

By Nicholas Wassajja

The First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, has called on Christians to consider a holistic approach in response to the poverty challenges affecting young people.

She said in addition to "immediate aid to the desperate", Christians should as well, "give a hand-up in the development of capable, passionate young adults who have the potential to change the world".

"As a Christian community, we are responsible for our youth, not only in the realm of spirituality and faith, but also in their productive work as contributing members of society," Mrs Museveni explained.

The First Lady made the remarks over the weekend while officiating at the launch of HillCity Foundation in Kampala.

The non-profit organisation that was started in Nigeria in 2004 not only offers educational support to financially constrained university students, but also gives them mentorship, self-discovery, personal development and economic empowerment.

She observed that if Christians are to achieve a holistic approach of dealing with the needs of the young people, they should brace themselves for investing a lot of time, energy and capital.

Mrs Museveni said this was important because helping the needy youth get education alone is not enough for them to compete for success in modern society, but should be coupled with skills relevant to the job market, entrepreneurial education, soft-skill mentorship and economic empowerment.

She said: "Education does not necessarily guarantee the young people positions in companies but they also need entrepreneurial education and job-relevant education to

# Young people need more than education, says First Lady



The First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports, Janet Museveni (fourth-right), with some of the beneficiaries of the HillCity Foundation students sponsorship programme at Golden Tulip Hotel in Kampala, recently. Photo by Eddie Ssejjoba

avoid being stuck in jobs that are low-paying and unstable. Therefore, true development of human capital should come through broadening opportunities by properly mentoring the young people to become change agents capable of entering an economically driven global society."

"Young people need role models and mentors who demonstrate a solid work ethic that is able to guide and develop them through character and relationship building. So, instead of expecting opportunity to come to them, the youth who are empowered this way will be

able to seize opportunities," the First Lady added.

Mrs Museveni handed over 11 scholarships, worth sh2.5m each per semester, with nine of the awardees being females from across the country.

According to the chairman of HillCity Foundation-Uganda Chapter, Andrew Rugasira, the organisation that has helped over 1,000 youth in Nigeria acquire an education, applies what he called a four-axis impact to beneficiaries because "there are many talented youth that need help but the help they need is not only school fees, that is why we walk them through identifying these

talents and unpacking them".

Uganda's managing director and founder of HillCity Foundation, Obi Imemba, noted that the need to support disadvantaged young people is based on the fact that their financial predicaments are not their own making.

"We are not any better than the children we see on streets or the hawkers that endure the daily sweltering heat and rain to make ends meet. We are at times lucky that our parents or any other person helped us be where we are today, but that doesn't mean we are smarter than the underprivileged. Therefore, it is upon each

one of us to look out for those young needy people and support them in whichever way we can because they have the potential to be anything they can be for the good of society," said Obi.

Mrs Museveni applauded the efforts of HillCity Foundation and noted that Africans should stop waiting for foreign aid to solve their challenges, but find it within themselves to provide lasting solutions.

"I know that Africa is blessed but because we have never known that for God to bless his people, he uses people, that is why we wait for external solutions, yet we have well-off

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people that are not sharing with those in need. Many people remain poor because God has no way of reaching them, except through people. Therefore, our children do not have to suffer with problems they did not create when we can help," she said.

The occasion was also graced by first son-in-law Odrek and Pastor Patience Rwabwogo, the state minister for Karamoja, Moses Kizige and Fort Portal Municipality MP Alex Ruhunda, among others.