



Retired Bishop of Madi and West Nile Diocese, Dr Joel Obetia (second-left) joins Aliga (centre) and executive members of West Nile Foundation in cutting cake after the launch of the West Nile Education Fund at Hotel Africana on Friday. Photo by Denis Dibebe

# Education fund targets 300 learners

By Andrew Ssenyonga

The community of West Nile region has set up an education trust fund aimed at revamping education standards in the area and fighting poverty.

The sh50m fund has started with a scholarship of four less privileged undergraduate university students pursuing bachelor's degrees in pharmacy and human medicine.

Pakwach, Zombo, Nebbi, Moyo, Arua, Maracha, Koboko, Yumbe and Adjumani districts make up the West Nile region.

The chairperson of the fund, Charles Draecabo, said they hoped to raise over sh5b in the next five years and support over 300 learners at different levels of education. The focus will be on supporting less privileged, but bright students to study science courses.

During the launch of the fund at Hotel Africana in Kampala on Friday, Draecabo said: "The fund will also support schools in the region to regain their past glory through support by way of equipment, retooling teachers and improving early childhood learning, among others."

The president of the West Nile Foundation, Caleb Alaka, said the area was known for

exporting casual labourers to sugarcane farms in other regions and for work as security guards during the colonial era.

"As if that was not enough, it was hit by the recent insurgencies like the Lord's Resistance Army, which left the institutions broken," he said.

Alaka said in the new era, they will focus on improving education, financial inclusion, health, agriculture, sanitation and environment, among others.

The guest speaker, Denis Aliga, said the foundation of economic development was quality education. "This increases the value of labour and reduces poverty in the communities," he added.

Aliga, who is a lawyer and a financial analyst, said education had a great social importance, especially in the modern, complex industrialised societies.

"Receiving a good education will empower you and make you strong enough to look after yourself in any given situation. So, we should not relax in educating the next generation," Aliga said.

During the launch of the fund, the group raised sh218m, both in cash and pledges, including sh5m donated by Vision Group.

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