



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

Wanalea Children's Home (WCH) is located in Ongata Rongai, Kajiado, and is home to 30 children. The founder of the home is Laura Vasconcelos, a native of Portugal who has spent some time in Kenya. Post Election violence in 2007, Laura sent her daughter Carolina to Kenya to help find a way to offer refuge to vulnerable children, including those living with HIV and abandoned and abused children, all of whom found loving and caring family support. WCH was initially set up in Kamura (Rongai area) in 2013 when it was officially recognized by the Ministry of Labour and Social Services as a Charitable Children's Institution (CCI n°558). From 2014-2019 Wanalea moved to Rimpa and was a home for 40 children. Today it is back in Ongata Rongai and currently serves 30 children.

WCH has Anthony Waiharo as Director and Carolina as Coordinator, both in full-time roles, along with Laura, who has an advisory role and supports fund-raising. All three moved back to Portugal at the start of the coronavirus pandemic but are engaged full-time with the running of the home. Ms. Winnie Njeri (social worker) and Ms. Petronilla Syombua (manager, having been with WCH since inception) are two of three staff members who live on-site with the children and communicate with Anthony and Carolina at least once daily. Anthony also travels to Nairobi several times a year and stays for several weeks each time.

This home is unique in that the leadership of Wanalea has thought ahead to ensure that each child they receive has a sponsor who commits to contributing to the child's welfare until they have completed tertiary education if that is what the child aspires to. This direct focus on the

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child reduces one of the biggest financial burdens at CCIs while ensuring that fees, health, and nutritional needs are equitably met for each child. Sponsors are allowed to communicate directly with the children to commemorate particular events, but never to the extent that any one child should be at a disadvantage relative to another.

Besides food and shelter, the children receive healthcare, formal education, vocational training, psycho-social support, civic education, and lots of love and care. Younger children attend a public school, the Arap Moi Primary School, which is just a short walk from Wanalea. Those in secondary education attend various schools within the country as they are examined according to their performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE).

WCH aims to become a Centre of Excellence where children are provided with the best conditions and given the support, assistance, and tools that will enable them to have a happy, healthy, and productive life in their native land. By giving children the opportunity to have a normal and healthy life in their country who can provide for themselves and their future families, The Children's Home wants to contribute, to the emergence of a new generation of Kenyans, educated and well-informed, able to bring a positive change, break the poverty cycle and actively participate in the development of their country by giving back to their communities."

For more information, please see:

https://www.facebook.com/WanaleaChildrensHome/about_details



The Thrive Assessment

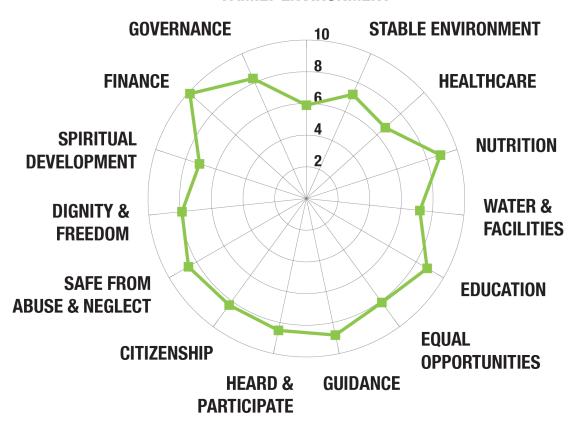
What is the Thrive Assessment?

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, nutrition and more. We have codified all 13 Rights, as well as a Finance Standard and a Governance and Human Resource Standard, resulting in a total of 15 standards. These standards ensure that children receive care that truly helps them to thrive, now and in the future.

The Thrive Assessment will be administered every 6 months with each partner home to chart the progress of each standard. Our team works with caregivers to outline next steps which and compiled into an Improvement Road-map.

