



# UF NEWS

A Newsletter of The Universities Fund

## Learning Proceeds Uninterrupted as National Government Disburses Sh3 billion for Scholarships

### The national government released Sh3.98 billion for scholarships for university students under the New Higher Education Funding Model.

According to the January 18 press statement, Education Cabinet Secretary Ezekiel Machogu said the second tranche brings to Sh7.88 billion the total amount disbursed by the government for scholarships to first year students since they joined universities beginning September last year.

In October last year, Sh3.9 billion was released through Universities Fund (UF) for scholarships to the students under the new model.

“The Ministry of Education wishes to express the government’s unwavering commitment to promoting access to university education and providing financial support to students to ensure no one is left behind,” Mr Machogu said.

The beneficiaries had applied for funding through the Higher Education Funding portal ([www.hef.co.ke](http://www.hef.co.ke)) by the October 7, 2023 deadline. CS Machogu launched the portal in August last year.

Students who sat the 2022 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination and placed in public universities by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) were the first

cohort to benefit from the new financing model.

Students are now required to apply individually for scholarships after the new model delinked student placement with funding.

Funding is now a combination of scholarships, loans and household contributions on a graduated scale determined by a Means Testing Instrument (MTI).

“The categorisation of students was realised through a reliable scientific method, Means Testing Instrument, used to determine the student’s level of financial need, to ensure they are supported adequately,” Mr Machogu said.

The MTI classifies students under five bands, where they get between Sh40,000 and Sh60,000 in upkeep based on their financial status. Under band one, for instance, the neediest student receives 70 percent scholarship, 25 percent loan, 5 percent household contribution and Sh60,000 for upkeep.

President William Ruto unveiled the model on May 3, 2023 to streamline the administration of universities and enhance access to quality and affordable education.

The measure also targets to bolster universities’ autonomy, promote partnerships with the private sector and boost research and innovation outputs.

Additionally, the new model will help public and private



**Education Cabinet Secretary Ezekiel Machogu presides over a past event in Nairobi this year. He said the government is committed to promote access to university education**

universities manage the collective debt of over Sh70 billion, as it emphasises on student-centred funding as opposed to block funding of universities as it were under the Differentiated Unit Cost model (DUC).

Candidates who sat the KCSE in 2023 will form the second batch of beneficiaries. The number of candidates who attained the minimum university entry qualification of grade C+ and above in the 2023 examination was 201,133 compared to 173,345 in 2022.

# CEO Geoffrey Monari Opens up about Work, Personal Life and Future of University Sector

Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari goes unplugged in this exclusive interview. He delves into his daily routine and work-life balance. He shares insights into the milestones achieved under his guidance, painting a vivid picture of the State agency's transformative journey.



**Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari speaks during a past interview**

## **Could you describe your typical day at UF?**

I wake up at 5:00 am. Then I exercise, mostly jogging, at least three times a week. Thereafter, I take my breakfast and head to the office. The first tasks are reading my emails, going through the day's newspapers and holding meetings. I prefer scheduling meetings early in the morning so that I can deal

with routine issues that could up the rest of the working hours. Normally, the day at the office ends around 6:00 pm but there are days we go up to 9:00 pm. It only on few occasions when we had to stay until 2:00 am in the morning. Ordinarily, I head to bed by 9:30 pm.

## **How do you manage to maintain a balance between work and personal life?**

I bond with my family regularly. For instance, Sunday is a family day. I also exercise and interact with nature every Saturday. If it is not a long walk around my neighbourhood, I go to Karura Forest early in the morning then attend church around 10:00 am. Aside from these, I like travelling with my family whenever possible.

## **As the organisation expands, how do you ensure continued connection with employees and foster UF culture?**

I have an open-door policy. Therefore, everyone can consult me at any time. I also engage with my managers every Monday to get their feedback. We have quarterly institutional barazas, biannual luncheons, and an end-year party. We also organise staff retreats of up to three days to encourage bonding.

