

# Off-Tu Mission

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Uganda

# IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

July | 2023



# Overview of this Children's Home

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## Background & Mission

Off Tu Mission is a Non-Governmental organization founded in 1997 to reach young people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The name “Off Tu Mission” is derived from a German phrase, “Missionswerk Offene Tueren,” which means “Open doors mission work.” Since 1997, the organization has sought to support young people in schools and communities not only with the gospel, but also with transformational and impactful messages to guide them to become resourceful citizens in Uganda. Due to the increasing number of street children in Uganda, the organization established a children's home in 2007 to provide shelter, support, rehabilitation, care and family reintegration for children. In 2009, the organization established a primary school to enable these former street children to obtain education while being prepared for family reintegration. The organization is committed to bring back lost hope amongst these little ones, and to see them obtain professions to transform their families and the country at large. Today, over 80 former street children have been transformed. The children's home is currently licensed to accommodate 40 children. However, several children have outgrown the home but are further supported by the organization to finish their school.



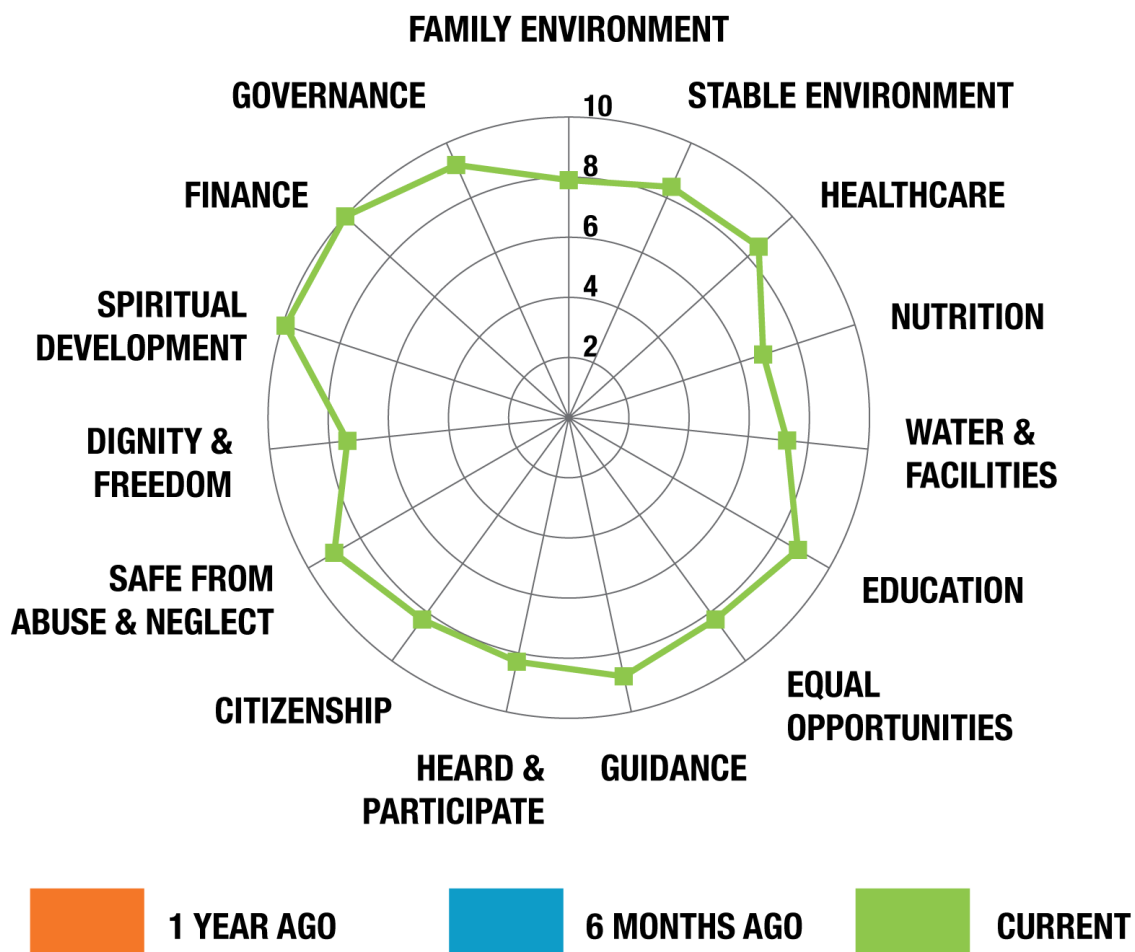
# The Thrive Assessment

## 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 are then compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