Current Thrive Scale

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT







6 MONTHS AGO



CURRENT

Strategic Initiatives

TRAINING FOR THE CAREGIVERS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The caregivers have not received training on Trauma-informed care giving for children living with trauma. The home needs them to deliver quality care to the children, so they need to access training of an acceptable standard that includes trauma informed care and first aid.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	Ksh. 15000+/\$100+ USD per session

HIRE 1 ADDITIONAL CAREGIVER

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The manager and social worker double up as caregivers so as to offer flexibility on the shifts that enable the staff to get weekly off days. Having an additional caregiver will enable the two to focus on their roles since they are responsible for day to day running of the home in liaison with the Directors.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	Ksh. 18000/\$132 USD per month

HIRE A NIGHT GUARD

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Currently the home has no guard to man the gate. To enhance security within the home, there is a need for them to hire one who could also keep vigilance around the compound, especially during the nights.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	Ksh. 15000/\$100 USD per month



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, there are 30 children in the home, which is the maximum that can be accommodated at any one time due to the design of the space. The house design is such that all kids live in one space, establishing that everybody at the home is family. However, siblings do know one another. There are 14 boys in 1 bedroom and 16 girls split into two bedrooms. The home has a total of 5 staff (all female) which include a manager, a social worker, and three caregivers (one of whom is a qualified teacher). All staff members help run the home while the directors monitor the operations from Portugal. Three staff live on site (a manager, a social worker, & 1 caregiver), and two others come daily. Each staff member gets two days off each week, and two caregivers are available at night at any given time to care for the children, including one infant, four young children (4-6 yrs), and 25 more (7 & Above). The home is housed in a rented five-bedroomed bungalow. A plan is in place for monthly visitation by the children's parents and guardians. These visits are done one day a month, and the family must call ahead to indicate their intent to visit their child. The home does not take in abandoned children. Instead, they specialize in caring for those rescued from family abuse or neglect, and the children's families are known to the home's management. There is currently only one child allowed to visit home, and if there is a need for others to visit home, the Social worker accompanies them. Four of the staff have been in the home for over two years. Thus, there is continuity in caring for the children. There is a plan in place for onboarding new caregivers, which is well stipulated in the appointment letters, a responsibility overseen by Wanalea's Project Coordinator (Carollina). However, there has been no formal training for the caregivers on childcare. The social worker (Winnie) is currently undergoing ToT (Trainer of Trainees) on child behavior and will provide supervision. For siblings within the home, unstructured time is available for bonding and connecting, although it is not intentionally planned.

Hire one additional caregiver to enable the manager and social worker to concentrate more
on their specific duties)

Provide training to caregivers for a better understanding of care for vulnerable children as
well as self-care



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children's Home has well laid written rules pinned in the living area, bedrooms and office where children and staff refer to regularly as a reminder of expectations and consequences for infractions Disciplinary action is taken through assigning extra chores, short time outs and denial of privileges (e.g. TV watching). Mealtime, work and play is done together by all as a family. Nicknames are not allowed within the home, and any incidence of such is corrected immediately. Caregivers have weekly meetings to discuss behavioral ideas, and both the manager and social worker give feedback and receive direction from the directors in Portugal on a daily basis. Other staff are also allowed to communicate to the director where need be. The social worker is currently receiving monthly training from Kutoa Project (https://www.kutoaproject.org/) on better care for children going through trauma and she shares knowledge with the other staff during their meetings. The only tradition the home has currently is the celebration of birthdays. On these occasions, celebration might involve singing happy birthday to the child and in some instances, an impromptu water shower on the birthday child! Cake cutting is done once a month at a group party for all who whose birthdays fall in that month. Trips and other outings that ceased during the pandemic are still halted.

None steps at the moment.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has no plan for routine medical checks as this happens only when volunteers offer. The last camp happened in 2021. Intervention for optical and dental issues are addressed when they appear. Most of the children do not have their vaccination cards on file since they are placed in the home post-vaccination age and documents are left with guardians. There is an identified hospital (Wananchi Jamii) within a 2km range of the home where children have access to medical services, at a cost. The home does not have a medical emergency fund in their yearly budget, but there is always an amount of petty cash available for use. Sanitary disposal is done in small buckets placed in girls toilets and later dumped in the garbage bins that are collected weekly. The method is not hygienic and could be done better by contracting companies that specialize in sanitary disposal (Rentokil/Rentoline Initial company, Kenya). There is no appointed place for diaper changing, so it is done on the beds. Currently the home has only 1 child in diapers. Deworming is done when children arrive and cases of ringworms are identified and treated. There is adequate water and soap placed in every toilet and these are usually made available for each individual in case of a contagious disease like ringworm. The home has a fully stocked first aid kit. There has not been a defined training of staff on care for children with special needs, but common knowledge is applied and special cases are referred to the relevant hospital for treatment. Orthodontics are addressed as needs arise. Brushing of teeth is guaranteed once a day in the morning, but a second time isn't reinforced, although some of them (especially boys) are seen to be brushing at night though.

