



**FAWE** Forum for African Women Educationalists  
Forum des éducatrices africaines

## **MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SCHOLARS ENTREPRENEURSHIP FUND (SEF)** **March 2019**

### **Introduction**

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation has been implementing a ten-year scholarship programme through FAWE Rwanda and FAWE Ethiopia to enable academically bright girls and boys from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to access and complete secondary and university education. The programme targets 2,000 Scholars at secondary school in Rwanda (1200) and Ethiopia (800). So far, 475 Scholars in Rwanda transitioned to University of Rwanda and INES-Ruhengeri under Mastercard Foundation support. In Ethiopia, 673 Scholars are continuing with secondary education.

The Scholars Program seeks to enable young people to positively contribute to socio-economic development of their countries. For this matter, their transition into higher levels of education, access to meaningful work and entrepreneurship is a priority for both the Foundation and its partners within an environment of shrinking formal employment on the continent. In this regard, the Foundation has introduced the Scholars Entrepreneurship Fund to catalyze and broaden pathways for Scholars to contribute to socio-economic development. This is a timely intervention as it comes at a time when the African Union has initiated the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCTA) which seeks to establish a single market and boost trade between African countries by about 52% by 2022.

### **Background to the SEF**

The Mastercard Foundation Transitions Working Group considered various pathways for Scholars' development in response to the demand from Scholars and partner institutions. Consequently, the Foundation established a two-million (\$2M) US dollar Scholars Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF) to support viable Scholars' projects that provide solutions to needs identified in their communities, and which will result in improved socio-economic status. The Fund will support projects by active Scholars in and alumni from partner tertiary institutions. However, the funding will not necessarily cover 100% of the selected applicant's enterprise costs.

Scholars will be involved in the design and implementation of the initiative and will contribute to the development of the selection criteria. Selection of the projects to be funded will be done through a competitive and transparent process. The piloting of SEF will not exceed two (2) years from the launch date and should be completed latest March 2021.

### **Rationale for Scholars Entrepreneurship Fund (SEF)**

Given the limited job opportunities to absorb the youth bulge, creativity and innovation is required of young people to create economic opportunities for themselves and for others too. The SEF links perfectly to the Young Africa Works strategy whose critical pillar is supporting young people to access capital so that they can grow their businesses within various sectors of the economy. In addition, the SEF aligns to the need to harness the African demographic dividend. It is for this reason that FAWE as an implementing partner in Rwanda has been allocated USD 200,000 to support competitive Scholars' social and entrepreneurial projects. FAWE will on behalf of the Foundation pilot the SEF to generate evidence and learning on the effect of intentionally making funding opportunities available to young people for



entrepreneurship. In order for FAWE to realize this purpose, FAWE Scholars will be requested to submit individual or small group (max 5 members which may also include not more than 2 non-Scholars at their university) projects that will be evaluated against set criteria for funding with the highest grant at USD 5,000 and the smallest at USD 500 per project. The awarded funds shall not be given to a scholar/group at a single go, rather they will receive the funds in instalments and the 2<sup>nd</sup> instalment shall be released after satisfactory project evaluation.

### **Scope of the SEF**

FAWE will implement the SEF in Rwanda from March 2019 to March 2021. At the inception of the SEF FAWE will hold a stakeholders meeting involving Scholars' representatives, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Rwanda Development Board and partner universities. The meeting envisages information sharing, support and mentorship to scholars before, during and after the implementation period. During this meeting a committee will also be set up to coordinate in-campus meetings to respond to any questions that the scholars may have in relation to the call for grant applications.

### ***Proposed objectives***

- To expand Scholars' capacity to exercise transformative leadership and give-back, by catalyzing economic opportunities for others (students and community) by March 2021.
- To support 30 to 50 viable Scholars' projects that bring solutions to needs identified in their communities and which will result in improved livelihoods, diversified income generation or job creation by March 2021.
- To document the processes and importance of financing and developing entrepreneurship among African Youth by March 2021.

### ***Proposed Activities***

- i. Call and launch of the SEF competition
- ii. Project ideation workshop
- iii. Closing the call for applications
- iv. Vetting applications and shortlisting for interview and due diligence
- v. Project refinement workshop
- vi. Award funds to the winners
- vii. Project work starts; Quarterly disbursements
- viii. Monthly reporting, quarterly reflections survey and group meetings; and
- ix. Project site visits by FAWE team and continuous guidance.

