



## **GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES ELIMU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME**

*Replicates and scales the successful Wings to Fly scholarship model by targeting 18,000 scholarships in two years*

**Nairobi 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2020....** A total of 9,000 beneficiaries of the Elimu Scholarship Programme will be proceeding to Form One, following the successful launch in Nairobi today. The Programme, which is in its initial year, is supported by the World Bank-funded Secondary Education Quality Improvement Project (SEQIP) and implemented by Equity. This inaugural cohort saw more than 38,000 primary school graduates across the country apply for the scholarship.

Under the programme, vulnerable children from financially constrained backgrounds in the 110 targeted sub counties and informal settlements in 15 urban centers who attained 280 marks and above in 2019 KCPE, were considered for the inaugural 2020 cohort of 9,000 scholars. For affirmative action, candidates who are Orphans and/or from Vulnerable Communities and those with special needs and disabilities who attained below 280 marks were also considered.

Speaking during the launch at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in Nairobi, Education Cabinet Secretary Prof. George Magoha noted that the Elimu Scholarship Programme, will support 18,000 learners from needy and vulnerable households on full four-year secondary school scholarships, selected in two cohorts of 9,000 each.

“I feel fulfilled as I launch this programme today. This is perhaps the most transformative programme for education in this country because needy children now have an opportunity to get an education,” said Prof. Magoha.

The Cabinet Secretary noted that the beneficiaries selected for the 2020 cohort are deserving and their selection into the programme was unbiased and based on solid, verifiable and objective criteria. He lauded Equity for putting together a rigorous selection criteria, which he described as free, fair, transparent and executed with utmost integrity. “I sat through complete interviews and went on home verification visits in Kisumu, Thika and Nyeri. What I saw is a committed selection team made up of education officers, local administrators and the local communities, coordinated by Equity.

He further added that the list of all the selected scholars would be made publicly available in the Ministry of Education website for ease of reference by schools, parents and other interested parties. He urged partners who were willing to take up scholars to pick from the remaining scholars who had already undergone the Elimu verification process but were not selected.

The Government, through the Ministry of Education appointed Equity Group as the implementing agency of the inaugural Elimu Scholarship, due to the success of the *Wings to Fly* Program. Equity Group Foundation Executive Chairman Dr. James Mwangi, who was also present at the event lauded the Government’s commitment in the Education sector.

“The launch today is a testament that the tried and tested *Wings to Fly* Program can be scaled to national level. Last week we commissioned the 11<sup>th</sup> cohort of the *Wings to Fly* Program, bringing the current total to 17,304 scholarships awarded so far. The Government in just two years will



have awarded 18,000 scholarships through the Elimu Programme. This truly demonstrates the Government's commitment in creating equitable access to education," said Dr. Mwangi.

To date, Equity Group Foundation and Mastercard with additional support from *Wings to Fly* partners has provided 17,304 comprehensive secondary school scholarships to bright but financially disadvantaged students under the *Wings to Fly* Program.

The 18,000 Elimu scholarships will be achieved at a cost of 3 billion funded by the Ministry of Education with support from the World Bank within a period of 2 years, bringing the total scholarships offered through the Equity Group Foundation to 35,304.

Dr. Mwangi urged the scholars to be responsible for the opportunity presented to them through the Elimu scholarship.

"For every Elimu scholarship you have received, four applicants were competing for it. You need to be responsible with the opportunity you have been given and work hard in school so that you can realize your dreams and transform your families and communities," he said.

Scholarship programmes in Kenya including *Wings to Fly* and Elimu Scholarship continue to provide opportunities for equitable access to education in the country. This complements the Government's efforts in ensuring that there is a 100% transition rate to secondary school.

Beneficiaries of the *Wings to Fly* scholarships have proven that given an opportunity, bright and needy students can achieve success. In the 2019 KCSE results, 81.3% of the 2016 class obtained university qualifying grades which is four times the national average rate of 18.1%.

Representing the World Bank Country Representative Felipe Jaramillo, World Bank Senior Education Specialist Co-Task Team Leader (SEQIP) Ruth Charo, lauded the Government's commitment to promoting access to education.

"We acknowledge Government efforts in resolving various inequalities in education. Financial constraints remain the main challenge prohibiting transition of students from primary to secondary school. We are confident that the Elimu Scholarship Programme will address these challenges," she said.

The launch was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Education, Parliamentary Committee for Education, The World Bank, Equity Group and other partners.

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