

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

### Featured Interviewee #3: Helena Mensah

Speaker, Ejisu Municipal Assembly-Ghana &  
President Women's Caucus-NALAG



Her political journey began in 2012, and she was first elected in 2016 as the Assembly Member for the Manhyia, Adadientem, and Ampabame Electoral Area. She was re-elected in 2023.

Hon. Mensah is a committed advocate for women's empowerment, actively supporting economic initiatives through the provision of soft loans and skills training. She promotes girls' education by supplying educational materials and enhances healthcare access by assisting constituents with the renewal of their national health insurance.

### Profile

**Hon. Helena Mensah** is the current President of the Women's Caucus of the National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG), elected in 2024. She also serves as the Presiding Member (Speaker) of the Ejisu Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region, a position she has held since 2022, now in her second term.

Professionally, she is an entrepreneur and marketing expert with over 19 years of experience in the private sector.

*Hon. Helena Mensah*  
*Speaker, Ejisu Municipal Assembly-Ghana &*  
*President, Women's Caucus-NALAG*

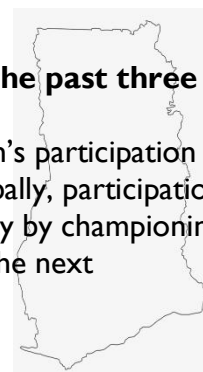
### Interview Highlights:

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

There has been a significant increase in awareness and advocacy for women's participation in local governance. While more women are assuming leadership roles globally, participation remains low in countries like Ghana. Women can accelerate gender equality by championing inclusive policies, promoting gender-responsive budgeting, and mentoring the next generation of female leaders.

#### 2. What inspired your entry into local government?

My motivation stemmed from a desire to effect meaningful change in my community, particularly for marginalized groups. As Presiding Member of Ejisu Municipal Assembly, I've supported the election of five women as Unit Committee members and mentored young





women

into student leadership roles. These efforts have amplified women's voices in governance and laid a foundation for future political engagement.

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

Increasing women's representation in local councils. My election as the first female Presiding Member in a male-dominated assembly was also a significant milestone, reflecting the trust and support of my peers and reinforcing the value of inclusive leadership.

### **4. Challenges you faced and how you addressed them?**

These included gender bias, limited mentorship, and weak support networks. I overcame these by building alliances, advocating inclusive policies, and demonstrating competence. To support future leaders, we must expand mentorship programs, provide equal access to political training, and dismantle systemic barriers.

### **5. What advice would you give women pursuing a career in local government?**

Remain focused, build strong support networks, and persist in advocating for change. Women must use their platforms to promote inclusive policies and empower others through gender-sensitive initiatives.

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

Mentorship, leadership training, and visible female role models are essential. Governments should implement gender quotas, promote flexible work policies, and ensure equal access to political opportunities. Ghana's recent Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121) is a critical step and must be effectively implemented at the local level.

### **7. Why is increasing women's participation in local government urgent?**

Greater female representation ensures diverse perspectives in decision-making, resulting in more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable policies that address the needs of all citizens.

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

Digital platforms have expanded women's ability to campaign, network, and engage in governance. To enhance access, investments in digital literacy, affordable technology, and supportive online spaces are essential.

### **9. Innovative strategies to advance women's participation in local government?**

I've established mentorship programs, organized gender-sensitive training workshops, and personally mentored women to pursue leadership roles. I also encourage schoolgirls to engage in student leadership, cultivating early interest in governance.

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

CLGF should continue to promote gender-responsive governance, enforce gender quotas, expand mentorship and training, and ensure digital inclusion. Supportive work environments with flexible and family-friendly policies will also be crucial to sustaining women's leadership in local government.

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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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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!