

Equity Group Foundation (EGF) increases access to and transition through secondary and tertiary education and provides leadership and career development in order to break the cycle of poverty and develop the next generation of leaders.

The Need

Education is universally recognized as an important factor contributing to economic growth and competitiveness, poverty alleviation, improved health and increased stability for individuals, families, and entire nations. In its *2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, UNESCO estimated that every \$1 spent on a person's education yields \$10 to \$15 in economic growth over that person's working lifetime.

In 2003, the Kenyan government made an important stride in increasing access to education when the Ministry of Education adopted free primary education. However, the cost of secondary school remains, on average, 12 to 20 times the monthly income of families in rural Kenya. The challenge is similar for families living in urban informal settlements. Consequently, of those who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in 2013, only 77% are expected to transition to secondary school, and of these, only 13% will make it to public universities.

Although education is the most important driver of economic growth and social progress, EGF understands that progress also depends on a critical mass of visionary and ethical leaders. Access to formal education must therefore be paired with leadership development opportunities, if we are to truly prepare young people to lead positive change in their communities and their nation.

Our Approach

Working together with partners, including donors, education authorities, community leaders and Equity Bank branches throughout Kenya, EGF is working to increase access to education and build the leadership capacities of our Vision 2030 generation through two signature programmes.

Wings to Fly

Launched in 2010 in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, the *Wings to Fly* programme increases access to secondary schooling and enhances academic success for academically promising yet financially disadvantaged students from across Kenya. The programme provides comprehensive scholarships covering tuition, room and board, books, transportation, uniform, health insurance, transport to and from school, and incidental expenses for the duration of students' secondary school tenure. The *Wings to Fly* programme also provides leadership development training through Annual Education and Leadership Congresses as well as wrap-around support services which include: medical check-ups; psycho-social counselling; ongoing mentorship from university and community role models, including *Equity Leaders Programme* scholars and Equity Bank staff; and now, digital tools to enhance scholars' learning through the digital learning platform, *Wings to Fly Learning*.

Students qualify to apply to *Wings to Fly* based on both academic performance and financial need. Applicants must be place in the top fifth percentile on the nationally-administered Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination in their home district to be considered. Financial need is determined based on economic status and vulnerability, including those affected by the loss of one or both parents; parental illness or disability; and displacement due to v

natural disaster or civil conflict. Equity Bank branch staff and local community leadership play a central role in vetting and ultimately selecting candidates by leading a community-owned process to interview and visit each prospective scholar and their families. *Wings to Fly* transparent, community-based selection process as well as its comprehensive scholarship package have been hailed nationally as a model for scholarship selection and design.

Equity Leaders Programme

Founded in 1998, the Equity Leaders Programme (ELP) aims to equip young people with the professional and leadership skills they need to succeed in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. It also cultivates a community of ethical leaders who work together across disciplines and sectors to transform the lives of their families, their communities, their country and the world at large. To date, the program has benefited 2,673 of the most academically gifted secondary school graduates across Kenya, including 455 *Wings to Fly* high school scholarship recipients and 263 (10%) scholars and alumni studying at global universities.

The program is centred on a rigorous internship experience that allows scholars intern at Equity Bank branches around the country before they join university. The internships not only develop the scholars professionally and give them real-world working experience, but also include a college savings scheme which allows scholars to fund their university education in Kenya with their internship stipends. In addition to the pre-university internship experience, the program provides internships and leadership development experiences to scholars throughout their time in university and beyond, as well as a college counseling program which helps scholars gain admission and scholarships to some of the world's best universities, including the Ivy League universities in the U.S.

Impact:

10,377 *Wings to Fly* scholars

- Program Growth:
 - 2010: 173
 - 2011: 1,175
 - 2012: 2,144
 - 2013: 2,915
 - 2014: 1,970
 - 2015: 2,000
- Secondary School Completion: 99% (2010) and 98% (2011)
- Scholars perform well above National Averages:
 - Scholars earning an A grade on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations: 41% (2010) and 30% (2011), compared to the national average of 3%.
 - Scholars earning a B+ or higher on the KCSE: 68% (2010) and 50% (2011).
 - Scholars earning a C+ or higher on the KCSE: 94% (2010) and 93% (2011) compared to national average of 27%.
- School & Community Leadership: 79% of scholars take on school and community leadership roles, including school presidents, captains, prefects, council and club leaders, founders of community-based organizations.
- University Admission: 94% (2010) and 93% (2011) scholars qualify for public university.

- Acceptance to *Equity Leaders Programme* : 115 alumni from the 2010 *Wings to Fly* cohort, and 340 alumni from the 2011 *Wings to Fly* cohort were accepted into the *Equity Leaders Programme* in 2014 and 2015.

2,673 Equity Leaders Programme Scholars

- Undergraduate Majors: 32% of ELP scholars study or have graduated with degrees in Engineering and Computer Science; 25% with degrees in Medicine and Dentistry; and 23% with degrees in Business & Economics.
- 263 scholars (10%) have been awarded over US\$ 45M in scholarships to study at global universities including Stanford, Princeton, Yale, Harvard and other top schools.
- ELP alumni recruited by many of the world's leading corporations and social enterprises, including McKinsey and Co., IBM, Nokia Networks, JP Morgan and others as well as some of Kenya's leading public and private institutions, including the Ministry of Health and Equity Bank.

Looking Ahead

Though proud to offer access to education to thousands of promising students, Equity Group Foundation (EGF) empathises with the thousands of other the thousands of other talented students who are denied access to secondary and tertiary education and leadership development opportunities due to their lack of financial resources.

In early 2015, EGF and The MasterCard Foundation have pledged to scale the *Wings to Fly* programme in Kenya. Additionally, as Equity Bank continues to expand across the continent, EGF is also looking to expand *Wings to Fly* and *Equity Leaders Programme* in other countries that face similar challenges in affording youth access to secondary and tertiary education. EGF will also continue to leverage Equitel and other technologies in order to avail high-quality education content and learning tools to the general public. In doing so, EGF will level the playing field for learners irrespective of their geography and economic status, reach an increasing number of the millions of young people, and greatly extend reach and educational impact.