



30 Women in Local Government: Celebrating CLGF's 30th Anniversary

Featured Interviewee #9: Akeliah Glasgow-Warner

Mayor, Diego Martin Borough Corporation, Trinidad and Tobago



Akeliah Glasgow-Warner

Mayor, Diego Martin Borough Corporation,
Trinidad and Tobago

Profile

Her Worship Akeliah Claudina Glasgow-Warner is the inaugural Mayor of the Borough of Diego Martin, making history in 2023 as its first officeholder. With over seven years in politics and more than 14 years in youth development, she is a dynamic leader, entrepreneur, and advocate for women's empowerment in Trinidad and Tobago.

She previously served as Vice Chairman of the Diego Martin Borough Corporation and chaired the Community Development, Decentralization & Social Services Committee, where she pioneered programs for women and youth. In 2024, she was appointed Chairman of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Local Government Authorities (TTALGA), strengthening her influence in national local governance.

Armed with an MBA in Leadership and Strategy, certifications in Family & Community Services, and entrepreneurial ventures in catering, fashion, and event supplies, Akeliah embodies strategic and compassionate leadership. She is also a proud wife to Jimmy Warner and mother to daughters Sanyah and Nubienne.

Interview Highlights

1. How has the role of women in local government evolved over the past three decades, and how do you think women can accelerate action for gender equality today?

Over three decades, we've moved from being "the exception" to being essential decision-makers—shaping budgets, infrastructure, safety, and social policy. A perfect example of how women have evolved in Local Government right here in Trinidad is both our current prime minister the Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar and our opposition leader the Honourable Penelope Beckles-Robinson started their political career in Local Government

Akeliah Glasgow-Warner (Trinidad & Tobago)

2. What inspired you to enter local government, and how has your journey advanced gender equality in your community or country?

My inspiration came from watching my grandmother and mother give their all to the community that I grew up in, advocating for women and children, better infrastructure and community outreach initiatives, through the local and central government representatives. I personally entered local government to be the change that they wanted to see and to make everyday life better for the people of my community. However, God had a greater plan because in becoming the first Mayor of the Borough of Diego Martin, and only female Mayor in Trinidad and Tobago at this time, has inspired other women and young girls.

3. What has been your most rewarding experience as a woman leader in local government, and how did it contribute to promoting gender equality?

Entering the Diego Martin Borough Corporation as the first female Mayor greeted by a team of women both on the Council and Administrative arm; a female Deputy Mayor, a female CEO, a female Disaster Coordinator, a female ASP, a female Inspector, a female Administrative Officer II, a female PIRO (Personnel and Industrial Relations Officer), a female Public Relations Officer and a majority female led Council.

4. What challenges did you face as a woman entering local government, and how did you overcome them? What can be done to accelerate overcoming these barriers for future women leaders?

Balancing life as a businesswoman, mother, wife, and now Mayor of Diego Martin has indeed been challenging. However, this requires discipline, time management, and a strong support system that I am grateful to have. I've also learnt to prioritize, delegate when necessary, and be fully present in each role—whether serving a client, leading a council meeting, or spending time with my family. It's not always easy, but with clear boundaries, planning, and a willingness to ask for help, I've found a rhythm that allows me to serve my Borough while nurturing my home and business.

5. What advice would you give to other women considering a career in local government to help them accelerate gender equality in their communities?

While I would advise to start where you stand; on a committee, a school board, or in your neighbourhood, I would also advise that it starts with love. Be sure to have a heart of empathy and prepare to be a nurturer to all.

6. How can we encourage more women, particularly young women, to enter leadership roles in local government, and what actions can governments take to create more inclusive environments for women?

The fact that out of 14 municipalities in my country I am the only female Mayor, proves that there is a shortage of women leaders in Local Government. I am of the view that we need visible role models, paid internships and micro-grants for women civic projects. Governments should mandate gender-balanced shortlists and embed leadership training in youth councils.

7. Why is it urgent to increase the number and influence of women in local government, and how will this contribute to positive change in governance?

Women's leadership in government correlates a supported environment through nurturing, mentorship, empowerment and open communication. This type of leadership produces



opportunities of investment in safety, health, and education — the basics that strengthen communities. The urgency matters due to the changes in society, climate and the economy. Diverse leadership produces better assessments, better service design, and higher public trust.

8. How has digital technology helped or can help accelerate women's political inclusion in local government, and what steps should we take to make it more accessible to women in leadership?

Digital tools widen the door for more women to be inclusive in decision making processes, hybrid meetings, e-petitions relevant to women inclusivity especially caregivers and entrepreneurs. To expand access, we should: provide public Wi-Fi hubs, offer digital literacy clinics, adopt low-data engagement options (WhatsApp, SMS), archive meetings, and publish machine-readable datasets so advocates can build solutions.

9. What innovative practices or strategies have you used to accelerate women's participation and leadership in local government in your region or country?

At the Borough of Diego Martin Borough Corporation, we have created a quick readiness system in times of disaster. Our disaster unit led by a female, alongside Council are able to communicate in real time using different mediums of communication. Therefore, bringing relief to affected burgesses in the Borough. In addition, we have led hybrid digital courses for entrepreneurs within the Borough, where 90% of participants were women. Providing training for business management and digital literacy.

10. As CLGF celebrates 30 years, what actions must be taken in the next 30 years to ensure the continued empowerment of women in local government?

- Create a Commonwealth exchange for women leaders—shadowing, internships and apprenticeship and shared toolkits
- Fund local care infrastructure that support women interested in Local Government; (childcare, safe transport).
- Standardize anti-harassment, safeguarding, and complaint mechanisms across local authorities.
- Invest in digital inclusion so participation isn't limited by device or data.
- Build resilience: ensure women lead on climate adaptation, disaster readiness, and local economic diversification.

CLGF 30th Anniversary Commemoration

In celebration of CLGF's 30th Anniversary, we are honored to spotlight the inspiring stories of 30 trailblazing women in local government from across the Commonwealth, all members of the Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network. These interviews celebrate their groundbreaking contributions to gender equality and their transformative impact on building inclusive, empowered communities.

Stay Connected

Join the conversation on social media using the hashtags:

#AccelerateAction | #ComWLG | #LocalGov | #IWD2025 | #CLGF30Years | @CLGF_News
Visit [CLGF's website](#) for more inspiring stories and to stay updated on the 30th Anniversary campaign. Thank you for being part of this important movement!