



Press Release

1,136 Top Performing Students in KCPE awarded Wings to Fly Scholarships

Nairobi Kenya, 3rd January 2020.....Equity Group has today commissioned the 2020 cohort of *Wings to Fly* scholars at a ceremony held at Kenyatta University, Nairobi presided over by Education Cabinet Secretary Prof. George Magoha on behalf of H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta. This year's 1,136 scholarships were funded by Mastercard Foundation, Equity Group and the German Government through KfW.

This year marks the 11th intake since the inception of the *Wings to Fly* scholarship program, bringing the total number of scholars admitted to the program to 17,304. The performance of *Wings to Fly* scholars in Secondary schools has continued to improve. As per the 2019 KCSE results, 81.3% of the 2016 class obtained university qualifying grades compared to an 18.1% national average.

Through the program, bright but financially disadvantaged children are offered comprehensive secondary school scholarships which cover tuition, books, uniform, transport costs and pocket money. The scholars also receive mentorship and leadership training during their four-year period in secondary school to equip them with life skills that will transform them into leaders in various capacities.

Speaking during the ceremony, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta through his speech read by Professor George Magoha highlighted how the program has been impactful and transformative to many bright but needy students in Kenya, noting how it has complemented the government's effort in achieving maximum transition rate to secondary school.

"We laud Mastercard Foundation, Equity Group and their *Wings to Fly* partners for their generous contribution for the past 11 years to this worthy course. We have good reasons to be optimistic that we are building a great country and future leaders when bright students who are vulnerable are given such opportunities to pursue their dreams and goals," said the President.

Equity Group Foundation Executive Chairman Dr. James Mwangi urged the students to always remember that their hard work and effort is what made them secure the scholarships and advised them to optimize the opportunity presented to them for the benefit of their families, community and country at large.

"As you set out on this journey today, we will walk with you throughout your secondary school. Make the best use of this opportunity and study hard to make your family and the community proud. In four years' time we want to celebrate because of how well you will have performed. Your predecessors have continued to do well and we trust you will emulate them," said Dr Mwangi.

Due to the success of the *Wings to Fly* Program, Equity Group secured the Government's competitive bid as an implementing agency for the Elimu Scholarship Programme. The Elimu Scholarship Programme is an initiative of the Government of Kenya funded by the Ministry of Education with support from the World Bank and aims to support 18,000 students within a six year period.

More than 26,000 pupils across the country, submitted applications for the *Wings to Fly* scholarship.

"Since the inception of this program, the government has continuously shown support. We acknowledge and thank the Government for rolling out Elimu Scholarships as more bright and deserving children will benefit. These additional scholarships have allowed us to select on a ratio of 1 for every 4 applications which is much better than previous ratio of 1 for every 10 applications," said Dr. Mwangi.



Since inception, scholars in the the Wings to Fly program continue to excel maintaining a 96% secondary school completion rate and 82% attaining university entry qualification grades.

Ends...

Wings To Fly program is a comprehensive secondary school education and leadership program for top performing yet needy (orphan or vulnerable) students in Kenya. The Program is a partnership between Mastercard Foundation and Equity Group, with support of other partners including the German Government through KfW, USAID, DFID among others. It is coordinated by Equity Group Foundation. The objective of the scholarship program is to provide financial support and leadership empowerment tools to the scholarship beneficiaries. The total number of scholarships given under the Wings to Fly since 2010 currently stand at 17,304. Every year the scholars attend an Annual Education and Leadership Congress to activate and inspire leadership as well as inculcating a culture of giving back to society. They interact with mentors, professionals, thought leaders, influencers and captains of industry who encourage them to take up leadership roles in schools. On average, 86% of the scholars hold one or several leadership positions during their secondary school academic life. Further, the program records a 96% secondary school completion rate with 82% of the scholars attaining university admission qualifying grades.

Equity Group Foundation

Equity Group Foundation was established by Equity Bank to create the financial and operational infrastructure for its social programs aimed at the 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 seven key social thematic areas are Education and Leadership development, Financial Literacy, Financial Inclusion, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Health, and Environment.

Website Link - <https://equitygroupfoundation.com/>

Flicker Link - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/equitybank>

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