

Stories from staff during covid-19 pandemic

1

Hi marnix, hope you are doing well. first is to appreciate for the time have been working in macheo, my life has changed completely. I also appreciate for an opportunity to given to us as employees to explain ourselves. we are 8 siblings, 7 sisters and 1 brother. before corona crisis, my salary I used to support my mother as my dad passed away and he was the only bread winner in the family, and my one sister who is a single mother, jobless and having 4 children aged 10 years, 5 years, 2 years and 1 month in providing basic needs and school. after corona crisis, the dependants has increased as all other siblings has been depending on small businesses and casual jobs which currently are unavailable. The 4 sisters are also single mothers.

2

My story. ..initially before Corona I used to support my parents partly because we used to share the budget with my 4 siblings. But now their businesses have gone down so am supporting my son, mother and father fully. Before corona my brother used to come to Nairobi for his own businesses now there is no movement anymore so am partly playing part in his life (a family of 3 children plus him and wife) To be honest before Corona I was able to save something in my account but now I can't even save even a coin. Can't able to let them go bed hungry. Budget has really hiked food is expensive and everything has really gone higher. Even the other day I was thinking how I will shift from the house I stay to a very cheap one.

3

Goodmorning Marnix. Hope you are still keeping safe. First is to appreciate the humanitarian work macheo is doing to support the vulnerable community. Secondly keeping your workers on full pay. The salary is so crucial in my day to day [life](#). My daughters and my grandchildren whom i live with and my aged mum are depending on it now that no income for most of family members at this time of pademic. Cutting salary or no pay will lead us to become vulnerable and add the number of needy community. Thanks for the open forum to air our views, we are lucky to have you as our team leader

4

Hi Marnix, I thank you for your concern and the way you value us. This is a bit of my story. I'm a single mother of 2 who are both in university it is more than 10 years since we separated with their dad and who got another family. Since last year has been jobless and things have been difficult early this year developed health problem, and early this month was discovered has kidney problem in fact yesterday is when was operated meaning he will use his money pay hospitals bills. That means I will take full responsibilities of my children. Just to name a few things. Food, school fees. Extra house rent for my son, my daughter joined last year so is long way before she clears and what would hurt me most is not to be able to educate my children. I have also helping my elder sister who developed stroke since 2018 her left side paralysed she attends kenyatta hospital 2 weeks in a month, has a special diet. She has 3 daughters who have kids and only one is married, one is jobless so they depend on her I'm unable to help high cost of living and espec. Break of Covid 19. I have a brother who has a big family back in rural place he

lost his job back 2018 nd I had been helping him bt stopped last yr after the father of my children lost his job infact our relation is not good for he think that I earn alot of money since I work in an NGO nd thats hurts me. Besides I dont have any other business, I live in a rental hse n even getting a casual job is hard I depend on that salary so Marnix I need that job more than never before . I wish you success as you argue our case may God guide you thanks

5

Hi, this is my story.

When Covid 19 was announced my 3 sisters inlaw and nephew came to stay with me. I also asked my Mum to close her business and promised to support her(She lives with my grandma who is sickly and was afraid if she gets corona my grandma would die).

When this happened I thought all was well, thought that my Hubby and I will still have incomes as usual and doing this would not be much of a strain.

My hubby's Employer had been taken to court on tax evasion, but we were sure that they would win the case, but they lost and were to pay 500Million and with Covid 19 the sales went significantly down, the company became unstable. Their salaries were slashed by half and it has become difficult for the company to pay salaries on time.They received March salary end of april and until now they have not yet received April's salary.

This means that I have to cater for more expense at home and also honor my promise to Mum, this has become a strain on us at the moment.

I am more worried now that my brother had to close his business since March for lack of client. He tells me that he has depleted his savings this month, his wife is also jobless and is 5 months pregnant.

Honestly, I really want this thing to end, thing are getting tougher each day.

6

Hi Marnix,

Thank you for your message via whatup.

Here is my story:

Am the first born in the family of 6 people where by due to Mum illness I took full responsibility for my siblings that is school fees payment and other expenses whereby for some payment it is once in a term and when they are in school the expense are less since am a lone in the house which with my salary am able to cater for the needs and also sometimes if dad needs help from me I also chip in for help

After the corona pandemic am fully responsible for my 3 siblings that is food,housing and other expenses which is such a difficult time.

