



532 TOP KCSE STUDENTS JOIN EQUITY BANK'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Scholars urged to be agents of change and build networks that can address national challenges



Peterson Kung'u (Left) and Tiberious Mugandi (Right) from Chania High School pose for a photo with Equity Group Foundation's Executive Chairman, Dr. James Mwangi during this year's Equity Leaders Program (ELP) induction ceremony. The 532 scholars in the 2019 cohort have been posted as interns to various Equity Bank branches across Kenya. To date, 14,524 scholars have joined the Equity Leaders Program, with 12,256 qualifying for university with 489 securing admissions and scholarships to global universities.



Wednesday, 13th February 2019... 532 students who scored a mean grade A (plain) and A- (minus) in the 2018 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examination have joined the Equity Bank's paid internship program. The 532 students including 160 scholars from the *Wings to Fly* program and 363 top students from across the country will intern at various Equity Bank branches across Kenya.

During their internship costing Ksh393million, the students will benefit from structured mentorship and training to build work ethics and leadership skills. Additionally, the interns will have an opportunity to receive support to secure scholarships in leading global universities.

Speaking to the students during the induction and commissioning, Equity Group Holdings Managing Director and C.E.O Dr James Mwangi articulated "When I look at you, I see the face of Kenya, very diverse. As you begin this transition from secondary school to the work environment and eventually to institutions of higher learning, it is important for you to realize that our expectations of you are very high. You are the future leaders of this country," he said. Dr. Mwangi further urged the students to be agents of change and build networks that can address national challenges.

"You're joining a network of 14,524 Equity Leadership Programme members. You are starting a journey of life together with other gifted Kenyans of the same age group. This will be your biggest asset in your career, because out of this group will emerge captains of industry, leaders of business, the public service and other sectors," said Dr Mwangi before deployment of the scholars to various stations.

On personal and career development, he advised the students to embrace competition with themselves and set goals that are ambitious and achievable. "I urge you to pursue a career path that matches your personality, and one that you are passionate about. Compete against yourself, and continuously set goals that are ambitious and attainable," Dr. Mwangi added.

Started in 1998, the internship program is part of the Equity Leaders Program (ELP) that seeks to address the challenges of employability and leadership among young people. ELP includes secondary graduates from Equity's *Wings to Fly* program. Equity Group developed the ELP with the aim of creating a community of transformative leaders who work together across borders and various sectors to drive sustainable economic growth and social progress in Africa. To date, 14,524 scholars have joined the Equity Leaders Program, with 12,256 qualifying for university with 489 securing admissions and scholarships to global universities in the US such as Harvard, Yale and Stanford in addition to other universities in countries like Canada, China, France, South Africa, Ghana and the United Kingdom.

The deployment of the student interns follows an intensive 2-week residential induction program. The induction was designed to acquaint the over 500 scholars with the Bank's operations before they commence the paid internship at various Equity Bank branches countrywide, as they wait to join universities locally and abroad. Each of the scholars will earn a stipend of Kshs 40,000 per



month, part of which they will save and use the balance for their upkeep. ELP provides an opportunity for the brightest students across Kenya to build their professional skills while earning enough money to put them through their first year of university.

Tiberious Mogendi, from Chania High School, who scored an A- in his KCSE examination, had nothing but gratitude for Equity Group Foundation for the opportunity. "I joined the *Wings to Fly* program in Form One. When I was in high school, I faced some challenges which led to my grades dropping in Form one and two. Dr. Mwangi sent me a success card with a letter encouraging me, in which he had written '*I forgive you for the past laxity, forgive yourself and work on your studies*'. These words motivated me and I regained my focus and power to sit KCSE. Today, I am part of the Equity Leadership Program," he said.

An emotional Ann Alwala from Bunyore Girls Secondary, who scored an A- in her KCSE, could not contain her tears of joy as she told the story of her life. "After my KCPE results were released, I didn't know my fate, I had no one. There was no hope, no future for me. But Equity Group came to my rescue through the *Wings to Fly* programme'.

Some ELP Scholars are working both locally and globally among them David Wainaina who went to Ashesi University and is working as a Technical Support Specialist at IBM Kenya.; Phoebe Akumu, who went to Harvard Business School and currently working at Open Capital Advisors -Nairobi; Doris Mwendwa Mbabu, who went to Williams College and is currently a Business Associate at Wellington Management, in Boston, USA, among others. The Program has also produced a team of 5 doctors who have spearheaded the launch of Equity Afia clinics in Nairobi and its environs with plans to expand the franchise into other parts of Kenya.

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For more information, kindly contact:

Alex Muhia Equity Bank Group T: 0763 026 007 (Office) T: 0763 618 871 (Mobile) E: CorporateCommunications@equitybank.co.ke E: Alex.Muhia@equitybank.co.ke	Geoffrey Nayema Ogilvy PR T: 0763 800 371 E: geoffrey.nayema@ogilvy.co.ke
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About the Equity Leaders Program

The Equity Leaders Programme was founded in 1998 and has scaled up over time to benefit 14,524 scholars. The Equity Leaders Program admits the top performing boy and girl in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) exams from each sub-county in Kenya where Equity Bank has a branch as well as Wings to Fly graduates who score a minimum grade of A-. 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.

The internship runs for the 6-10 months between secondary school completion and the beginning of university. 5,963 scholars have benefitted from internships at Equity Bank prior to joining local or global universities. Of these, 489 scholars have secured admissions and scholarships in top global universities.

The leadership development model seeks to develop scholars in 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 in these thematic areas, the program also endeavors to create a strong network of scholars working 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 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 program runs for the 6-10 months between secondary school completion and the beginning of university.*
- 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 Counselling 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 **Annual Leadership Congress** which allows scholars to connect with each other to form a strong community, learn about leadership and employability skills, and interact with successful leaders from various industries*
- 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 various secondary schools*
- 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.*