



## Second Biennial University Financing Conference 2025 Set for February



This year's event will focus on promoting innovative funding strategies, optimising financial management, and leveraging digital technology to transform university operations.

Taking place at Lake Naivasha Resort, the conference comes at a critical juncture in Kenya's higher education financial landscape, particularly following the High Court decision in December 2024 to quash the Variable Scholarships and Loans Funding (VSLF) model, also known as the New Funding Model (NFM).

The conference will provide an opportunity to address the critical gaps hindering long-term sustainability and explore alternative funding mechanisms. It aligns with the country's key economic development priorities - Vision 2030, BETA Agenda and Pan African Agenda.

**The 2nd Biennial University Financing Conference will take place on February 26-27th, 2025 under the theme "Navigating the New Era of Higher Education Financing in Kenya".**

Hosted by the Universities Fund, the high-level conference will convene key stakeholders in higher education, including university leaders, government policymakers, private sector partners, and development organisations to explore innovative and actionable solutions for enhancing the financial sustainability and operational efficiency of Kenyan universities.

"As the demand for quality education grows, so do the financial challenges facing universities. The urgent need for sustainable and innovative financing solutions has become increasingly apparent," says Mr Geoffrey Monari, Chief Executive Officer, Universities Fund.

The 2nd Biennial Conference will be opened by Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba. It builds on the successes of the inaugural 2023 conference, which took place in Mombasa. A raft of resolutions were agreed upon, and will form part of the discussions at this year's event in Nakuru County.

# KCSE 2024: More than 240,000 Graduates Attain C+, Qualify to Join Public Varsities

**The number of students who attained the minimum university entry grade of C+ and above has increased, Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba said.**

While announcing the results of the 2024 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination last month, Mr Ogamba said 246,391 students achieved a university entry grade of C+ and above compared to 201,133 recorded in 2023.

During the 2024 KCSE examination, a total of 962,512 candidates sat the examination compared to 899,453 candidates in 2022.

“Of the 962,512 candidates who sat the 2024 KCSE examination, 480,310 were male, while 482,202 were female, representing 49.90% and 50.10% of the total candidature respectively. This is the first time since inception of KCSE examination that female candidates are more than male candidates,” he said.

The qualifying students are set to receive government support for their higher education through scholarships and loans provided by the Universities Fund and the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB). However, this support has been impacted by the suspension of the new higher education funding model by the high court.

Launched in 2023, the new funding model has already benefited over 127,000 students. In October 2023, the government allocated Ksh3.9 billion to support the programme, followed by an additional Ksh3.98 billion in February 2024.



*Education Cabinet Secretary Julius Ogamba releases the 2024 KCSE results in Nairobi on January 9, 2025.*

In August 2024, another Ksh2.8 billion was disbursed to the Universities Fund to support scholarships for first-year students.

The second cohort, consisting of students who sat the 2023 KCSE exams, also benefited from the funding. Out of 153,274 students placed in various degree programmes by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS), 79,035 had applied for scholarships by August 2024.

The surge in university-eligible students in the 2024 examination means that over 240,000 additional students are expected to join universities this year, piling more pressure on the higher education financing system.

In response, Mr Ogamba reassured the public that the government is committed to resolving the challenges flagged by the court.

“The President has formed a working party to re-examine the entire funding model and refine it to ensure that the next cohort does not face the same challenges encountered by the current one,” Mr. Ogamba stated.

He also noted that the government had introduced an interim report for review, which will be finalised to ensure that the funding model works efficiently for incoming students.