7

I am a 23 year old, working as a ... in Macheo. When I joined Macheo my parents were jobless, my mother had lost her job and my father depended on casual jobs. They had no where to turn to and got into alot of debts. After a few months of working, I was able to pay off some rent arrears and start a small green grocer for my mother so that she could atleast have somewhere she can get food for the family. In 2019 my brother had to join secondary school and I had to take a loan so that I could support my parents to take him to school and there after continue paying his school fees as well as servicing the loan. In 2020 my sister also had to join form 1. This time it was abit easier as my mother was able to save some money from her business, my father from his casual jobs and I from my salary and a little help from friends. With my salary I was able to support both my siblings throu school. After the Corona crisis all responsibilities have befallen on me. Corona has affected casual jobs that my dad depend on now there is no construction ongoing, it has been some months since he last had a job. It has also affected most people, they have lost their jobs and have no money to even buy food and this has made the green grocer sales to drop drastically that even providing food for the family is not possible. My family now solely depends on the salary I earn in Macheo for food and other basic bills and am still servicing the loan. I highly appreciate all the people involved in making it possible for me and my colleagues to still get full salaries. The salary is really helping us alot. Thank you.

8

Greetings. Am glad to share my personal story,I have elderly parents whom I take care of, my mother has a heart condition, (Dialeted cardio myopathy).she lives on medications of which I have to buy every time she sees a cardiologist as per recommendation. I also pay a care giver who takes care of my parents, she lives with them. bcoz the cardiologist requested that mum should be free from duties. I also pay the nhif card.. This is before corona. After corona, the cardiologist requested that mum should go for appointment twice per month, she also has a preexisting condition (Asthmatic) .. I take care of inhalers n other medications. My nephew was fired(son to my late sister) after corona, He's a single father of 5 kids.. One of the kids is under my roof, in class 8 at barracks primary. Right now my nephew is grounded since March. I have been supporting him with the family.
Regards.

9

About two years ago, my second born son was diagnosed with epilepsy. This was quite a stressing moment for us as it was something new and quite unexpected. His seizures are tonic- clonic and it is quite depressing to watch him go through them, with nothing to do as a mother to ease the pain and discomfort.

Over this period his monthly medical bill rose from Kshs 900 in the first month to Kshs 21,450 mid last year, not talking about the neurologist consultation fee which I was lucky to get one at Kshs 2000 per visit after many trials. We visit every two months. His seizures are not yet fully controlled but have reduced significantly from almost daily to one (or a cluster) in about 3 weeks or so. I hope they can be controlled soon. Needless to say this is not taken care of by the NHIF as the medicine is not in the hospitals covered by the insurance. I therefore have to pay in cash.

When Covid 19 hit Kenya mid March it became more stressful. With the uncertainty and anticipation of a lockdown or movement restriction I needed to stock up at least on medication for my son. I did not have any emergency savings and I was in a tight fix.

I was elated when Macheo accepted my request for a medical advance which enabled me to buy medicine for three months.

This gave me peace! I am still repaying the advance.

At the end of March, my younger brother who was working in a horticultural farm in Kajiado was stopped from working. He went back home with his wife and two children. We are now supporting him as well as my mother who is quite aged and has been living with my two older brothers who has do not work. One has a mental disorder.

I have to support them as I also support my family. We are trying as much as possible to pool the few resources we have with my two siblings to ensure that they are okay.

I am grateful that Macheo keeps on paying me despite the fact that there is little work to be done. With the money I can ensure the health of my son as well as support my own family and extended family!

10

I would like to tell you about my salary, really this salary has been helping people, and I, as I have some children apart from my children, my sister passed away in 2017 and left young children, even I tried to look for the children home for them but I couldn't get, later I send them home to live with my step father whom is very old about over 70 yrs, they are 4 girls, I was left with a boy the older one now in form one, I really do support at home every month when get the salary.

Also I was blessed with 8 boys, as now only 3 are depending on their own but 6 are still in school, as now they are all depending on me and their father who does only casual jobs. I also live with an orphan boy from the side of my husband, he is in form one.

For me really this salary has helped me very much, as now people are now on difficult times, especially this time for COVID-19, many people are suffering, some were fired, some are now earning half of their money, the business can not do well, I really appreciate to the management of Macheo, I would like just to tell the managers to continue talking to everybody about this difficult moment we are now.

11

Dear Marnix,

It is my hope you are well and keeping safe.

