

# WOMEN LEADERS SHAPING UGANDA'S FUTURE

BY JOSEPH BATTE

Uganda's political landscape is evolving, with women increasingly stepping into pivotal roles that once seemed unattainable. As of March 2026, following the recent general election, where President Yoweri Museveni secured another term, the spotlight shines on these trailblazers.

Their journeys, from humble beginnings to high office, reveal tales of determination amid cultural barriers, economic hardships and political turbulence. Yet, their achievements underscore a vital truth: women's representation in decision-making is not just about equality; it is a catalyst for inclusive policies that uplift

families, communities, and the economy.

When women lead, issues like education, health and gender violence get prioritised, fostering sustainable development and reducing poverty gaps.

Take Jessica Alupo, Uganda's Vice-President since 2021. Born in 1974 in Katakwi district, Alupo started as a teacher before joining the army and politics.

Her profile: A former educator and army officer, she served as education minister from 2011 to 2016, where she pushed for better school infrastructure and teacher training.

Challenges?

Navigating a male-dominated military and politics, facing skepticism about women's leadership capabilities.

Her achievement: As Vice-President, Alupo has championed women's empowerment programmes, including skills training for rural youth.

Her story highlights how women's voices in executive roles drive policies that address maternal health and education, benefiting entire generations.

Then there is Anita Among, the Speaker of Parliament since 2022. Hailing from

**MRS MUSEVENI  
FOUNDED  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANISATIONS  
BEFORE JOINING  
POLITICS.**



**Mrs Museveni has focused on youth and HIV/AIDS awareness**

Bukedea district, Among rose from a lecturer and banker to a key legislator. Short profile:

A lawyer by training, she was Deputy Speaker before ascending to the top post,

becoming the third woman in that role after Rebecca Kadaga. Challenges include intense scrutiny and allegations of corruption, which she has navigated while maintaining party loyalty.

**Achievements:** Under her leadership, Parliament has passed laws on domestic violence and land rights, amplifying women's issues. Among's tenure shows how female speakers can foster debates on gender parity, ensuring Bills reflect diverse needs.

**Robinah Nabbanja**, the Prime Minister since 2021, embodies grassroots grit. Born in 1969 in Kakumiro district, she began as a teacher and local councillor.

**Profile:** A nurse by profession, she climbed to district chairperson before joining national politics.

**Challenges:** Balancing family duties with demanding roles, plus facing online harassment and political rivalries.

**Achievements:** As Prime Minister, she has led COVID-19 recovery efforts and poverty alleviation programmes, like the Parish Development Model,



**Vice-President Alupo**

which has empowered rural women through microfinance.

Nabbanja's work illustrates that women in top executive positions can steer national agendas toward social welfare, reducing inequality.

Rebecca Kadaga, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, is a veteran.

Born in 1956 in Kamuli district, she is a lawyer who



**Parliament Speaker Among**

served as Speaker from 2011 to 2021.

**Short profile:** Uganda's first female Speaker, she advocated for women's rights in Parliament.

**Challenges:** Overcoming patriarchal norms in early career and health setbacks.

**Achievements:** She spearheaded affirmative action policies, increasing women's parliamentary seats to 34%.



**Prime Minister Nabbanja**

Kadaga's legacy proves women's leadership enhances regional co-operation and economic integration, vital for Uganda's growth.

Janet Kataaha Museveni, the Minister of Education and Sports since 2016 and First Lady, brings a unique blend of influence.

Born in 1948, she founded community organisations before joining politics.

**Profile:** Focused on youth and HIV/AIDS awareness, Mrs Museveni has pushed for universal education.

**Challenges:** Criticism over nepotism and balancing public scrutiny with family roles.

**Achievements:** Her ministry has boosted girl-child enrolment through scholarships and sanitary programmes, cutting dropout rates. This role emphasises how women ministers can transform education, empowering future leaders.

Betty Amongi Ongom, the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, is a force for equity.

Born in 1975 in Oyam district, she joined Parliament young.

**Short profile:** An advocate of workers' rights, she has held various ministerial posts.

**Challenges:** Tackling entrenched gender biases and limited funding for programmes.

**Achievements:** Amongi has rolled out initiatives against child labour and gender-based violence, supporting women's economic independence.

# WOMEN PLAY KEY ROLE IN UGANDA'S MATTERS

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Her efforts show women's cabinet presence leads to policies combating exploitation.

Ruth Ssentamu Nankabirwa, the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, drives industrial progress.

Born in 1964 in Kiboga district, she started in local government.

Profile: A seasoned politician, she is focused on sustainable energy.

Challenges: Male-dominated sector with technical and corruption hurdles. Achievements: Nankabirwa has advanced oil and renewable energy projects, creating jobs for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Her work highlights how female ministers innovate



**Kadaga: Oversaw affirmative action policies**

in key sectors, boosting gross domestic product.

These women are not anomalies; they are part of a broader shift. Uganda's Constitution mandates women's



**Amongi: Advocates workers' rights**

representation, with one-third of local councils reserved for them. Yet, challenges persist: Only 34% of MPs are women, and cultural norms like early marriage hinder progress. Experiences shared by leaders like Rashida from Butambala district reveal "pull her down" syndrome among women and electoral violence.



**Nankabirwa: Focused on sustainable energy**

Their achievements ripple outward. Educated, empowered women delay marriage, have fewer children, and invest in families, slashing poverty by up to 20% per extra

schooling year. Politically, they advocate for health reforms, cutting HIV rates and maternal deaths. Economically, leaders like Nankabirwa open doors in male fields, inspiring g