## **What community activities is UF involved in?**

We have been involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives such as Standard Chartered Marathon, planting of over 3,000 tree seedlings in Tinderet, as well as taking part in the National Tree Planting Day by planting trees in Machakos County. Further, we are heavy on CSR activities and preserving the environment.

## **What achievements has the Universities Fund made under your leadership?**

They are many. One, we have created the new funding model through which we offer scholarships to university students. Secondly, we have been able to employ 32 dedicated members of staff. Thirdly, we have relocated to new offices that offer a better working environment. We have also provided staff with equipment such as computers to perform their duties, in addition to capacity building them to improve their performance. Furthermore, we provided advisories to the Ministry of Education and created the new funding model that has supported students' education and helped address cash flow

## **What motivated you to assume the role of CEO at the Universities Fund?**

It was the need to change the university landscape, having worked in this sector for many years. This was coupled with the realisation that to register impact, universities have to be supported, given the myriad of challenges they are dealing with such as cash flow hurdles. In fact, when I joined UF, universities had accrued debts of up to Sh33 billion. Consequently, something needed to be done.

The other motivation for joining UF is change. I had worked in one institution for 23 years. Additionally, UF was a new institution and I was excited at the challenge of growing it as the first CEO.

challenges affecting universities. Lastly, we have established a pension scheme for staff.

**What are the primary challenges confronting higher education sector in Kenya, and how is UF addressing them?**

One of the challenges was availability of data we could use to create evidence-based solutions for the government. Fortunately, the UF sourced for funds to develop a management information system. Secondly, we always had a problem of funding. However, the new funding model will sort that out because we have seen an increase of about Sh20 billion channelled to the university sector.

When it comes to resource mobilisation, we are reaching out to various partners. For example, we are working with Cooperative Bank and we managed to bring Vihiga County on board for the solarisation project where universities can use solar panels to generate cheaper electricity.

**Are there specific opportunities you are leveraging to enhance the effectiveness and impact of UF initiatives?**

Number one is to create and enhance partnerships between industry players and universities. The other one is focusing on climate change issues aimed at protecting our environment.

**Where do you envision the Universities Fund in the next five to 10 years?**

I see UF stabilised and universities financially sustainable. I am seeing a UF that will be able to cater for all needy university students in the next five years. I see a valued Fund for the sector; a go-to Fund where employees are satisfied and other stakeholder see its value.

# UF Raises Awareness on New Funding Model during Barngetuny Memorial Run



**A Universities Fund staff takes residents of Tinderet, Nandi County, through the revised New Higher Education Funding Model during the Nandi Barngetuny Memorial Mountain Run on January 7, 2024**

## The Universities Fund took sensitisation about the revised New Higher Education Funding (HEF) Model to Tinderet in Nandi County during the Third Edition of Nandi Barngetuny Memorial Mountain Run on January 7.

The UF educated the locals on the new funding model and encouraged them to apply for government scholarships. The theme was 'Clean Air for Clean Run'.

UF staff took part in planting 3,000 indigenous tree seedlings at Barngetuny family farm, demonstrating its commitment

to tackling deforestation and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua led the exercise alongside area MP Julius Meli, Nandi Governor Stephen Sang, Uasin Gishu Senator Jackson Mandago and renowned athlete Julius Yego.

Governor Sang rallied the communities towards fostering a healthy environment by planting more trees.

The funding agency was one of the sponsors of the event, which had a top prize of Sh5 million up for grabs.

Other sponsors were Athletics Kenya, Kenya Cooperative Bank, Tinderet Tea Farm, County government of Nandi, Lions Hill Farm Lelgotet, Equity Bank and Coca-Cola.





***Tree seedlings are planted in Tinderet, Nandi County, on January 7, 2024 as part of national efforts to protect the environment***



***Universities Fund employees plant tree seedlings in Tinderet, Nandi County, on January 7, 2024***



***Winners of the Barngetuny Memorial Mountain Run held in Tinderet on January 7, 2024 showcase their awards***