

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

### Featured Interviewee #2: Florence Namayanja Mayor Masaka City & Executive Member EACLGA, Uganda



#### Profile

Hon. **Florence Namayanja** is a strong advocate for women's empowerment who mentors emerging female leaders within the National Unity Platform, her political

party. She holds a distinguished career in public service rooted in grassroots leadership, has served as Deputy Mayor of Kampala City and is a two-term Member of Parliament for Bukoto East, where she held key parliamentary committee positions.

As Mayor, she leads urban revitalization efforts with a focus on inclusive governance. She also serves on the Board of the East African County and Local Governments Association (EACLGA) and chairs the Resource Mobilisation Committee at Muteesa I Royal University. Her leadership is marked by resilience, strategic vision, and a commitment to community advancement.

*Florence Namayanja - Mayor Masaka City, Uganda & Executive Member EACLGA*

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#### Interview Highlights:

##### 1. How has the role of women in local government evolved over the past three decades?

*Uganda*

The role of women in Ugandan local government has evolved from being mere statistics to integral parts of policy formation and implementation. Initially, affirmative action, like ring-fenced positions (women councillors and district Women MPs), was used to increase women's participation due to an uneven playing field. However, there's a shift towards women competing for and winning direct seats, including mayoral positions.

##### 2. What inspired you to enter local government?

Local government offers the opportunity to directly implement envisioned changes for communities, unlike the national level (Parliament), which primarily focuses on legislation. As the only female City Mayor in Uganda, I have lobbied for opportunities for young women's capacity development and organized women's political leadership training to address systemic barriers.

*Florence Namayanja, Uganda*



### **3. Most rewarding experience as a woman leader in local government?**

Serving as the City Mayor of Masaka City and witnessing the positive impact of the City Executive Committee decisions on the lives of residents through infrastructural developments and improved services has been rewarding. Gender equality has been promoted by assigning women leaders to head various council sub-committees, including traditionally male-dominated ones like the Works Committee, and by having women in key leadership positions like Deputy Mayor, Secretary for Gender, and Deputy Speaker. This empowers them in decision-making and enhances their relevance to constituents.

### **4. What challenges did you face as a woman entering local government, and how did you overcome them?**

Overcoming male dominance and convincing the electorate unaccustomed to a female mayor, within the administration, adjusting technocrats to female leadership. These were overcome by focusing on delivering results, which transcended gender. To accelerate overcoming barriers for future leaders, establishing strong women's networks for lobbying and influencing policies is crucial. Current women leaders should perform well to ease acceptance for those who follow.

### **5. Advice to other women considering a career in local government?**

Ensuring equal access to economic opportunities and financial independence for women at the local level through access to affordable loans and business training. Building relationships with cultural and religious leaders is crucial for influencing gender-sensitive social attitudes.

### **6. How to encourage more young women to enter leadership roles?**

Sensitizing them to the nobility of local service and highlighting how it provides valuable experience for national-level roles. Governments should ensure equal pay for women and men and create mother-friendly workplace policies, such as encouraging the establishment of nurseries at work stations, to foster more inclusive environments.

### **7. Why is it urgent to increase the number of women in local government?**

More women's voices will lead to a shift from marginalization to active decision-making, transforming communities socially and economically and ensuring future generations of women don't face the same challenges.

### **8. Role of digital technology in political inclusion?**

It has facilitated information sharing, making it easier for women to stay informed and demand better leadership and accountability, thus fostering greater political participation. Providing computer skills training and necessary devices like tablets will enhance their efficiency.



9.

### **Innovative practices to accelerate women's participation in local government?**

Organizing inclusive community engagement meetings to ensure all voices, especially women who may not regularly attend council sittings, are heard.

### **10. Actions for CLGF in the next 30 years to empower women in local government?**

Providing education opportunities for women in local government, influencing government policies to improve local government remuneration to attract and retain more women, initiating early engagement with high school and university students to encourage their participation, facilitating peer-to-peer learning opportunities with women in local government in other countries, and funding for technological empowerment to ensure women can access and utilize modern technology for effective decision-making.

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### **CLGF 30th Anniversary Commemoration**

In celebration of CLGF's 30th Anniversary, we are honoured 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.

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Thank you for being part of this important movement!