Consider engaging services of Rentoline (or any other that offers the service in the area)
for more hygienic disposal of sanitary products.

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SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are guaranteed well balanced meals 3 times a day with two intervals of snacking at 10 a.m and 4p.m. The open kitchen area within the house is well ventilated, clean, and free of toxins and pests. Sometimes small cockroaches can be spotted, but these are fumigated when necessary. The food is appetizing as children are seen to enjoy every meal. Fruits and vegetables are offered daily, and the home ensures incorporation of proteins daily. There is no nutritionist in place to give guidance, but the staff ensures the children are getting a balanced diet. There is no trained cook in the home and meals are instead prepared by the existing staff in shifts. Consequently, the staff all go for annual health checks and get certification from the government health department.

No next steps at the moment.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home receives its water from a company known as Arizona which supplies metered water for the entire community at a fee. Wanalea pays Ksh 12,000 (approx. USD 100) a month for this water service. There is no annual inspection of water at the home since it happens at source / the company. There has not been piping maintenance as of yet, but the water pipes are plastic, free of rust and therefore safe. Sewage and kitchen water disposal occur separately into different tanks that are apart from the main house (one on the front and the other on rear side). There is adequate security lighting within the compound. The home has a generator on standby in case of power outages. There is no written plan for maintenance and repairs, but the home has someone on call, should services be required. All shower heads and hand wash sinks are functional, only the kitchen sink is reported to often malfunction and the home has plans to have it changed for a more durable version. There are no exposed wires that could pose danger to the children.

☐ Consider having the water inspected.



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children of school age are enrolled in school i.e (4 in universities, 5 in high school, 20 in primary). Homeschooling by a paid teacher is done for children in pre-primary levels who later join formal schools at grade 1 level. Currently there is only 1 baby below 2 years of age whose mother is a form 3 (grade 10) student and also under care of the home. She attends a day school and therefore is able to spend time with her baby. There is no 1:1 tutorial happening at the moment, but they would like to hire one to help the children with their school work at the end of the school day, 2-3 days in a week. All children above 7 years are able to identify letters of the alphabet and are able to articulate their sounds. Assessment is done by teachers in school, and at 11 years they have already progressed to grade 3 level and above. There is 1 case reported of a girl with dyslexia who, after assessment by a doctor, was recommended for a special school (Rare Gem Talent School) and she is reported to be progressing well. For suspected cases of learning disabilities, the children are assessed at Mbagathi District Hospital Nairobi. Upon receipt of a medical report, the child can apply for a disability card that entitles them access to certain activities, services and programs from the government including assistive devices, education support, tax exemption and cash transfers. Children's grades are discussed and evaluated at the end of every school term by the various teachers, the home manager and the social worker. The home has a library well equipped with age appropriate books which are accessible by all children. There are enough toys for children below school age. There is access to the internet and the home has 3 computers and 2 laptops accessible by the children. Computer use is not currently encouraged in the home because of a challenge with supervision given the few staff available. The children are allowed access to reading material and art supplies under direction of the manager and social worker. All children are supported to independence beyond college, but there is no housing funding in place since most of them have families that they are expected to return to.

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SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The bedrooms are well fitted with wardrobes that offer every child a dedicated space for their items. All children have the same opportunity to attend school with access to books. There is no tutor allocated for 1:1 coaching, however, guidance and assistance with homework is done by the staff. Children are allowed time for extracurricular activities, most of which takes place in school but also continues at the home during free time. Older children are allocated cooking duties, which they enjoy. The home has a plan in place and is keen to offer equal opportunity for adolescents to transition to independent living even after reintegration back into their families. Female staff are available on site to offer mentorship and act as role models to the children. Director Anthony is responsible for male mentorship and the children are allowed to contact him any time they have issues that require his attention. He visits the home 2 to 3 times every year and stays for over a month. At times, church groups also visit to spend time with the children. Expert assessment by medical doctors is offered at Mbagathi District Hospital to identify learning abilities which warrant special attention (e.g. need for assistive devices, etc). Dietary needs are accommodated in the home. However, there are no measures in place to accommodate children with physical disabilities since the home does not have provision for such. Placement of children to the childen's home is done by the Sub County Children's Office and they recognize that Wanalea is unable to accommodate children with physical disability.

No next step at the moment.

