33 Equity Leaders Program Scholars gain admission to top global universities

**33 scholars from the 2016 class of Equity Leaders Program Scholars Admitted to Global Universities in Early Decision. Total admissions expected to double with Regular Decision.**

*Nairobi, 28th December 2016..….* 33 scholars in the 2016 class of the Equity Leaders Program (ELP) have received admissions to study in top Global Universities during the Early Decisions application round. This number is expected to more than double when the regular admissions are released in March 2017. This brings the total number of ELP scholars studying or alumni in global universities to 362.

Of the 33 admissions, 18 are alumni of the *Wings to Fly* program bringing the total number of Wings to Fly scholars who have transited to global universities to 32.

“We are very proud of our ELP scholars who are increasingly demonstrating capability to compete for the most competitive positions in some of the top universities globally. In Early Decision application, scholars submit an application to only one university. This year, 98 ELP scholars attempted the early decision application translating to 34% admission rate as compared to last years’ 20%. This shows how our Kenyan children are academically competitive on the global scale,” said Dr. Mwangi, the Executive Chairman of Equity Group Foundation that implements ELP on behalf of Equity Bank.

Dr Mwangi further added; “while it was expected that best performing students would ordinarily come from national schools, we are seeing a trend where scholars joining ELP are distributed across national, county and district schools. This performance should serve to encourage students from all secondary schools in Kenya that no matter which school they attend, they can achieve their dreams if they focus, are determined and aim high.”

ELP admits the top performing boy and girl in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) exams from each district in Kenya. *Wings to Fly* scholars who also score an A in K.C.S.E. also qualify to join the ELP. The program aims at empowering young academically gifted scholars by supporting their access to education in public universities in Kenya and around the globe, as well as equipping them with leadership skills.

To date, ELP has benefited 4,490 scholars who are studying both locally and abroad or alumni. Of these, 2,057 are *Wings to Fly* scholars who have successfully transited to the university.

“The objective is to develop a generation of servant leaders who will think globally; are inspired to fight poverty in the African continent; embrace sustainable development; improve living standards and coexist peacefully as a people while being fully committed to giving back to society.”, Dr. Mwangi added.

Universities that have offered scholarships to the top performing students this year are spread across the USA, South Africa, Germany and Mauritius. They include Amherst College, Brown University, Cornell University, Duke University, Princeton University, University of Cape Town, University of Pretoria, among others.

ELP scholars have distinguished themselves as mentors and role models to secondary school students when they inspire and encourage students to aim at academic excellence. They also take leadership positions in their universities as well in local communities where they participate in decision making.

The ELP scholars return to Kenya from their universities abroad during their summer holidays to team up with their colleagues in local universities and spend their time mentoring the incoming ELP scholars on how to apply for college admissions, as well as preparing them for life in the university and abroad in global universities.

***About Equity Leaders Program***

Founded in 1998, Equity Leaders Program (ELP) is an internship program that selects the most academically gifted secondary school graduates from across Kenya and develops them into world-class leaders to transform society. The program selects the top boy and top girl in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination from every district where Equity Bank has a branch. *Wings to Fly* scholars who also score an A in K.C.S.E. also qualify to join ELP. The program aims at empowering young academically gifted scholars by supporting their access to education in public universities in Kenya and around the globe, as well as equipping them with leadership skills

ELP has now benefitted **4,490** young people, including **362** **scholars and alumni at global universities**. The programme is centered on a rigorous internship experience that allows scholars to work as members of staff at Equity Bank branches around the country before they join university. The internships/program develops the scholars professionally, gives them real-world working experience, as well as 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.
The program’s leadership development model seeks to develop scholars across four program areas:

1. **Personal and Professional Development** to enable scholars to identify their unique talents and strengths and to match their individual interests with meaningful career opportunities
2. **Global Exposure** to encourage scholars to expand their horizons and become world class-leaders who can compete and succeed in a global marketplace
3. **Creativity and Innovation** to empower scholars to think creatively about providing solutions to the challenges and opportunities facing communities around the world
4. **Community Engagement** to inspire scholars to use their abilities for good and to make a positive impact on society

While developing individual scholars across these four thematic areas, the program also endeavors to create a strong network of scholars who work together across disciplines and sectors to transform their communities, their country, and the world at large.