### ***Project duration***

The SEF will not exceed 2 years and will end by March 2021 from the date it is launched. However, Scholars' projects are expected to continue beyond the funding period.

### **Application and selection process**

The SEF opportunity will be administered on a competitive basis and will be open to the Scholars or Alumni at/of university level with projects that bring solutions to needs identified in their communities. The



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Scholars will be invited to submit proposals on their projects either individually or in small groups through an online application tool.

### ***Call for applications***

The call for applications for the last round will be put out on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2019. Eligible and prospective applicants must meet the following conditions:

- Be a FAWWE Mastercard Foundation ongoing Scholar at the University of Rwanda or INES-Ruhengeri
- Be a Mastercard Foundation Scholars' Alumni and
- Propose a business/project to be implemented in Rwanda

### ***Selection Team***

The project selection team will comprise of FAWWE staff, Scholars and partner university staff from the entrepreneurship department where possible. The team may consider incorporating a private sector member to assist in the selection process and possibly offer mentorship on a pro-bono basis.

### ***Selection criteria***

The proposed projects/businesses will be judged based on the following criteria:

- i. Viability of the project – environmentally sound, attainable outcomes, profitability, social impact, markets, etc.
- ii. Need to be addressed in the community — basic market analysis/research of the problem to be addressed by the project, improved livelihood (income, jobs)
- iii. Costing and budget of the proposed project — cost-effectiveness, leverage, realistic budget with a growth plan
- iv. Creativity and innovativeness — sources of funds, balance between academics and project
- v. Expertise/experience in the area of interest (self or mentor) i.e. if technical expertise is needed to implement a project;
- vi. Potential for expansion and/or scalability — target market;
- vii. Potential for job creation — employment creation
- viii. The project should be ethical and in line with government regulatory frameworks in the region of implementation — compliance.

### **Number of projects to be funded**

There will be three cohorts of Scholars/projects (15, 20 & 15) to be funded under the SEF. This means a total of 30 to 50 projects will be funded during the two years.

### **Access to technical support and resources**

To ensure that the business ideas succeed, FAWWE will provide a business mentorship support programme to Scholars while building on the experience of other organizations who have implemented related programmes. FAWWE will also reach out for support from other Mastercard Foundation partners with experience in administering entrepreneurship funding competitions.



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### **Monitoring, Learning and Reporting**

FAWE will facilitate collection of quantitative data at two key moments: 1) baseline survey to be completed by Scholars through a link <https://m.geopoll.com/polls/optin?pollid=4583108&Country=KE> as part of their application process, and 2) Monthly venture data to be provided by winning Scholars through a short SMS or smartphone survey.

The funded Scholars will be required to submit to FAWE quarterly activity and financial reports on the progress of their projects, using a designed template accompanied by supporting documents. The reports will be evaluated and validated before subsequent funds are released. FAWE will provide quarterly update reports to the Foundation from these reports and conduct regular monitoring.

FAWE will also carry out qualitative data collection through face-to-face interviews and Focus Group Discussions on a quarterly basis. The purpose will be to track the status of the projects and for learning purposes. The monitoring exercise will endeavor to also include some of the projects that will not have been selected for varied reasons and also those funded but may unfortunately not be successful.

Scholars will be encouraged to document their personal experiences through journaling, blogging and video blogging. They will then be expected to share these experiences from their entrepreneurial project implementation with the FAWE Communications Officer who will disseminate the same through a quarterly e-newsletter

### ***Baseline, Midline and end-line evaluations***

FAWE in partnership with the Foundation will conduct 3 surveys; baseline at the inception of the project, midline in the 15<sup>th</sup> month of the first disbursement and end-line after the 21<sup>st</sup> month. The program will track the following groups:

- Funded projects
  - Successful business
  - Unsuccessful business(es)
- Non-funded projects

### **Communication**

FAWE will widely share information on the funding opportunity among the tertiary Scholars in Rwanda through social media (WhatsApp), Facebook, FAWE RS and Rwanda websites and face-to-face meetings at their campuses.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) link will be provided by FAWE to help answer additional queries from Scholars.