



WINGS TO FLY APPLICANTS UNDERGO RIGOROUS COMMUNITY-BASED VERIFICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS AHEAD OF COMMISSIONING OF THE 2023 COHORT

- ***The Wings to Fly scholarships selection entails a transparent and rigorous community-based verification and monitoring process***
- ***1,000 scholars will be selected in the 2023 cohort.***
- ***To date, Equity Group Foundation in collaboration with its partners have issued a total of 48,009 comprehensive secondary school scholarships***

Nairobi, 13th January 2023.... The selection process of recipients of the 2023 Wings to Fly scholarships is ongoing in different parts of the country. Equity Group Foundation (EGF) and Equity Bank in partnership with the German Development Agency, KfW will be offering 1,000 comprehensive secondary school scholarships to bright children from financially challenged backgrounds who sat for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations in 2022 and scored over 350 marks. The 2023 cohort will bring to 48,009 the total number of scholars who have benefitted from EGF's comprehensive secondary school scholarship programs to date.

Equity Group Foundation has been the implementing partner for the Government-led Elimu Scholarship program which has benefitted 27,000 scholars over a period of three years. 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 Wings to Fly selection process is currently at the verification stage where members of the community who serve on the Community Scholarship Selection Boards (CSSBs) across the country invest 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.

Commenting on the ongoing selection exercise, Dr. James Mwangi, Equity Group Foundation Executive Chairman said, "the successful candidates from this cohort will not only add to the growing number of students who have been supported by the Equity Group Foundation's transformational scholarships, but they will also play a vital role in transforming their communities and this country. We commend the CSSBs and our teams who are working diligently to ensure that the selection and verification process is thorough, credible, fair and transparent."



He emphasized the need for scholars to receive guidance and counselling during the four years of their high school, saying that Wings to Fly offers a rigorous mentorship program that involves scholar congresses where they get to interact with industry captains and school holiday programs conducted by Equity branch staff and Equity Group Foundation.

“Our holistic approach to scholarship which includes mentorship and coaching is aimed at equipping these promising learners with the right tools required for them to be transformational leaders in society. This is what drives the success of this initiative,” Dr. Mwangi added.

The Wings to Fly and Elimu 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 Leadership Programme (ELP).

Since its inception, 17,820 scholars have joined university under the Equity Leadership 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 in Ivy League universities like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, MIT, Columbia, and Cornell Universities. 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 financial support from other partners, notably the German Government through KfW, Mastercard Foundation, USAID, UKAid, private institutions, and individuals. The selection exercise will culminate in the commissioning of the 2023 cohort of scholars which is scheduled to take place on 21st January, 2023.



Equity Voi Branch Manager Teresia Warui (left) guides the home verification process of Wings to Fly Scholarship applicant, Saumu Masika (2nd left) in Maungu village, Taita Taveta County, verify details presented during her interview. With them is Fredrick Mwavula (2nd right), the Kenya Primary Schools Headteachers Association representative in the Community Scholarship Selection Board (CSSB) in Taita Taveta and Wings to Fly alumnus Jared Kidola (right). 1,000 scholars will be selected in the 2023 cohort bringing to 48,009 the total number of scholars who have benefitted from Equity Group Foundation's comprehensive secondary school scholarship programs to date.



Busia County Director of Education William Makori (centre) who chairs the Community Scholarship Selection Board in Busia leads his team in conducting interviews for the selection of Wings to Fly Program applicants in the County. With him are CSSB committee members Anne Wambui (left) and Rael Mutula (right). 1,000 scholars will be selected in the 2023 cohort bringing to 48,009 the total number of scholars who have benefitted from Equity Group Foundation's comprehensive secondary school scholarship programs to date.