

YVONNE AKI-SAWYERR OBE

Mayor Aki-Sawyerr was featured by Time Magazine in the Time100 Next 2021 List and by the BBC in the BBC 100 Women 2020 List. She is Vice Chairperson for the C40 Cities Global Group Steering Committee and a member of the Inaugural Class of Amujae Leaders, a flagship initiative of the Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf Centre. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr's TedTalk "How to turn dissatisfaction into action" has had over 2.2million views.

Mayor Aki-Sawyerr's vision is to #Transform Freetown in order to improve the lives of Freetown's residents. A finance professional with over 25 years of experience in strategic planning, risk management and project management in the public and private sectors, she was sworn in as Mayor of Freetown in May 2018. Her transformation plan is being delivered through a focus on resilience, human development, features of healthy cities and urban mobility; with the use of innovation as an underlying principle. Mayor Aki-Sawyerr's delivery approach places a premium on community ownership, a heightened level of transparency and accountability and data-driven decision making.

Starting her finance career with Arthur Andersen in London in 1990, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr has held senior management roles providing risk management, regulatory and corporate governance consulting services to blue chip clients in the UK financial services industry. She was the Investment Director of IDEA where she was responsible for raising international financing for IDEA projects and for local stakeholder management. IDEA are the owners and developers of the Hilton Freetown Cape Sierra Hotel. She campaigned against the trade in 'blood diamonds' and advocated for ending the Sierra Leone civil war. In 1999, she co-founded the Sierra Leone War Trust (SLWT) which continues to support disadvantaged children and young people in Sierra Leone. She remained actively involved with SLWT for 18 years and until December 2017 she was Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

From August 2014 to October 2014, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr led a campaign in the UK to increase international awareness of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and recruit volunteers to work in the Ebola Treatment Centres. Taking sabbatical leave from IDEA, she relocated to Sierra Leone in November 2014 and served as Director of Planning at the National Ebola Response Centre (NERC). In collaboration with others, she developed and implemented the strategy to end the outbreak in Sierra Leone. In recognition of her contribution to the Ebola response efforts, she was awarded an Ebola Gold Medal by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone in December 2015 and was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire (OBE) by Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom in January 2016.

Continuing her public sector service work, from January 2016 to September 2017, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr served as the Delivery Team Lead for the President's Recovery Priorities – the second phase of a multi-stakeholder programme to drive sustainable socio-economic recovery in Sierra Leone post Ebola. She led the design and implementation of an innovative approach to public service delivery that facilitated, coordinated and supported the activities of eleven Ministries, Departments and Agencies in seven priority sectors to achieve specific targets over a 15-month period.

A team player with a demonstrable record of leading institutional change, Mayor Aki-Sawyerr is passionate about the development of Sierra Leone and the transformation of Freetown. She is a Chartered Accountant and holds an MSc in Politics of the World Economy from the London School of Economics and a BSc Hons in Economics from Fourah Bay College. She is married with two children.

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyers's Current International Roles

Leadership Board, Mayor's Migration Council (<https://www.mayorsmigrationcouncil.org>)

Vice-Chairperson for Innovator Cities, C40 Cities Steering Committee
(https://www.c40.org/press_releases/freetown-elected-steering-committee)

Member of the C40 Cities Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force (<https://www.c40.org/other/covid-task-force>)

Member of the High Level Group of Personalities on Africa-Europe Relations
(<https://www.friendsofeurope.org/initiatives/eu-africa-high-level-group/>)

Co-Lead of the Mayor's Dialogue (<https://www.odi.org/projects/16889-mayors-dialogue-on-growth-and-solidarity-reimagining-human-mobility-in-africa-and-europe>)

Member of the High-Level Group of the Africa-Europe Foundation
(<https://www.friendsofeurope.org/initiatives/africa-europe-foundation/>)

Member of the Advisory Board of the University of Oxford's Commission for Creating Healthy Cities

Member of the World Economic Forum Supervisory Board for Net Zero Carbon Cities

Member, World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Cities

(<https://www.weforum.org/communities/gfc-on-cities-of-tomorrow>)

Pioneer Member, Women4Climate (<https://w4c.org>)

OECD Champion Mayor (<http://www.oecd-inclusive.com/champion-mayors/mayors/>)

Member, Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative 2018 (<https://www.cityleadership.harvard.edu>)

Inaugural Class of Amujae Leaders (<https://www.eiscenter.org/programs/amujae-initiative/>)

Ted Speaker

(https://www.ted.com/talks/yvonne_aki_sawyers_how_to_turn_your_dissatisfaction_into_action/up-next)

(https://www.ted.com/talks/yvonne_aki_sawyers_the_city_planting_a_million_trees_in_two_years/transcript?language=en)

Norman Foster Foundation Masterclass Series Speaker (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDXKq8V-DQ0>)

Founding Member of the Council on Urban Initiatives, hosted by UN Habitat

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyers Awards and Recognitions

Dr. Benjamin Barber Global Cities Award 2021 (<https://globalparliamentofmayors.org/14916-2/>)

Time100 Next 2021 List (<https://time.com/collection/time100-next-2021/>)

BBC – BBC 100 Women 2020 List (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-55042935>)

Charleston Sister Cities International Woman of the Year Award 2021

Penn Institute for Urban Research 2020 Urban Leadership Award (<https://penniur.upenn.edu/events/16th-annual-urban-leadership-awards-mayoral-leadership-in-challenging-times>)

Reputation Poll International - 100 Most Reputable Africans in 2020 (<https://www.reputationpoll.com/2020-list-of-100-most-reputable-africans/>)

Avance Media - 100 Most Influential African Women 2020 (<https://100women.avancemedia.org>)

Officer of the Most Excellent Order of British Empire (OBE) – 2016

Ebola Gold Medal from the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone - 2015