Before COVID-19 I was able to Carter for my family needs. My family consists of seven children, four are mine and three belong to my Late sister (Jennifer) may her soul rest in peace. I was able to divide my salary and provide for my family basic needs

Two of these children were working before COVID-19. They provided their support in providing for their siblings

When the pandemic came, difficulties in providing for my family needs arose unfortunately the two kids who were working lost their jobs so they stopped supporting me and started depending on me. I am really feeling the stretch now and my only source of income is Macheo children's home. I am very grateful that I still have a source of income during this crisis.

12

Good evening sir, first of all I take this opportunity to thank you and the board for what you have been doing for us during this time of covid-19, I personally I don't take it for granted. The salary that I receive every month have been of help to me and my siblings especially in this pandemic. since I lost my parents 10yrs ago I have two siblings who have been depending on me even before Corona virus outbreak. Since the death of our parents we were chased from the home we used to stay and vacated to rental house in our area which I pay rent with the salary I receive and also, buying food paying school fees, and clothes is my responsibility. Thanks once again for giving me a chance to grow.

13

Hi manix hope you are good thnx for the opportunity you gave us to explain ourselves and the opportunity to be in macheo. since then my life has never been the same. am a single mother with 4 children. before Corona crisis, I used to support the only 2 children in paying school fees and providing of basic needs, as the others 2 does casual jobs with currently are unavailable. after Corona, the dependants have increased as right now am supporting the 4. still I have 3 other children for my brother that am supporting due to various reasons. thank you

14

Hello Marnix. This is my story.

Before Corona Virus, my salary served my family. My wife who runs a business helped to supplement the income so as to cater for the family needs. Currently, her business is adversely affected hence my salary meets most family needs. We are supporting our parents and brother in law who lost his job due to Covid-19. Am also contributing to the Macheo Corona Virus relief fund.

Thank you. Stay safe.

15

Good morning marnix, Hope you are doing well. This is my story on how am being affected financially since coroner came, before coroner I was supporting fully my three daughters and my mum who is old, After coroner came my two brothers have really been struggling alot to get jobs because they are not employed, they depends on casual jobs, one brother has family of 2 children him and his wife, now am party supporting them because I can not let them suffer, life has really gone higher and everything is very expensive this making life to be more difficult. Thanks so much for the continued support.

16

I am married and a mother of three children 16yrs, 9yrs, and 5yrs. I live in majengo estate in a rental house. My husband is a mobile electrician.

Since this pandemic life have been very tough in my family. My husband is not working as usual because his customers are on financial constraints. He used to contribute a major role in the family which is not happening now. My salary is paying all the bills in the house. Before pandemic I had a house help who is a mother of four children, she is not working in my house now but I promised her

never to let her children go without food so I have been supporting her with my salary. I have my two sisters in rural and one is always under medication. Due to this pandemic one of my sister who is not sick and the one caring for the sick one is a casual labourer is not working, so they always call for medical and food support. I share with them the little I have.

I have my parents in law who are over seventy years old. Before pandemic they were selling farm products in the village market. Due to transport difficulties and covid 19 measures they are unable to continue with their business. I have been sending money to them for support out of my salary.

I also have a loan to service where I have been forced by circumstances to review the payments terms with the provider

My salary had been very very supportive to my family and others.

17

First let me start by appreciating Macheo and it's stakeholders for the continually supporting it's staff. Personally I feel I have grown in all aspects; intellectually, financially. Because I was able to get back to school and fund my education. I was able to study and complete two courses, HIV/AIDS testing and counseling and Adherence counseling. These short courses have been fundamental in boosting my career in Community Development and Social work. I have also been saving money to continue with my degree soon.

My mom is a single mom of 5 daughters but our family keeps growing cause my mom takes in vulnerable kids. My mother had been supporting all of us since our dad left and cut off communication with us. With little income my sister, cousin and I get we try to help her financially. The eldest of my sisters who is married with her family assist with paying the rent and chipping in on school fees for my our two younger sisters in highschool and in university together with the second born who is in nursing school and works part time. I support my mother with some money for upkeep for my youngest sister since she is still in school. Working at Macheo has not only instrumental in helping me have a chance to study but also enabled me provide for my family and ease the financial strains.

As we face this Corona virus pandemic ,my mother depends on me to continue to support them with money for basic needs i.e food especially with all my younger sisters home.

I appreciate and value what the Macheo is doing for us the staff and I hope that even in the face of this pandemic and trying times we shall continue to empower each other.

