

# New campaign fights drug abuse through education

ERNEST JJINGO

In an effort to combat drug abuse among young people, AIDO Network International in collaboration with the Church of Scientology have rolled out the second edition of the Drug-Free World Campaign in Eastern Uganda.

AIDO is a Pan-African development organisation which focuses on youth empowerment, strengthening cultural and community leadership and addressing pressing social challenges. By integrating drug education into community structures and schools, the organisation hopes to build resilience among young people and create environments that discourage substance abuse.

The campaign was officially launched at Olio Primary School in Serere District marking the beginning of a broader outreach program aimed at educating children and communities about the dangers of drug abuse. The event brought together educators, cultural leaders and students with an

aim to protect young people from the dangers of drugs through knowledge and awareness.

According to His Highness Paul Eganda, the president of AIDO Network International, the program introduces learners to the real impacts of substances such as marijuana, tobacco, and other harmful drugs addressing not only health risks but also the social and economic consequences of addiction.

"The campaign focuses on education rather than punishment. By equipping learners with factual information about drugs and their long-term effects, the initiative seeks to help them make informed life choices," Eganda said.

Local leaders and educators who attended the launch expressed optimism about the initiative's potential impact, noting that drug abuse is increasingly becoming a concern even in rural areas. They highlighted the importance of reaching children at an early age, before they encounter high-risk environments or influences. By targeting primary school learners, they said the campaign will ensure that prevention messages are



Students participate in the Drug Free World Campaign

delivered at a critical stage in children's development.

As part of the campaign, students who will be outstanding in promoting drug free lifestyles among fellow young people will win fully funded scholarships from AIDO.

The organization says the awards are intended to support the student's education in higher institutions of learning while recognising their leadership and commitment to encouraging their peers to stay away from drugs as well as being a positive influence in their communities.

"The scholarships form part of our broader approach to addressing

drug abuse among people by linking awareness to real opportunities," said Princess Ulrike Pholman, the representative of the Church of Scientology.

The campaign is supported by the Foundation for a Drug-Free World, an international initiative established in 2006 with a mission to prevent drug abuse through education. Through its widely used "Truth About Drugs" program, the foundation provides educational booklets, videos and school-based resources designed to deliver clear, factual information about drugs to young audiences.

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