

Oil evictees get financial training

By Robert Atuhairwe

Over 1,000 people who will vacate their land to pave way for the Tilenga Oil Industrial Park in Ngwedo sub-county, Buliisa district have been advised to use their compensation money productively.

The Tilenga Industrial Project is where the oil central processing and production facilities will be established – to cater for oil from the fields north of the Albertine Graben.

The advice was passed on during a financial literacy and capacity-building training of the project-affected persons last week.

The week-long event which ended on Thursday took place at Kisomere Primary School in Ngwedo sub-county, Buliisa, district. It was attended by over 500 affected persons.

The training followed the completion of the identification process of the 300-hectare piece of land required for the establishment of oil project facilities.

Christopher Ocowun, the spokesperson of Total E&P, the company manning the activities in Exploration Area One, on Friday said the financial literacy training given to the affected people was aimed at building their capacity on how to handle and use their compensation money to improve their lives and build a sustainable future.

The training was conducted by Total E&P Uganda and Tullow Uganda Operations Pty Limited through ATACAMA Consulting and MasterLinks Group.

Jorams Mwebaze, the lead facilitator, said under the financial literacy component, they focused on topics such as mindset change, community mobilisation and group dynamics.

The chairperson of Ngwedo sub-county, Stephen Munange and Mulimba Mugisha (chairperson of Resettlement Planning Committee) welcomed the training, saying people usually misuse compensation money and later live a destitute lifestyle.

Ocowun said following the approval of the final valuation report and the resettlement action plan report by the Government, the project is moving into the stage of implementation – payment of the affected people.

He said subsequent activities scheduled to be carried out include data verification and alignment, individual disclosure, signing off of compensation agreements and opening of bank accounts.

Others are payment of cash compensation, physical relocation and delivery of in-kind compensation (for those who choose to be compensated in kind).

Uganda is set to start producing oil in three year's time following the recent launching of the construction of the pipeline.