18

Hi hope you are doing well I want to share with you my story, before corona my salary was upon 4 people and loan deduction and am single parent, after corona things now am feeding my 4 family members and my elderly parents, my mental sick sister and her son , previously we were sharing responsibilities with my other siblings but after covid 19 they lost their jobs so they depend on me fully.

19

Good afternoon hope you are oky and safe, I wanted to share my story, before corona my salary was for 4 people ,after corona am supporting 10 people, my sister with her 2 children who separeted with her husband before corona she was learning a day care center at kisill estate after corona she went

back home in kiandutu to live with my parents,my younger sister and my nephew and my elderly grand mother and my parents fully depends on me because they no longer go to any job. Have a good day.

20

Hello, am female 25 years old. I am/ have been a staff at Macheo children's Organization for close to 2 years now. Me acquiring job in Macheo was a great move/achievement since it was my first job and I really needed the job for various reasons.

Am born in a family of five children in a certain rural area in Kenya. I come from a needy background where me being taken to college was a great sacrifice/ a struggle. My both parents are not employed, So when I got the job I had several things to take care of. My younger sister had joined highschool and my parents were struggling to keep her in school, when I got the job I had to chip in assistance of paying her school fees so that she can be retained. Also I had to take a loan to help my parents start some income generating activities that would sustain them even in my absence. The loan payment is still ongoing .

During this corona period, my only sister who is employed and married and she supports me in keeping my family going lost her job together with the husband. They are not working for now and they live on a rented house and have children. Luckily, am still being paid and I support them to the extent that I can as continue supporting my parents as well as paying my rent and settling my other bills. My salary has been of great help and without it especially at this moment things would be so tough.

Am really appreciative for the continued support that you have shown, supporting us as your staffs during this hard time is the greatest thing that you have done. I wish you well as we continue carrying out this noble cause; helping the children.

21

Hallo sir,negative effects of coronavirus has changed my lifestyle increased number of people feeding my husband is jobless.

22

On 18th march 2020 the president announced about the pandemic of Corona virus where he directed closure of Schools, churches, Restaurant and Bars. I was so scared about the news since I had seen how the virus had caused lots of uncertainty and affected many families. Sooner than later, my employer convened us in a meeting and briefed us on the way forward. Since am a social worker, I had to ensure that all students in the program especially in boarding school travel back home safely. I remember very well that before the coronavirus started, I was taking care of myself and my daughter and repaying loans for my daughters Education but now things have drastically changed. My eldest brother who is a business man in the transport business and a father of three children used to support his family and my elderly dad.

Towards the end of March until now, my brothers transport business has not been doing well since the government introduced strict regulations on public transport to enhance social distancing. His ability

to support the family has since been affected and I stepped in to support them with food in the last months. In addition, my younger brother who is also not working and his wife gave birth recently, In such a fragile situation, I had to send him money to buy food for his family. However, in early May, my father's house which is also where my elder brother stays with his family was broken into by thieves who stole a lot of things which up to now they have not made it to replace. This also forced me to send my brother some money to help them sustain themselves. Life is becoming a struggle and thanks to Macheo for the continued payment of salaries I can support my family and siblings during this trying time. Though it hasn't been this tough before but we hope that the situation will get better and we can come back to normalcy.

Thank you for supporting my family during this trying moment.

23

Hi Marnix, hope you are keeping safe during this period.

Am ... a 27 years old, am the 1st born in a family of 6 children and from a humble background. I am a mother of 1 child.

Through working with Macheo, i have really benefited a lot. Before covid 19 i was able to pay my siblings school fees, support my child's education as she joined school this year 2020, bought food and other basic needs as i am the only person working in my family. During covid 19 pandemic 9 people depend on the salary i get from Macheo. If it were not for the salary i get, things would be more stressing and tough for me and so Macheo has really played a big role in my life and that of my family members at large. Am very thankful and my wish is that this virus gets over so that we can resume to work and continue serving the most vulnerable children for them to have a better tomorrow. Thanks to all our donors for their support.

24

I am fine and doing well. So far, life is not easy because of the many struggles and challenges that were there before and that are there due to the current pandemic. However, I still try to live positively hoping for everything to be well soon or adopt to a new normal life.

Being a mother, a wife, a daughter and in general a member of the society, I have to work to earn a living and support my dear ones. To this, I say thanks to Macheo Organisation for employing me as one of their staff, hence I have been able to fulfill most duties.

First, my husband is a small scale farmer, who is only able to support a small bit of the family financially hence I have to take up the other roles.

