**Mock Background**

Over the past year or so, Kenya’s economy has been in the most unstable state we as a nation have witnessed in quite a few years. We’ve witnessed the Kenyan shilling regularly free fall with 1 USD being valued at as low as Ksh. 161 at one point, and currently being valued at Ksh. 131.21. This unpredictable, unstable economic environment has affected everyone in the country, down from the individual citizen to the family unit/household all the way up to businesses, business owners and industries.

The working class/labor force is experiencing an increase in taxes. For example, as of March 19th, 2024, the Affordable Housing Levy Act was assented into law. This Housing Act is mandatory for all employers, employees, salaried and non-salaried individuals who are required to remit a percentage of their salaries. An employer is required to remit in respect of each employee the employer's contribution at 1.5% of the employee's monthly gross salary and the employee's contribution at 1.5% of the employee's monthly gross salary. The Act also incorporates non-salaried persons, who were not previously covered by the provisions that the High Court suspended. Non-salaried persons will be expected to make contributions of 1.5% of their gross income. Furthermore, penalties of 3% on unpaid amounts are levied on those who fail to remit the levy by the due date. This increase in tax will reduce employee’s disposable income, hurt purchasing power and erode business’ profits. Moreover, as an economic rule of thumb, with an increase in taxes comes a corresponding increase in the cost of living.

Each of us has personally been affected by the increased cost of living over the past year or so. The price of small goods such as eggs increased from Ksh. 15 to Ksh. 20 per egg. We experienced a shortage of Maize flour around June 2023 which led to some households stock piling on any available maize flour that they could and individuals fighting for any available maize flour they could find in stores. Furthermore, the already scarce maize flour was selling at a higher price than usual. In general, the price of household goods increased over the last year or so, food stuff, cleaning tools etc. The most noticeable change brought about by the increased cost of living however has been the regular increases in the cost of fuel. This change has affected both users of public and private transportation. Public transport users have been affected by the increase in the fare prices they use to cover distances they would usually cover for less. An example of this is how a matatu from the Safaricom headquarters along Waiyaki Way to town costs Ksh. 50 where a year or two ago the same matatu would charge one Ksh. 30. Private transport users have been affected in that, we are seeing more individuals that own cars opt to use public transport like matatus especially while covering long distances with even a few opting to use means such as Uber and Bolt which would ordinarily be the less economically viable option for someone with a car long term.