# Stakeholders to Take Stock of Higher Education Status at High-level Conference in Naivasha

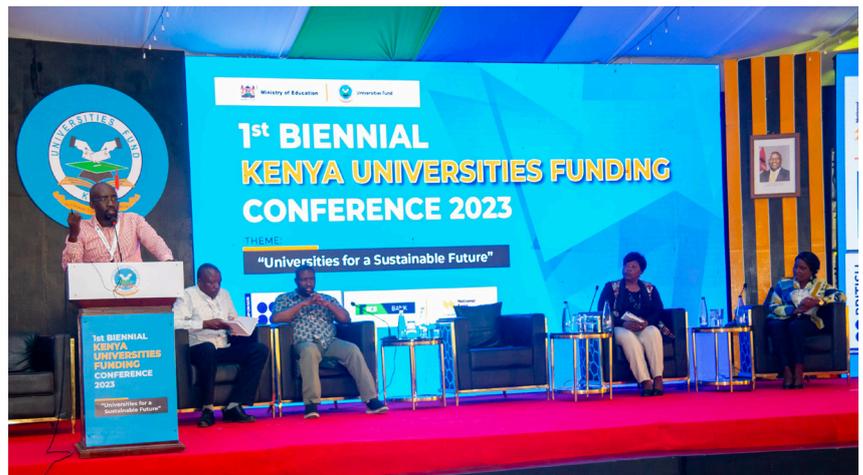
**S**takeholders in the higher education sector are set to review the progress made in the last two years to bolster the sustainability of the higher education sector.

The Universities Fund will facilitate the stock-taking during the Second Biennial University Financing Conference scheduled from February 26-27 in Naivasha. The theme is Navigating the New Era of Higher Education Financing in Kenya.

The experts will build on the resolutions advanced during the inaugural conference held on February 23-24, 2023 in Mombasa County.

The delegates, who will range from vice-chancellors, senior government officials, private sector to donors, proposed a flurry of interventions such as: to clear universities' pending bills, enhance the independence and governance of public universities, review students' fees, and incentivise faculty to engage in research and innovation.

Other far-reaching proposals included devising and diversifying income streams to complement Government funding, prioritising



Members of the National Assembly Parliamentary Education Committee lead a discussion during the 1st Biennial Kenya Universities Funding Conference in Mombasa.

strategic collective bargaining agreement negotiations, and leveraging technology to deliver education.

On pending bills, which stood at Sh75.53 billion in June 2023, the institutions reduced it by a meagre Sh3.28 billion last year owing to the introduction of the student-centred funding model in May 2023.

“Universities now receive tuition fees directly from the government, reducing dependency on internally generated funds to cover operational costs,” a status report said.

The model scrapped automatic government funding for students, shifting to the use of a means-testing instrument to measure the financial needs of students.

But the quashing of the model by the high court in December last year is likely to exacerbated the situation.

It was recommended that university managers should enhance financial management, prioritise settlement of statutory obligations, and seek government intervention through bailout packages to resolve the problem.

The delegates will review how far varsities have implemented strategies for expanding income sources. They include leverage AI, adopt renewable energy solutions, and integrate climate action initiatives.

## 4 RESOLUTIONS for expanding income streams of public universities in Kenya

### 01. Forums

Integrate climate action and sustainability initiatives in public universities.

Sponsorship and participation in the 3rd Forum for the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities of Africa and the Origin Fest Hackathon.

### 02. Climate Change

### 03. Energy

Artificial intelligence (AI) training for financial prudence in the higher education sector.

Adopt renewable energy initiatives for resource optimisation.

### 04. Technology

# Universities Fund Champions Environmental Conservation with Tree Planting Campaign



*Universities Fund staff during the Baragetuny Mountain Race in Tinderet, Nandi County, on January 18, 2025.*

## **The Universities Fund took part in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tinderet Baragetuny Mountain Run, an event aimed at emphasising the importance of environmental conservation.**

Under the theme ‘Clean Air for Clean Run’, the Universities Fund team led by Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari participated in mountain running and planted over 2,000 thousand seedlings in Tinderet, Nandi County, on January 18<sup>th</sup> 2025.

The team was also joined by Tinderet MP Julius Melly, Head of Public Service Felix Koskei, Senate Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot, Sports PS Peter Tum, and Athletics Kenya President Lt Gen (Rtd) Jack Tuwei.

The event was held to underscore the importance of environmental conservation in accordance with the Presidential Directive of planting 15 billion trees by 2032.

“Our efforts in planting 2,000 seedlings, engaging with stakeholders, and sensitising the community have not only contributed to the national tree-planting agenda but also strengthened our relationship with the community and

enhanced our brand visibility,” read a report by the Fund.

The Universities Fund team sensitised the community and stakeholders with detailed information about the Fund and its role in supporting higher education sustainability.

“Positive responses were received from the community and educational institutions, appreciating the Universities Fund’s proactive approach to environmental conservation,” said the report.

Last year, the team planted 1,000 trees to mark Mazingira Day at the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) in Karen.



*Universities Fund employees participate in a tree-planting event in Tinderet, Nandi County.*