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a profile in place when looking for new caregivers, which is also stipulated in the appointment letters. Children are taught to be respectful and there are lists of Do's and Dont's pinned on all walls for the children to be reminded. They have opportunities to meet therapists from Kutoa Project, an ongoing program, and there is a group going through therapy at any one given time. Although it doesn't happen quarterly for every child, it is according to observed needs. There has been no scheduled evaluation done on all caregivers to determine if they are a quality mentor apart from the social worker who is the one who guides them around. She is fully trained and therefore is the trusted source who discusses puberty with adolescents together with a volunteer (Tessie), who is a trusted friend of the founder and directors. No formal annual training has been conducted on the caregivers regarding role models, teaching and reinforcement of skills and behaviors, apart from for the social worker. Life skills are primarily taught at school, but are also reinforced in the home (older children can be sent to do shopping and account for the cash given). While children above 15 years receive aptitude testing and career guidance at school to determine academic ability and long term educational goals, it is not addressed as much at home. Each child has a folder with an individual development plan which is typically updated at the end of every school term. There is a written plan for all the children for post orphanage education and work. The home ensures that the children and young adults are well settled either with their families or in society once they leave. Life skills guidance is offered on a needs basis, but there is no written program. The teenagers are well guided and supported when dealing with common difficult subjects in life. All children in vocational training and universities are still under the home support to which they return during school holidays. The social worker stated they have an 'open door' policy where kids know they can call home when they have a problem.

No next step at the moment.

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Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There is a timetable in place for daily activities in the home that provides free time where the children are allowed to choose what to do. A weekly menu is pinned up at the dining area wall to let the children know what to expect for meals, however, they are not allowed to participate in its making to avoid conflict of interests. They are allowed to make choices on what they wear. Health care procedures are normally explained to the caregivers and children and they are allowed to ask questions before it's administered. There is an individual development plan in every child's file. The home doesn't encourage leadership roles for the children to avoid them feeling superior than others. Instead, they allocate alternate responsibilities in household chores and in leading prayers before bedtime.

No next step at the moment.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Most of the children have birth certificate copies in their files. Only 11 children are missing their certificates and the social worker is currently working towards obtaining them. There are well laid consequences for wrongdoing where the children are assigned extra age appropriate chores as a mode of restitution. There is a timetable in place for daily chores for all according to age. National and local holidays are observed according to the Kenyan calendar and children are allowed to participate in major current events like the Day of the African child. Wanalea is a neat home free from litter and children are taught democratic processes according to their age. The children 15 years and over are well mentored on skills like making grocery lists. Proper utilization of personal supplies for those in boarding schools is emphasized as the children learn how to budget, whereas those in universities have fully learnt how to budget and manage their own supplies.

No steps at the moment.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The security fencing around the home is adequate as per standards within the community. The gate is always under lock and key and the staff are always on standby via phone to open in case of visitors since the home does not have a day or night guard. There are two bedrooms for the girls who are separated according to age, and one bedroom for the boys. The boys are in a confined space in their room which is a concern to the management and they are looking at ways they can convert one of the store rooms to accommodate some of them. The social worker has been trained on ways of disciplining the children and alternatives for corporal punishment and she trains the caregivers on ways to recognize and prevent abuse of the children. The home has written rules against corporal punishment which are accessible to all staff. There are no male staff in the home apart from the Director (Anthony) who visits regularly from Portugal, hence no children are left alone under care of male staff. Children at Wanalea are never employed for wages. There is no scheduled training given to children 5 years and older on how to recognize or report abuse, but the staff are always guiding and reminding them on reporting methods. The home will consider having the training going forward. In case of off-site trips, which are rare, the staff will always accompany the children. Wanalea has a visitor policy in place that states when and how visitors, especially guardians, may visit the home. However, there are a few cases of pop-in visitors who come to bring donations. When children are enrolled in the home, they are assessed at Mbagathi District Hospital and referred for further care where necessary. The social worker keeps track of therapy sessions of the children administered by the Kutoa Program.

