

## Going BEYOND Awards

# MACHEO PROGRAM

Service to society is a key pillar of Strathmore University's strategy and one of its core values. All undergraduate students are required to do Service Based Learning attachment of 220 hours to get their degree. After this internship many students want to continue volunteering in such activities and this is facilitated by the Community Service Centre.

The Macheo program (meaning sunrise) was born from the interactions of staff and students in the Kibera slums, which neighbors Strathmore University.



Constant contact with this community revealed that the high schools in the area were grappling with high drop-out rates. Students completing high school performed poorly and most did not get good enough grades to be able to join tertiary institutions.

Several studies on transition rates and school dropout-rates in informal settlements in Nairobi quote several factors contributing to students dropping out of high school. Low parental involvement in the child's education and lack of finances to support their school fees cause some students to drop out. Most students depend on bursaries and government sponsorships to complete their education.

Other factors that have been mentioned include drug and substance abuse, lack of proper role models and early pregnancies in girls. It is with this in mind that we started Macheo in 2012. The program's goals are to improve the rates of transition to third level education, reduce school drop-out rates, inspire acquisition of values and good character among the disadvantaged students.

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Every year, the program has 150 secondary school students enrolled, from 8 secondary schools. There are 50 students in each of the last three years in high school. 50% of the students are girls. The students can be in the program for 3 years maximum, by which time they should have completed high school.

Over the years, Macheo has grown to include students not only from Kibera slums, but also other informal settlements in Nairobi like Kangemi and Mukuru. Most of the program activities take place in Strathmore University on Saturday afternoons and during school holidays. The Strathmore University environment enables them to experience university life and use university facilities, making their aspirations to join a University more tangible. A normal Saturday timetable would be as follows: 12.30-1.30 lunch in the students' cafeteria, 1.30-2.30 discussion on some aspect of life skills conducted by a university student, 2.30-5.30: 2 revision sessions of 90 minutes on one of the following subjects: Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English, Swahili.

Once a month we take them to play sports or to visit some place of interest around Nairobi. University students speak one on one with the high school students to help them with their school work, help them think and plan about their future studies, as well as to help them apply the life skills they learn to their everyday life and thus facilitate their future success. Students are asked to pay US \$5 per year to be enrolled in Macheo. The university and well wishers cover the other costs.

### **ABOUT STRATHMORE BUSINESS SCHOOL**

Strathmore University is a leading not for profit private university situated in Nairobi, Kenya. It was awarded a charter in 2008 by the Commission for University Education (CUE). Before 2008, it began its operations as an advanced-level college and as the first multi-racial college in Kenya. Strathmore University's aim is to become a leading outcome driven entrepreneurial research university by translating its excellence into a major contribution to culture, economic well-being, and quality of life. It offers undergraduate and post-graduate courses in the areas of: Commerce and Management; Information Technology; Law; Tourism and Management; Business Administration; Philosophy and Ethics; Education Management; Engineering. Strathmore University's mission is to provide an all-round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship; ethical and social development; and service to society.

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## PROGRAM IMPACT AND SUCCESS

**As we approach our 10th anniversary in 2022 we have impacted over 500 secondary school students from informal settlements in Nairobi.**

About 300 students have qualified to study in 3rd level institutions. Of these about 50% chose to study either a degree or a diploma in Strathmore University. They were offered financial aid to be able to do so. Many of the others went to study in public universities or in other colleges. For the latter we helped them access the various options regarding financial aid either from the Kenyan government or private institutions who offer scholarships.

Through these 500 we have also impacted their fellow students (about 5000 of them ) at their schools. They have seen now it is possible to get good grades and improve performance even in their schools with discipline and determination. They have seen how an increased number of them were qualifying for third level. We supported the 8 schools in the following ways:

- ongoing training on some aspects of management of the schools for the principal and his deputy
- ongoing courses for teachers on various aspects of their work
- help to build their school library and/or laboratory equipment
- help to improve their infrastructure (only in a few cases)
- some support with school fees for very needy students

Every year we have also had sessions for the parents and/or guardians of the students, in which we get experts to talk to them about the role they still play in the education of their children and other matters that will make them more effective as parents. The rates of transition from secondary school to university have significantly grown from 17% in 2017 to 43% in 2018 and 50% in 2019.

Despite their very difficult circumstances the students in the program have gone on to defy the odds by consistently beating the national transition rates in Kenya every year.



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The program took a hard hit during the pandemic owing to the prolonged school closures but still managed to have 30% of Macheo students scoring grade C+ and above, which is the national cut-mark for students in Kenya to qualify for university.

The percentage of students who did not qualify for degree courses in university but qualified a diploma courses in a college has also improved. The details are as follows:

<b>62%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>30%</b>
2017	2018	2019	2020

Macheo's model has proven to be a success, with 3 studies published on the program's impact. The program's success led to a scale up project by Strathmore University running in 10 schools in Kitui county, in the Eastern region of Kenya.

The scale-up project-Centers of Excellence, is currently reaching 5,000 secondary school students. This new initiative focuses on consistent capacity building of teachers and parents, with a key focus on character development of secondary school students through mentorship.

The university students who volunteer in these and similar programs also benefit a lot from mentoring and interaction with these students.

In most cases they grow in responsibility and maturity in their own personal life and studies.





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## SDG IMPACT

### GOAL 1: No poverty

By students completing their high school education and opening the door to third level education to about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of them, we will be improving their income in the future helping thus to reduce poverty.

### GOAL 4: Quality Education

Ensuring that adolescent girls and boys from disadvantaged backgrounds complete free, equitable quality secondary education.

Ensuring equal access for adolescent girls and boys to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. Through intensive character education, we are increasing the number of young people with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. By providing an opportunity for both girls and boys in Macheo we are ensuring equal access to secondary and tertiary levels of education for the vulnerable.

Through our activities we will also help to achieve the following SDGs:

**GOAL 2:** Zero Hunger

**GOAL 3:** Good Health and Well Being

**GOAL 5:** Gender Equality

**GOAL 6:** Clean Water and Sanitation (in the schools)

**GOAL 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth



**[csc.strathmore.edu/programs/macheo](https://csc.strathmore.edu/programs/macheo)**

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## LOOKING FORWARD

We have proven that the Macheo program works in transforming the lives of young people from very disadvantaged backgrounds.

We would like universities in other parts of the world to consider integrating aspects of our model applicable to their contexts to enable more students to complete high school and access tertiary education.

Through our second project called Centers of Excellence, we are applying lessons from Macheo, to schools in a rural setting.

The advent of covid has slowed down our interventions in these rural schools but we hope in 1-2 more years, we will have sufficient data to reach a conclusion.

The key element of the Macheo program is the training in life skills and values. We have started a series of podcasts to make our content available across the world. We will keep sharing life skills lessons through these podcasts and analyzing the data about its usage to see what else we need to do in Kenya, Africa and the rest of the world and to engage and empower more young people to succeed and prosper.