setting a vision, and actually reaching that. It's to understand that alone, we cannot do it. But we can actually do it. If you had a theme and everybody is within the same vision, if everybody understands the goals, the goals, and what it takes to actually reach those goals. And I believe that the society actually helped me a lot in terms of understanding what it takes for leaders to actually set an environment getting to know whoever is around them, even in the workplace, in their personal life, people that can actually get in the same atmosphere. I like to say get in the same atmosphere and then they can contribute. They understand that this is the way that this is possible and we can all reach that together. And the society actually help the me through that. As I said, I was an avid member. I used to watch Motivational Mondays. I used to log in to see what the speakers were trying to teach us. And at that moments, those were very particular moments that I realized that I could actually transport that to the setting that I am in today and to actually make not just the people around me but to shape a whole generation. And that's what I've been trying to do. Because obviously, I'm very young and leadership doesn't really have to do with the position that we are in today, but it's about the way we've been shaping this way. It's about the trajectory until we reach this goal.

**Corey Andrew 00:07:59**

A lot of the kids, and I say kids, but they're young adults —a lot of the young adults who are in our program, I think, because of the society that we are in, they might just be part of a generation that may expect things a little faster. But what I like about your story, as a young person, you're stressing the importance of the hard work too, the commitment to work, not just showing up. So what's important about that is that you speak about resilience. And when it comes to resilience you have mentioned that you were rising up the corporate ladder, if you will, during some difficult times of transition. Did you mean personal transitions or do you mean there are societal transitions in Angola that were happening, that major job a bit more difficult?

**Lizandra 00:08:45**

Both, actually, when I say that it's a way for me to touch and shape a generation is because I come from a very quick kind of generation. We want everything very fast and we want to make it happen, like in the, in our, you know, in our fingerprints (a snap), but I want to kind of take the perspective away, that perspective away. And I want to be able to tell people at my age, through my generation, that it's possible, through hard work, through persistence, we have to be persistent. You don't get to a place of trust with big responsibilities without actually having to step on all the stairs in order to go up.

**Lizandra 00:09:35**

And that is something that I do like to preach to everybody. Especially the younger generation. Through my resilience, I like to say that it wasn't just personal, but it was political in my country. It was a big shift in a lot of the things in a lot of the way that the country was going — political. It was a shape of a society. It was also related to work, and it was about having those resilient foundations, positively, emotional stability, balance, spirituality. It's about being aware of your triggers and understanding that everything is possible, if you do it the right way. And that's something that I like to say. That is actually the foundation of resilience, the foundation of great leaders.

**Lizandra 00:10:29**

And the direction that we actually are going in the whole world. It's okay to want things very quick. It's okay to want things to happen and to get things done. But in order for you to do that, you have to understand that there is a process. It's not just something that will happen overnight, but it's an active process of shaping things along the way, shaping ideas, shaping a vision setting up goals, getting yourself to grow in every area of your life for you to start impacting your society, your community, and one day, your whole country, and one day, that's in my sector, but the Whole Health Care system — one step at a time. With a lot of focus, with a lot of integrity and transparency. That's what young leaders have to set up in their mind and go for it. It is possible in the right way.

**Corey Andrew 00:11:29**

That is wonderful advice. I mean, I was just like clinging to every word like, wow. I mean, I couldn't have said it better. No, really. No, really. I mean, I think I cannot wait for our members to hear that because it's everything that we try to make sure that they gain from the society when they join. Everything you just tapped on. Because people can take shortcuts. I think, at some point in our lives we've all tried a shortcut or we tried to minimize the work. And at the end of the day the lack of Integrity in that moment means that we were not as prepared as we should have been. We did not produce or perform as good as we should have. So the lesson for me, like you just said, is that there really are no shortcuts if you want quality, right? If you want high performance, you have to put the work in. Now, also, while that's important too, is another issue

which is specific to women. You are not only just an amazing business person and thought leader. You're a mom and you have three children.

**Corey Andrew 00:12:29**

You have twins and a third child and you still balance all that. I raised that point in the conversation to to discuss women's specific needs in business, right? As moms. And I was wondering if you had any challenges as a mother or when you became pregnant, still pursuing your occupation because sometimes for women, it's really hard in society. There's bias in business against women trying to be a mom. So, how was that experience for you?

**Lizandra 00:12:57**

That was actually very challenging experience that also shaped me. That is also part of my resilience process. Because I'm not ashamed of being the minority, in every sense. And actually because I understand where I stand, when it comes to be young, a black woman and to be in such a responsibility in my country. I understand that. I am the minority. And for that, I try to relate to the people that can actually see me has an inspiration.

**Lizandra 00:13:32**

Obviously, it was very hard because since I started, I have four year old twins. I have a toddler and he's 7 months old. So it is a lot of work. I have a loving husband and I have I like to say that I have a whole life. Part of who I am, when it comes to my business and my profession, I have a whole life to manage. There were times that it was a huge challenge, but I like to say that a good support system will take you very far. And I had this great support system. I had a husband that understood my vision when it comes to my work and he put his heart to. We had to make a lot of sacrifices for our family, especially with my time with my toddlers. That is something that I want to do. I want to, when I get home as much tired that I am, I still want to see, their little faces coming up and running. Obviously where I am. It takes a lot of trust. It takes a lot of persistence to still hold your ground. That is a good way, to still hold your ground and not let people define you by your choices. It's a great support system. There were great people around me that actually made it happen. It's not always perfect. It's not always easy to do that, but if you can get everybody that is around you within your vision within the perspective for the future, those steps will actually be much easier if they understand, this is where we are, and this is where we want to go. This is the goal that we have for the country, for our family, for your spirituality, for your personal growth, and they can actually help you. And as a person, as a woman, as being so young, and being a young mom, you understand that there are areas in your life that they may lack something here and there. But you're willing to make those sacrifices, you're willing to fulfill those areas with the values that you have in order to keep moving forward. Do not let that hold you back, but to understand that it is possible.

**Lizandra 00:15:59**

As much as I need to sacrifice this, in the long run we will all win. We will all have that. So, if you have to work until 10 p.m. I won't, because I still have time for my kids. So, I will start, I will stop

a little bit early. See them, have my quality time with them and then go back to work if I have to. It's also to understand that everything goes through a process. And you have to respect the process, you have to respect the miles that will take in order for you to fulfill a goal.

Corey Andrew

Lizandra

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00:16:38

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by The National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. I'm Corey Andrew Powell and I'll see you again here next week.