

News feature

How Matugga local leader is transforming women's lives

Sarah Namuddu Nambuya, the chairperson for women in Matugga ward, Gombe Division, Nansana Municipality, Wakiso District, is mobilising women in her community to earn money through business.

BY NOELINE NABUKENYA

In Matugga Town, Wakiso District, women have moved out of their comfort zones to start businesses that support their families and pay their children's school fees.

Sarah Namuddu Nambuya, the chairperson for women in Matugga ward, Gombe Division, Nansana Municipality has been key in supporting the women from mobilising them to work, providing financial literacy and advice, to encouraging them to embrace government programmes.

"Several women in my jurisdiction were housewives, school dropouts and unemployed graduates. This had a substantive contribution to domestic violence and crime in the area," she says.

Namuddu realised that skilling women would reduce the vices. She helped them access funds through Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Youth Livelihood Programme,



Ms Oliver Nankabirwa, a beneficiary of the mentorship programme by Ms Sarah Namuddu Nambuya, shows off the rats she rears for business. PHOTOS/NOELINE NABUKENYA

Emyooga, Operation Wealth Creation, and the Parish Development Model (PDM) to venture in different businesses.

Leading by example

When Namuddu acquired money, she bought a two-acre piece of land in Masulita Sub-county, Wakiso District, and set up a coffee and banana plantation. In addition to farming, she has a shoe business.

To address cases of unemployment, Namuddu partnered with Life of House Min-



Ms Namuddu (right) with Ms Latifah Nalwanga display the multi-purpose electric sewing machine she received after the training.

100

This is the number of members in the Matugga Women Development Sacco. It was the Sacco that Ms Sarah Namuddu Nambuya, the chairperson for women in Matugga Ward, Nansana Municipality started.



Ms Sarah Namuddu Nambuya, Matugga Women chairperson

Creating hope.

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istries Uganda that offered free skilling programmes to women in tailoring, hair dressing, bakery, cosmetology, computer studies, and catering skills, among others.

Beneficiaries like Betty Ssebuliba, who were trained for six months, praise Namuddu for being an exemplary leader who has transformed their lives.

Ssebuliba owns a sewing machine, which was donated to her as start-up capital. She plans to set up a business in the nearby trading centre and believes her future is bright.

"I had always dreamed of owning a sewing machine but could not afford one. I also felt embarrassed to ask my husband to get it for me. Therefore, before this opportunity, I was just a caregiver at home," she says.

Latifah Nalwanga, another beneficiary, says during the Covid-19 pandemic,

her house went up in flames, leaving her stranded with nine children. She used the capital from her vegetable stall to construct a new house and feed her family, leading to the collapse of the business.

"I had no hope of starting a new business as I also suffered with hypertension. The skilling opportunity was a game changer as I received an electric sewing machine. I hope that one day, I will fully support my family again," she says.

Forming Saccos

Apart from skilling, Namuddu sensitised the women in her community to form savings groups. Today, besides, Matugga Women Development Sacco, there are 20 other small village Saccos across the seven cells in Matugga Ward. Matugga Women Development Sacco has more than 100 registered members.

Through these, women can save and take credit at low interest rates, eliminating the risk of ending up at loan sharks.

Rose Sserwanga, a church leader and resident of Kito Village, has run a salon business for many years. After joining the Sacco, she managed to enter the real estate business.

"Diversifying my business lifted the burden of school fees off my back. Previously, I borrowed and ensured I repaid in time. Now, I own over 20 rental rooms and all my children have graduated," she says.

Sserwanga attributes her success to Namuddu's innovative ideas.

The call

Namuddu calls on leaders to serve beyond self to create an impact that will contribute to the development of their areas. She has a belief that when one woman wins, all women win.

"There is a tendency of leaders exercising greed and self-interests regarding opportunities, and only go back to the community during the election period. I just love seeing fellow women succeed and I have been doing this for several years without expecting pay. I will continue to serve in my capacity as long as I live," she says.

Namuddu appeals to the government to support the Saccos with funds that can accommodate the women's needs. She also appeals for an increment of the PDM funds in Matugga, arguing that the Shs300m allocated to the town is not enough.

SERVING BEYOND SELF

Apart from skilling, Ms Sarah Namuddu Nambuya sensitised the women in her community to form savings groups. Through these Saccos, women can save and take credit at low interest rates, eliminating the need for loan sharks. Ms Namuddu appeals to the government to support the saccos with funds that can accommodate the women's needs. She appeals for an increment of the PDM funds in Matugga, arguing that the Shs300m allocated to the town is not enough. She also calls on leaders to serve communities beyond self to create impact in communities.