Secondly, my first born child studies in a secondary boarding school and I have to take care of her needs and school fees to help her continue with her education. I have other kids who are also in school and I have to provide basic needs to them.

Also, my mother, is a widow fully depends on me for her daily living due to her old age. I also include in my budget the expenses of two of my nephews and one niece, who is a single mother of three children. This is because they lost both their parents where their late mother was my sister.

I also support my parents - in - law who, due to old age cannot work to sustain themselves.

25

My name is ... working with Macheo Children's Organization as the My life and career has been driven by the passion to help children and alleviate their suffering. I have enjoyed seeing children able to express themselves freely while playing and also their talents being identified and nurtured at an early age.

However, with the whole world almost at a standstill over the rapid spread of corona virus life has not been the same for many families and children in Kenya. The coronavirus has made new terms like

social distancing and self-isolation common, and enveloped communities in fear. This has also contributed to lack incomes for many families rendering many helpless and desperately crumbling for basic needs such as food.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic started, it hasn't been an easy time for me and my family. Being the first born in a family of seven I have to take in the responsibility of supporting my family. I have been providing daily bread for our family and also buying medicine for my mother who is suffering from arthritic and high blood pressure. Out of the 7 members in my family, two are my late sister's children whom my parents adopted after the death of my sister which occurred after a domestic violence with her husband who was later jailed.

In addition, one of the kid is a girl who is in form four in boarding school. Because of the current home situation, I had to buy a smart phone so that she is able to follow up with her studies. This cost me 7,000 to enable her catch up with online classes as their subjects teachers requested.

Also, once in a week I have to send 500 shillings to my younger brother who has two kids so that he can buy food for his family. Before then my brother used to work in a coffee factory but due to Covid-19 he lost his job. It is the continued Macheo salary that has sustained me and my family and we don't take that for granted.

My entire family appreciates Macheo's kind heart since it has enabled me and my family to put food on the table, provide my mum medication and my niece is able to continue with her studies through the phone.

I am also very grateful for Macheo since despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Macheo has stood with me by continually paying my salary that has helped me to pay for my bills and support my family.

May Macheo live forever!

26

Losing a parent is one of the most devastating things that can happen to a child. But for me and my siblings, our father's death was very unexpected. It brought a lasting heartache and it occurred to us that we had to leave our comfort zone and live a new reality. And my siblings at that point, when I was 25 – my elder brother was 26 and the next one down from me was 22, then - my sister was 19 and my youngest brother was 17.

Looking back, our father had that dream of taking all of us to the university so as to afford an education. He struggled hard for give us a standard life and everything was coming to actualize until he got sick. We vividly saw our father fight his illness, the pain, the unfairness of it all that gave him a dark, almost black courage. It broke our heart loosing him and throwing a handful of soil on his coffin. Now our mum had to take the position of a father and the struggle was real. Despite the hardships she faced to pay for our upkeep and school fees, she took it on with a positive outlook. When my father died, my elder brother and I had finished college, my mother could not look after all of us because my other three sibling were all school going. We had to go our way out, step into the role and were forced to grow up immediately. After 2 years of struggle, I was lucky to get a nice job that enabled me to support my family's upkeep and pay school fees for my younger siblings. I did not have time and an opportunity to enjoy my youthful days even if no one stopped me. I had to forego the outings, dating, buying good things for myself to pay school fees for my two siblings and maintain our home bills while saving some money for my education.

Though my job lasted for a year, my family could then afford a standard life while my sister and youngest brother had completed secondary education. In fact, my sister was already in her second semester of her certificate course and I also enrolled for my degree course. Despite all odds, my sister successfully completed her certificate on April 2019 as I too completed my degree on August 2019 having attained a first class honors and awarded the academic merit award for the best student.

Though I can't say it was a smooth road but my story has taught me a lot, that everything is possible with determination. My mum and her positive outlook were my source of inspiration.

Today my story is different and working with Macheo Children's Organization has enabled me to continue supporting my family and also help mum to pay school fees for my sister who is doing her diploma and youngest brother who is taking a university degree. This has been the most trying times in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and many have suffered from its impact especially on household income. Though we can no longer go to work but have to work from home, we are grateful to Macheo since we can still manage to support our families. My immediate younger brother who depends on casual job can no longer get jobs and I have to support him now. My mum showed us not to take anything for granted. That's something I try to teach my siblings and I have wanted to show them the importance of an education. My dream is that they finish school and be successful. I need to give them that example and it makes me so happy to be with them and to be there for them.

CONFIDENTIAL