

EQUITY GROUP AIRLIFT TO GLOBAL UNIVERSITIES REACHES 329 SCHOLARS AT A SCHOLARSHIP VALUE OF KSHS 8.225 BILLION

The 64 scholars are part of the 605 scholars earlier selected to join the ELP in 2015, having excelled as scholars in the *Wings to Fly* Programme in KCSE the previous year. The ELP program has started recording an increase in the number of scholars gaining admission to global university annually with 2015 and 2016 accounting for 129 admissions after benefiting from the MasterCard Global Scholarship fund of US \$ 500 million launched in 2014.

Speaking from Equity Centre at a ceremony to see off the class of 2016 scholars Equity Group CEO and Executive Chairman of Equity Group Foundation Dr. James Mwangi advised the scholars to remain true to their mission abroad, which is academic pursuit, leadership training, networking and global exposure. He reminded them that they had earned themselves the opportunity to study alongside the best brains in the world. “Be proud of your identity and your roots. You will be differentiated by your values, culture and belief systems. You will meet and interact with other global citizens from different cultures and socializations. Always remember that they are not necessarily better than you, they are just different. Be quick to discern good and progressive attributes that will enrich your life and embrace them, while consciously avoiding bad influence that can compromise the purpose of your mission abroad. Wear your Kenyan and African identity with pride. Make your home country and your continent proud among the nations that you will meet, interact and compete with. Similarly, your parents, your teachers and the ELP program have taught you the importance of character in shaping your destiny. Your character is the sum total of the values that have been impacted on you. I urge you to uphold these values and don’t be attracted to the easy path in life. Be prepared to work hard and earn your place in the community of nations. After you achieve your academic goals, remember to come back home and participate in building our great nation, beginning with your immediate family and local communities”

Dr Mwangi further added, “Our Foundation recognizes the need to support brilliant and needy students through ELP. This programme epitomizes the Tom Mboya academic airlift in the 1960’s that saw the likes of Barack Obama Snr and the late Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai, who later impacted our country in social economic development. Indeed, the quote by the then USA Senator, John F. Kennedy, that ‘Education is, in truth, the only key to genuine African independence and progress’ rings true to the Equity Group Foundation’s social programme initiatives.”

He said that the Equity Leaders Programme has now supported 3,405 scholars since inception with the number of those studying abroad as of this year, reaching 329 scholars from all over the country. 90% of the ELP Scholars access local public universities while 10% are assisted to gain admission in global leading universities so that they get global experience and exposure. The scholars are exposed and have an opportunity to build global networks and experiences , so that their training and learning, personal life and professional experiences and future goals will be aligned to their society and community goals and will help to transform education and promote social economic transformation of our country. The ELP programme is in line with Kenya’s Vision

2030 of transforming Kenya into a globally competitive middle income economy by the year 2030.

The Equity Leaders Programme is a transition pre-university programme from the successful *Wings To Fly* Secondary School Scholarship Program for bright gifted but financially challenged children executed by Equity Group in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation with support of USAID, UKAID and Kfw. The *Wings To Fly* secondary school program has so far benefited 12,377 students at a cost of over Kshs 12 billion (US\$120 million) of in comprehensive secondary school scholarship that cover their tuition, pocket money, transport, uniform and annual congress. To date 3,400 students have completed their secondary school education while close to 9,000 are still in secondary school.

“Kenya’s main potential lies in its people – their capacity, creativity, work ethic, education, knowledge, wisdom and entrepreneurial spirit and resilience. To ensure significant and consistent results, the human resources must be guided to develop global competitiveness. To be successful in developing competitiveness, the capacity to utilise knowledge and information must be at the global level. These scholars are the Vision 2030 generation. They will gain global experience and exposure and will bring those skills and competitiveness back to Kenya and support in its journey of achieving Vision 2030,” said Dr Mwangi.

To date, more than 1,029 beneficiaries are gainfully employed in leadership positions across the world and others pursuing their post-graduate studies. More than 2,376 ELP scholars are still pursuing their undergraduate degrees and will soon be graduating in various disciplines in local and international universities.

The Equity Leaders Programme also offers a paid internship programme at the Bank. It is anchored as an advanced leadership development initiative which selects the top *Wings to Fly* scholars who attain grade ‘A’ as well as the top boy and top girl in the KCSE exams from all the counties, to develop them into world-class leaders.

