

# Namakula's journey of growth and resilience

Solomy Namakula's career path - from underwriter to finance leader - reflects the power of perseverance and the opportunities that open when organizations invest in nurturing talent, particularly women seeking to build long-term careers.

BY CAESAR ABANGIRAH

Dressed in a bright red short-sleeved dress, cinched neatly with a black belt, Solomy Namakula sits with quiet confidence. Her posture reflects calm authority, the kind shaped by years of experience and steady growth. Occasionally glancing at the gold watch on her wrist, she reminds herself that time is a resource to be respected and used wisely.

It is perhaps this discipline and sense of purpose that have defined her remarkable two-decade journey at ICEA LION - a one-stop financial services provider offering insurance, investments and pensions in Uganda.

When Namakula joined the company in 2005, she began not in finance, but as an underwriter. Her role involved assessing risk, explaining insurance policies to clients, and ensuring premiums accurately reflected the level of coverage provided. It was a technical role that introduced her to the fundamentals of the insurance industry and laid the groundwork for her future.

More than 20 years later, Namakula now serves as Assistant Manager in the Finance Department, a position she earned through determination, continuous learning, and an unwavering commitment to professional growth.

Her career path reflects the power of perseverance and the opportunities that open when organizations invest in nurturing talent, particularly women seeking to build long-term careers.

After discovering her passion for finance, Namakula transitioned into the company's cash office as a cashier at a time when most financial transactions were still handled physically. She managed petty cash, processed large transfers, and handled agent commis-

sions, often dealing with significant amounts of money under minimal supervision.

Those early years shaped her professional philosophy. Integrity and accountability, she says, were non-negotiable. Every transaction had to be reconciled, every procedure carefully followed. That culture of discipline would later shape her leadership style as she mentored younger colleagues entering the finance profession.

As the company grew, so did her responsibilities. She progressed from cashier to Accounts Assistant, overseeing reconciliations, supervising junior staff, and supporting financial reporting processes.

In 2014, following a corporate restructuring, Namakula focused her work on General Insurance, strengthening financial controls, overseeing payroll alignment, managing receivables, and contributing to investment oversight.

Today, she leads a finance team while working closely with the

Chief Accountant to ensure reporting accuracy, tax compliance, and efficient financial operations.

She also plays a key role in managing the company's investment portfolio, reinvesting long-term instruments and injecting new funds annually to sustain growth.

Her professional journey mirrors the transformation of the company itself. Over the past two decades, the company has strengthened governance structures, embraced ethical competition, and invested in innovative products designed to meet the changing needs of Ugandan clients.

Innovations, such as Gold Cash and Nyumbani reflect the company's growing focus on customer-centered solutions. Despite industry challenges such as price undercutting and lingering misconceptions around insurance claims, ICEA LION has continued to prior-



For Solomy Namakula, faith remains the anchor behind her journey. PHOTO/ COURTESY

itize transparency and ethical practices, helping strengthen trust in the insurance sector.

#### What they say

Within the organisation, Namakula's leadership is widely recognized not only for its technical excellence but also for its human touch.

Jacob Ocero-Noid, Assistant Manager Claims, describes the work environment she helps foster.

"I have been here for five years because people like Solomy make that possible. She is a classically trained accountant who handles business with a motherly touch, welcoming, patient, and always reminding you of the importance of being insured," he says.

Juliet Namyalo from Credit Control shares a similar perspective.

"Five years down the road,

I have grown, and she has helped me tremendously. We share life beyond work. She is a counselor in the office and beyond, and those qualities make work enjoyable."

Beyond her professional role, Namakula balances several responsibilities. She is a mother of four, including twins, a church minister, and a mentor to young people at Watoto Church Lubowa.

#### Faith, education

For her, faith remains the anchor behind her journey.

"Nothing in life works without God on your side. Every elevation that has happened in my life has been God's doing. I come from a strong religious family, and I apply those values in everything I do," she says.

Her academic journey reflects the same commitment to growth.

She studied at Gayaza Junior School and Gayaza High School before earning a Bachelor of Social Sciences from Makerere University. She is currently completing a Master of Business Administration in Finance and Accounting from Amity University.

Looking ahead, Namakula hopes to expand her professional influence while exploring entrepreneurial ventures.

Yet her story remains deeply intertwined with the insurance firm, reflecting how organizations and individuals grow together when dedication, opportunity, and purpose align.

For many young women entering the corporate world, her journey sends a powerful message: careers are not built overnight, but through resilience, discipline, and the courage to keep growing.