***Some useful facts***

* 2016 Early Decision: 33 ELP scholars (18 boys and 15 girls) gain admission to global universities during Early Decision bringing the total number of scholars in/alumni in global universities to 362. Among the universities with the highest number of ELP scholars include;
1. Harvard University (USA)
2. Africa Leadership Academy (South Africa)
3. University of Toronto (Canada)
4. University of Pretoria (South Africa)
5. Yale University (USA)
6. Duke University (USA)
7. University of Pennsylvania (USA)
* So far 4,490 scholars have benefited from the Equity Leaders Program, out of which 2,057 scholars are alumni’s of Wings to Fly program. 4,128 of the scholars are studying/alumni of national universities in Kenya the following taking the highest number of scholars;
1. University of Nairobi
2. Kenyatta University
3. Moi University
4. Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology
5. Egerton University
* Among the most popular courses include;
1. Business and Economics
2. Pure and Applied Sciences
3. Engineering and Architecture
4. Health Sciences
5. Arts and Social Sciences

Below is a table showing the early decision beneficiaries in 2016 Early Decision

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| **Name** | **Admitted to** | **High School** | **Selection to ELP** |
| Drake Ezekiel Kufwafwa | Amherst College | Nairobi School | Top District |
| Valary Cherotich Kones | Brown University | St. Brigids Kiminini | Top District |
| Joan Nyambura Ndichu | Bryn Mawr College | Moi Girls' School Nairobi | Wings to Fly |
| Millicent Auma | Bryn Mawr College | Loreto High School Limuru | Wings to Fly |
| Franklin Omullo Otieno | Cornell University | Rapogi Secondary School | Top District |
| Samuel Mbugua | Cornell University | Ituru High School | Top District |
| Cynthia Jeruto Bundi | Dartmouth College | Alliance Girls School | Top District |
| Brian Kimutai Sawe | Davidson College | Alliance High School | Top student |
| Ahmed Salat Birik | Duke University | Alliance High School | Wings to Fly |
| John Meshack Rotich | Ecole Centrale - Mauritius | Mang'u High School | Top District |
| Dorris Nduku Waeni | IFY Scholarship - Brookhouse School | Karima Girls'high school | Wings to Fly |
| Jackline Kasisi | Minerva College | Statehouse Girls | Wings to Fly |
| Simon Waweru Mumbi | New York University | Nanyuki High School | Wings to Fly |
| Lily Nyaruai Muindi | Princeton University | MaryHill Girls High School | Top District |
| Willie Macharia | University of Capetown | Njiiri School | Wings to Fly |
| Bredah Nzuki | University of Capetown | Machakos Girls High School | Wings to Fly |
| Joan Namalwa Wanjala | University of Gannon in Erie, Pennsylvania | Alliance Girls High School | Wings to Fly |
| Frida A Aloo | University of Pennsylvania | Kenya High School | Top District |
| Monica Marika | University of Pretoria | Karima Girls'high school | Wings to Fly |
| Jesse Mwiti Mwirigi | University of Pretoria | Meru School | Wings to Fly |
| Maria Ashley Gogo | University of Pretoria | St.Yermo Girls Secondary School | Top District |
| Kevin Lubembe | University of Pretoria | University of Eldoret | USAID Alumni |
| Onesmus O. Mong'are | University of Pretoria | University of Nairobi | ELP Alumni |
| Naomi Nyambura Theuri | Vanderbilt University | Alliance Girls School | Top Specialty - Arts & Design |
| Annjoy Gichane | Washington & Lee University | St Anne's Girls' Sec School | Top District |
| June Wangari Nyaga | Spelman College | Kabare Girls | Top District |
| Pius Kimathi | Michigan State University | Ikuu Boys High School | Wings to Fly |
| Allan Kieha | Michigan State University | Machakos Boys' High School | Wings to Fly |
| Ronny Ng'ethe Wanjiku | Michigan State University | Kanunga High School | Wings to Fly |
| Helstine Ochieng Opondo | Michigan State University | Kiaguthu Boys' Secondary School | Wings to Fly |
| Inness Lilian Amollo | Agnes Scott College | Moi Girls' High School- Eldoret | Wings to Fly |
| Benson Kimani Mwaniki | Jacobs University Bremen, Germany | Alliance High School | Wings to Fly |
| Musa Sheikh Salah | Ripon College | Moi Forces Academy, Nairobi | Wings to Fly |

**ABOUT EQUITY GROUP FOUNDATION**

Equity Group Foundation was established by Equity Group to create the financial and operational infrastructure for social programs aimed at low income population. This innovation and creative vehicle has fully transformed the concept of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. While Equity Group Foundation champions the social economic transformation of the people of Africa and seeks partnership along seven cluster thematic areas, Equity Bank provides the infrastructure of delivery hence reducing the operational cost of the Foundation and increasing the rate of return on any social investment. The Foundation focuses on seven key social thematic areas of Education and Leadership development, Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Health, and Environment.

[www.equitygroupfoundation.com](http://www.equitygroupfoundation.com/)