The students attend a three-week boot camp run by the alumni of the ELP College Counseling Programme while on summer holidays from their respective universities. The mentoring involves coaching training and preparing scholars to apply for entry examinations to universities of their choice. It also includes inducting and preparing those admitted for college life abroad.

As a way of giving back, the ELP scholars engage in mentorship activities to high school students, a gesture which has seen remarkable improvement in many public schools’ performance. The scholars also run initiatives that impact and benefit the immediate communities through charity and volunteering.

This year, of the 64 ELP scholars set to join global universities, 53 Scholars will be pursuing their undergraduate studies, 8 Scholars will be pursuing their postgraduate studies, 8 Scholars will be pursuing their postgraduate studies and 3 Scholars will be pursuing their post-secondary diploma at the African Leadership Academy. Some of the top schools that they will be joining this year

include Princeton, Yale, Amherst, Duke, MIT, University of California Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, University of Toronto, Michigan State University, University of Leeds, Edinburg university, Carnegie Mellon university (in Rwanda) among others.

Some of the leading institutions that have admitted our ELP Scholars for the last six years include:

Institution	Country	Number of Scholars
Harvard University	US	19
African Leadership Academy	South Africa	26
Ashesi University	Ghana	15
University of Toronto	Canada	15
Yale University	US	15
University of Pretoria	South Africa	16
Arizona State University	US	10
Duke University	US	11
University of Pennsylvania	US	11
Cornell University	US	9
Amherst College	US	9
Williams College	US	8
Stanford University	US	7



64 ELP Scholars Class of 2016 proceeding to Global Universities with Equity Bank Senior management staff. From Left: Gerald Warui ,Director Operations and Customer Experience; Elizabeth Gathai, Director of Credit; Dr. James Mwangi, Executive Chairman of Equity Group Foundation; Dr. Helen Gichohi MD, Equity Group Foundation and Bhartesh Shah, Chief Operating Officer, standing from left Peter Ibaare Program Manager and Reuben Mbindu Chief Officer Human Capital and Administration.

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About Equity Leaders Program (ELP)

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 has now benefitted 3,405 young people, including more than 329 scholars and alumni of global universities. The program is centred on a rigorous experiential learning. The scholars go through a paid internship at Equity Bank as they wait to join University. By the time they join university; they usually have earned and saved enough to pay for their university education in a local public university.

They work under the leadership, mentorship and coaching by senior staff in Equity Bank. They get first-hand encounter with serving customers as part of witnessing and understanding the daily needs, challenges and aspirations of the communities within which they have been raised and nurtured. This internship gives the scholars exposure to real decision making and problem solving skills and prepares them to be transformative leaders.

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 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.

This leadership development model is delivered through the following key initiatives:

- The Internship program which allows scholars at local universities to return for internships with Equity Group and its partners during university holidays to get professional experience while saving for their university education.
- The Global Summer Internship Program which allows scholars studying at international universities to return to Africa for their summer holidays and intern with Equity Group and its partners, giving them work experience and building their professional networks on the continent
- The College Counseling program which supports Equity scholars to access admission and scholarships to some of the world's leading universities, including the Ivy League universities in the US
- The Innovators Program which trains and develops scholars in innovation and entrepreneurship skills, allowing them to write business plans and pitch their ideas for seed funding
- The Centers of Excellence program where scholars provide residential mentorship to students at three high schools around Kenya: Kwale Girls, Nyawara Girls, and Nyagatugu Boys
- The University Chapters at campuses in Kenya and abroad that serve as platforms for interaction, networking, and activities for the scholars during their university session
- The Wings to Fly Mentorship Program which enables scholars to visit *Wings to Fly* high school scholarship recipients at their respective high schools to provide mentorship and academic coaching

About Equity Group Foundation

Established in 2008, Equity Group Foundation (EGF) acts as the institutional home for the Equity Group's social initiatives and interventions. EGF's aim is to catalyze the socio-economic prosperity of the people of Africa by giving opportunity to the millions at the bottom of the pyramid to be incorporated into the modern economy. Having demonstrated scalability, impact and high return on investment, EGF has forged partnerships with development organizations who wish to give back to society without duplicating effort and/or investing in infrastructure. This innovative and creative vehicle has fundamentally transformed the concept of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. While EGF champions the social economic transformation of the people of Africa and seeks partnerships along seven thematic areas, (Education & Leadership Development, Financial Inclusion & Literacy, Environment, Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Health), Equity Group provides the infrastructure of delivery hence reducing the operational costs for EGF and increasing the rate of return on any social investment.