



1,000 ACADEMICALLY BRIGHT BUT FINANCIALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN GET WINGS TO FLY SCHOLARSHIPS

- ***Wings to Fly scholarships offer full tuition fees for four years, transport, a back-to-school shopping hamper, wrap-around psychosocial support, mentorship and medical care while in school.***
- ***To date, Equity Group Foundation in collaboration with its partners have issued a total of 48,009 comprehensive secondary school scholarships***

Nairobi, 23rd January 2023.... 1,000 bright children from financially disadvantaged backgrounds who sat for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations in 2022 have officially been commissioned into the Wings to Fly scholarship program. The scholars from across the whole country had converged at Pangani Girls High School in Nairobi for a 3-day induction and training program, before the official commissioning.

The 2023 Wings to Fly scholarships have been funded by Equity Group in partnership with the German Development Agency, KfW. The commissioning of the 14th cohort of the Wings to Fly program brings the total number of comprehensive secondary school scholarships awarded through Equity Group Foundation to 48,009.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Director and Project Coordinator Ministry of Education, Jane Mbugua on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Education Hon. Ezekiel Machogu said, “The support given by Equity Group and its partners through the Wings to Fly scholarship program has over the years continued to boost Government’s initiative that targets 100% transition to secondary schools. I commend Equity for being a true partner to the government in furthering the socio-economic development agenda of the people of Kenya. We are aware of the tremendous impact of programs such as Wings to Fly. With proper resourcing of education, we can support needy families, uplift the society and avoid school dropout.”

Equity Group Foundation Executive Chairman Dr. James Mwangi while addressing the scholars said, “I would like to congratulate all the scholars in the 2023 cohort, they’ve earned these scholarships through their hard work and we remain optimistic that at the end of the four-year period, they will come back as winners. As we give them the ‘Wings to Fly’ our hope is that this program, as it also offers mentorship and coaching will equip them with the right tools to be transformational leaders in society.”

The Wings to Fly Program has demonstrated success with a 97 percent secondary school completion rate and 82 percent of the graduating scholars attaining university direct entry grades to both local and global universities.

The Federal Republic of Germany’s Ambassador to Kenya H. E. Sebastian Groth, while speaking at the commissioning ceremony said, “It is an honor to be part of this life-changing event. On behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany we congratulate the 2023 beneficiaries of the Wings to Fly scholarships who are about to be commissioned today. As the German Development Agency continues to partner with Equity Group to offer these scholarships annually, it is our hope that the scholars here will find inspiration from this facility to motivate them to become great leaders in their communities and society.”

The Wings to Fly applicants were onboarded through a transparent and rigorous community-based verification and monitoring process, where members of the community who serve on the Community Scholarship Selection Boards (CSSBs) across the country invested their time to



review and scrutinize applications, carry out face-to-face interviews and home visits before awarding the scholarships to the most deserving scholars. The CSSBs comprise of not less than 13 community based key personalities who include Directors of Education, religious leaders, local administration leaders, representatives of Primary and Secondary School Heads Associations, representatives of persons living with disabilities among other local leaders and are chaired by the Sub-County Director of Education and coordinated by Equity Bank Branches. The CSSB is mandated to select the program beneficiaries, tracking their academic performance and the general welfare of the scholars. It serves as the crucial link in ensuring objectivity in the selection process, making it possible to verify the case put forth by each applicant, and evaluate for need and potential of the selected candidates.

The Wings to Fly scholarships ensure that the scholars are well-rounded individuals by going beyond paying of full tuition fees for four years to include a comprehensive mentorship program, a back-to-school hamper, psychosocial wrap-around support, and medical care while in school. The scholars on completion of their high school and admission to universities will transition into the Equity Leaders Programme (ELP).

Julius Chacha Mwitwa, a 16-year-old Wings to Fly beneficiary from Isebania in Migori county scored 429 marks in KCPE to emerge the 2nd top candidate in Kenya. He said, “Most successful people have a painful story to tell and every painful story has an ending, I aspire to become a doctor and I believe that with the Wings to Fly scholarship, I will achieve this.” Julius and his single mother are hosted by a well-wisher. Chacha’s mother is a vendor at the border market town in Isebania. He will be joining Kapsabet High School.