☐ Hire a day and night guard to man the gate and enhance security around the home.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home ensures that children shower daily. Well wishers keep donating clothes to the home and therefore they have adequate clothes that are washed and neatly arranged in the wardrobe spaces. Bullying and name calling is not allowed, and the children are always reminded of the rules of the home. The girls are well accommodated with each having their own bed, but the boys beds are short by 4 due to the limited space in their room, hence some are sharing. Each child has 1 bed sheet, 2 blankets, a bed cover and a towel which are well cleaned and adequate according to the home. Safety protocols are well observed and children are aware of the fire assembly place. There are 7 fire extinguishers in total, with some placed in the kitchen, living room, corridor leading to the bedrooms and extra ones in the library. The home will endeavor to train the children on a fire drill. There are 2 play areas, one in the front and the other at the back side of the house, which are said to be adequate given the numbers in the home. There are enough toys for the younger children, but the social worker is exploring ways to keep the teenagers occupied as they appear bored at times for lack of activities that interest them. They would benefit from board games, which Director Anthony is ready to provide. There is no program in place for the children to work in the community for earning, but instead they are rewarded for extra chores done within the home by way of starring where the highest will get rewards according to identified interest.

☐ Continue with the plan in place to provide more sleeping space for the boys.

Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The Children at Wanalea attend the nearby Nkoroi Catholic church. However, they are not forced to attend. There are 3 children of the muslim faith rescued from a parent who would not allow them to go to church, and the home is looking for ways they can get spiritual nourishment from within the home. (Thinking of hiring a part time Islamic teacher?). They participate in a communal prayer before bed where leadership is alternated at will. There are spiritual books available for the children and they are allowed to participate in church service with some children having been involved in the liturgical dances during mass prior to the Covid pandemic.

☐ Explore ways all children can be accommodated for spiritual nourishment.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home operates on a budget plan with cost-lines for food, school fees, bills and other requirements e.g books and clothing. The manager and social worker are responsible for all purchases. A monthly budget for food and bills and a termly (every 3 months) budget for school fees and books are sent to the project coordinator, Carolina, whereas incidentals are sent as a need arises. Upon approval, money is deposited in the home's I&M bank account where it is withdrawn via ATM Card for use. All receipts are scanned and emailed to Carolina at the end of every month according to cost-lines. Food budgets are reviewed every week to ensure the children are well fed. There is an accountant contracted by the Project Coordinator working within Nairobi who keeps the books for the home, and he is responsible for reconciling monthly bank accounts and profit/loss statements. The social worker and manager believe the accountant also submits income tax returns. Thus, there are controls in place to minimize opportunities for waste. Segregation of duties for Wanalea staff is lacking since the manager and social worker also work as caregivers and either of the caregivers takes up the cook's job at any one given time. The social worker believes that auditing is done internally. The home is housed in rented premises, hence no major alterations would be done to warrant construction budgets. However, school fees and food costs go above 25,000 Kes, but the directors have the budget plan. Validation of the books is done by the contracted accountant as well.

None at the moment.

Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Since the home is on rented premises, there is no risk of land disputes that could arise unless it comes from the landlord. There is room for new caregivers shadowing experienced ones. The home has an organizational chart in place that is known to all staff. There are regular staff meetings happening every two weeks to discuss processes of improvement, chaired by the manager who together with the social worker carries out daily reporting and consultations with the directors. Full staff meetings with the directors take place monthly. Caregivers are given letters of appointment upon employment as well as a job description detailing their duties and responsibilities. The home is certified by the Government of Kenya to operate, with renewals happening every 3 years. Not all staff have undergone yearly training relevant to all aspects of child care apart from the social worker, but plans are underway to have all trained. There is a board of directors that ensures smooth running of the home. The home has a clear leave policy for its staff, who are entitled to 21 days distributed over 3 months and in addition, they each take two days off a week. Additionally, every employee has a file in place with the letters of appointment and every other relevant documentation. The home is certified by the Government of Kenya to operate, with renewals happening every 3 years. Not all staff have undergone yearly training relevant to all aspects of child care apart from the social worker, but plans are underway to have all trained. There is a board of directors that ensures smooth running of the home. The home has a clear leave policy for its staff, who are entitled to 21 days distributed over 3 months and in addition, they each take two days off a week. Additionally, every employee has a file in place with the letters of appointment and every other relevant documentation.

No next step at the moment

Current Improvement Partners



Child in Family Focus

Child in Family Focus - Kenya champions family-based care for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children through Supporting National Care Reform efforts.

The organization engages, enlightens and empowers Charitable Children's Institutions and families for life-changing outcomes through offering technical support in project reviews, organizational capacity development and mentoring on transitioning models of care for OVC.

At Child in Family Focus, all is done to God's glory - pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:14)

> For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to www.ACHF.org/Projects