Mitchell Muthoni, a 14-year-old Wings to Fly beneficiary from Matongu village in Murang’a lives with her single mother who makes a living from mining sand. “The main challenge I had was getting my school fees paid since my mother couldn’t find a job. Most times I had to get out of school and come back home and wait until she gets the school fees then go back to school. The Wings to Fly scholarship will help me succeed in my studies, achieve my dreams, and help my mum out of poverty. It doesn’t mean that when you are from a poor background you cannot achieve your dream,” she said. Mitchell scored 426 marks emerging the 3rd best student in Murang’a County and has been admitted to Kabare Girls High School.

Issa Feisal a 14-year-old Wings to Fly beneficiary from Pate Island in Lamu county has faced unimaginable challenges in life after being abandoned by his father at infancy. He has had to navigate life supported by his mother. “My mother has faced several challenges while ensuring my siblings and I have a meal every day. I am hopeful that the Wings to Fly scholarship will enable me to realize my dream of becoming a doctor,” said Issa.

Since its inception, 17,820 scholars have joined university under the Equity Leaders Programme (ELP) with 7,482 benefiting from Equity Bank Paid Internships while 3,262 have joined Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. 761 of the ELP scholars have been privileged to secure admission on fully funded scholarships at leading global universities including Ivy League universities like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, MIT, Columbia, and Cornell. ELP 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 Scholars who pursued medicine and gained the required experience have been supported by EGF to set up the Equity Afia Medical centers to expand access to affordable and quality healthcare. Equity Afia has so far rolled out 77 facilities countrywide.



The Wings to Fly program is a partnership between Equity Group Foundation and Equity Bank with additional support from other partners, notably the German Government through KfW, Mastercard Foundation, USAID, UKAid, private institutions, and individuals.

Ends

About the Wings to Fly Scholarship Program

The Wings to Fly Scholarship program, a signature program in EGF's Education and Leadership Development pillar, provides comprehensive secondary school scholarships to academically promising, yet financially disadvantaged youth. Since 2010, over 21,009 scholarships have been offered to scholars selected from across the country through community scholarship selection boards. The scholarship covers school fees, transport, books, pocket money, mentoring, psychosocial support, and leadership development. Mastercard Foundation has been EGF's anchor partner in supporting worthy scholars lacking resources to carry their academic dreams forward since 2010. Other former and current partners include USAID (United States Agency for International Development), UKAID, and the German Government through KfW. Graduates of Wings to Fly have an additional opportunity to access financing from EGF to pursue technical courses at reputable TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) institutions across Kenya.

About Elimu Scholarship Program

The Elimu scholarship program is run by EGF on behalf of the Ministry of Education and the Government of Kenya. With financial support from the World Bank, the program will provide comprehensive secondary school scholarships 27,000 primary school graduates, last year the selection has covered all the counties, with emphasis on selected 15 urban centres with informal settlements.

About Equity Group Foundation

Equity Group Foundation (EGF), the corporate implementing foundation of Equity Group Holdings Plc, has as its mission to champion the transformation of lives and livelihoods for 100 million people in Africa by 2024 through the design and implementation of innovative programs that leverage Equity Group's infrastructure and partnerships to create shared value. Established in 2008 as the Group's social engine, the Foundation delivers economic opportunities, capacity, tools, and technologies that enable individuals and businesses to increase productivity, resilience and share in socio-economic growth. EGF responds to the continuum of issues that challenge the socio-economic advancement of the people of Africa, especially low-income individuals, and families. EGF's Creating Shared Value (CSV) strategy provides social development initiatives in Education and Leadership Development, Food and Agriculture, Health, Financial Inclusion and Entrepreneurship Development, Energy and Environment and Social Protections for the most vulnerable citizens. EGF's programs are underpinned by technology, innovation, and synergy as a central means to launch, nurture, and scale up Africa's next generation of successful leaders and entrepreneurs delivered to all communities in which Equity has operations. Additional information, visit <https://equitygroupfoundation.com/>