## Current Thrive Scale



# Strategic Initiatives

## NUTRITION TRAINING

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	The project will be aimed at improving beneficiaries' health. The project is intended to run for six months or more depending on the assessed needs during its implementation. It is based on the recent thrive assessment which indicates a need to respond to the health demands for beneficiaries and training caregivers on understanding nutritional needs of the children and how to plan for a balanced diet and backyard gardening.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	2,500,000 UGX \$695 USD

## TRAUMA INFORMED CARE TRAINING

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	This project signifies commitment to creating a safe, nurturing environment that empowers the children and young adults under care to thrive. The Thrive Assessment indicates the home has a visiting psychologist who only attends to the children and does not orient the caregivers on how well to care for traumatized children hence leaving a gap that affects the quality of care.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	3,000,000 UGX \$834 USD

## VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	The project aims to provide comprehensive skills training to the children in the home of ages 5 to 18 and young adults of 19 to 24 years under the care of Off Tu Mission. Its primary goal is empowering them with practical knowledge and abilities alongside their formal education that will enhance their personal growth, employability and overall well-being. The training would teach detergent and soap making.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	3,000,000 UGX \$834 USD



## Right to Live with Family

**SURVIVING****SUSTAINING****THRIVING**

This home is licensed to work with 40 children and there are 24 currently at the facility. 6 out of 9 staff members are designated to work closely with the children. The school-going children travel with an adult to and from school to ensure their safety. The caregivers each have a day off during the week to enable them to reset and offer quality care to children. All the children are referrals from the local council, police, probation officers, and other local NGOs. Each of the children has a profile that's backed up on Children First Software in case of emergencies. The home also conducts home traces so that every child's home is known, and any required services for children are provided, based on intake assessments. Additionally, the children go back home during school holidays as a way of bonding with their parents/relatives and a general annual meeting for parents and children to enhance bonding is observed. Caregivers are periodically trained to ensure a high quality of care to children is provided, but they are not trained specifically in trauma-informed care. Bonding sessions are not much emphasized since the children spend most of their time together at school and during holidays.

Social workers ensure that parents and children are prepared for family reunification, and it's noted that the available therapist attends to children and not staff.

- ☐ Train caregivers in trauma-informed care to improve the care quality for children they work with.
- ☐ Periodic parenting skills training to caregivers to ensure they support children better.
- ☐ Encourage sibling bonding to establish stability for children and also improve their relationships.



## Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has rules that govern children but are not easily accessible or displayed to frequently remind children. Positive discipline is being observed in the home and followed by all staff. Children are called by their preferred names and unstructured play happens for at least one hour every day. Children eat and play together as a way of encouraging family groups. While the home does not have a specialist that supports behavioral issues and positive discipline training, home management committees happen every quarter and are instrumental in supporting staff. Matrons and patrons are given hours off weekly and weeks off during holidays since children are taken to their homes. New staff go through a 6-month probation period and are later given a 1-year contract that's renewed based on performance. Staff turnover is less than 10% and monthly meetings happen to ensure a safe environment is created for both children and staff. Caregivers engage in children's play, the home has fellowships (spiritual gatherings/prayer sessions) attended by all children and every child's birthday is celebrated.

- ☐ Hire a specialist who discusses behavioral issues with caregivers to improve care quality.
- ☐ Document meeting minutes to ensure agreed actions are implemented before the next meeting.



## Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children receive medical check-ups on a quarterly basis. All required vaccinations are administered from the home and recorded, although it's a constant challenge as most parents do not have their children's vaccination records. Soap and water are readily available in all the required spots, however, caregivers don't remind the children daily regarding washing hands each time they visit the washrooms. The home has an MOU with a health center where children are taken in case of an emergency. The home has a staff member who specifically ensures girls receive feminine care products and proper disposal is used. The children brush their teeth at least once a day, and the older children help the younger ones to clean up properly. Children only receive dental and eye exams if there is a need. Lice is not a common thing in Uganda, but the home is sprayed often to avoid bedbugs. The home has a first aid kit, but it's not fully stocked since the health center is near and operates 24/7. The home has a medical emergency fund. Children with special needs are not accommodated at this home because they have no facilities for special needs. The children also receive orthodontic treatment when needed.

- ☐ Incorporate annual dental and vision checks into their budget and the workplan.
- ☐ Encourage parents to keep their children's vaccinations and medical records on children file.
- ☐ Stock up on the first aid kit with the relevant meds in case of an emergency and train caregivers in first aid.



## Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children eat enough calories that aid their growth. Food is prepared in a hygienic manner and cooked thoroughly. The food store area is currently being repaired to ensure rats cannot enter since they are the most disturbing pests. The store is cleaned daily and well-ventilated. Children receive tasty foods and receive proteins daily. The home provides green vegetables daily and children eat fruit once or twice a week. A nutritionist conducts periodic reviews of the menu and updates it when needed. Cooks are not currently trained on food safety and preparation.

- ☐ Follow up to ensure food store repairs are done so food is kept in a safe space.
- ☐ Fumigate frequently to get rid of pests.
- ☐ Train cooks annually on food safety and preparation.



## Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home is inspected by a probation officer (government official) at least once a year. They have their own water source that's supplied directly into the home and is free from chemicals. Additionally, they also harvest rainwater. The home has enough light and a proper sewage disposal method. There is a standby generator in case of power outage, but they have no written plan to follow in case of a fire. Most safety concerns around the home are addressed and the facility can withstand elements. Water and power concerns have been addressed, including broken showers and pipes.. The compound is lit to ensure safety of children and the home has emergency plans, but they are not properly documented.

- ☐ Develop a plan that informs responses in case of a fire, and install the required equipment like fire extinguishers, fire alarms, a fire assembly point etc.
- ☐ Document and file emergency plans instead of just discussing them.





## Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children in the home are enrolled in school since the youngest child in the home is 8 years old. Children have access to 1 on 1 tutoring if the need arises and have computer lessons at school. All the children receive enough tutoring and support from their teachers and can ably express themselves based on their level or understanding. For children with learning disabilities, they are taken to a special needs school if it's severe.

The home has a mini library which gives access to children whenever they want to read. All children can read and write, and the home has enough funding to ensure they complete school post orphanage.

- ☐ Stock up on Art materials and encourage children's participation.
- ☐ Have home leadership get involved in children's tutoring to ensure learning gaps
- ☐ Invest in expanding the library of the home to provide more reading opportunities for children.



## Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Every child has their own storage space, and all have access to the same educational opportunities. The home has no facilities for children with special needs, so it does not work with them. A plan is built for every child regardless of gender etc. Every adult at the home acts as a mentor and counsels children accordingly. Children with learning disabilities are taken to special schools if needed. All children's needs are responded to if there is need.

- ☐ Ensure children with learning disabilities are receiving the appropriate support and properly documented on their files.
- ☐ Draft a response plan to ensure children receive the required support in case of a disability.





## Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There are job descriptions clearly stipulating caregivers' responsibilities, drafted by human resources. Caregivers are trained on respectful behaviors, children are educated about their bodies and communication channels are clear.

The home has a visiting therapist that assesses children's psychosocial needs, as well counseling sessions from the social workers and other caregivers at the home. Caregivers are evaluated every six months by management. The home teaches life skills, Sexual reproductive health and rights lessons, and offers spiritual guidance to children as well. There is a child protection policy in place that addresses all needs surrounding children and abuse. Children are exposed to career guidance programs to enable them to make responsible choices. Follow ups are ensured to children who leave the home to pursue vocational training after they are old enough.

- ☐ Provide training to caregivers by a professional therapist to ensure they offer tailored counseling to children.
- ☐ Provide more exposure for children to vocation training and university programs to prepare them for the future.



## Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are able to choose what to do during free time on weekends, but they are guided more on weekends. The children's needs are attended to through the matron/patron. Although children don't participate in menu planning, sometimes they swap food depending on the children's needs. Some children refuse to participate in some non-essential activities. Development plans have been in place since the home started. The home carries out elections amongst the children for different positions such as the president, who leads all the children in the home.

- ☐ Establish a practice of giving children the chance to decide what to do during their free time even during weekdays.
- ☐ Allow children to participate in menu planning, incorporating their tastes and preferences at least monthly, as well as allowing them to opt out on some non-essential activities.
- ☐ Inform children and caregivers about health procedures prior to their administration.



## Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, some children don't have birth certificates. However, through NIRA (National Identification Registration Authority), all children can obtain birth certificates which helps inform future decisions and allows homes to determine their age. The home does have schedules for age-appropriate activities. Routine activities include swimming, community football games, Sunday programs for Christians, and Muslim prayers on Fridays for Muslims. Staff are allocated to children to be mentors. While the home is generally free of litter, improvements could be made with the provision of dustbins to help children be more responsible with their space. While at the home generally free of litter, improvements could be made with the provision of dustbins.

- ☐ Obtain birth certifications for all children through NIRA (National Identification Registration Authority).
- ☐ Provision of dustbins in the compound for litter collections and well named for easy identification.



## Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Caregivers carry out one-on-one sessions of counseling with the children in open spaces, though in privacy. Caregivers are trained two times a year on the subject of abuse. Children are evaluated by the caregivers for signs of abuse quarterly. Visitors are not allowed to visit the dormitories. Intake assessments are not currently being used. Additionally, staff and frequent visitors are not undergoing background checks. The home does have a child protection policy, but better clarity and implementation of the policy is needed.

- ☐ Ensure intake assessments are completed by the therapist to evaluate children when they arrive.
- ☐ Implement practices to check all staff and frequent visitors' information through proper background checks.
- ☐ Implement the child protection policy.



## Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children have individual beds and clothes, though they also share clothes. The children come from different tribes and thus they can use their native languages. However, Luganda and English are most commonly used within the home. There is currently no arrangement for allowances, but children above fifteen years of age are involved in the community.

- ☐ Provide more beddings to the children.
- ☐ Introduce earning allowances or privileges for children when they do extra chores.



## Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are allowed to fellowship with the community. Muslim children attend Friday prayers in the community mosque under the supervision of a caretaker. Christian children attend fellowship together. Both Christian and Muslim children celebrate religious holidays respectively. All children have access to religious books. Children are allowed to practice their spiritual learnings and quiet places are available. Children who are Christians have an exclusive designated prayer space at the home.

- ☐ Provide a space within the home where children of any faith can pray whenever desired.



## Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a full-time accountant who keeps in check all books of accounting. The home draws a monthly budget. Once approved, it comes with a requisition. Accountability is done for all expenses incurred in the home. Money can't be realized for the next month before the accountability of the previous month. All staff pay PAYE (Pay As You Earn) and NSSF (National Social Security Fund). External auditors carry out annual audits. The home submits annual returns to respective government bodies such as URA (Uganda Revenue Authority).

- ☐ Audit the work of the accountant.



## Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home currently expands over 12 acres of land with. Appointment letters and contracts are given to staff, but inclusion of contracts within Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) could be improved. While staff do receive time-off, additional clarification on how many days of leave are permitted is needed to comply with the Employment Act of Uganda. Caregivers have monthly meetings, but not weekly. The board of trustees meets once a year in Uganda, while the main Board in Germany meets twice a year. Child participation within the home is not currently addressed and could be improved. Additionally, caregivers could use training on child development, caring for sick children, and promoting good hygiene.

- ☐ Establish clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are included in the staff contracts.
- ☐ Provide caregivers training in child participation, child development, caring for sick children, and good hygiene.
- ☐ Clarify leave policies to comply with the Employment Act of Uganda where all employees need time off work.



# Current Improvement Partners



## Both Ends Believing

Both Ends Believing (BEB) is an organization with a global presence. They offer an incredible case management software (Children First Software) that helps governments create digital identities for vulnerable children, a pivotal step in placing kids in families. Our partnership with BEB Uganda looks like training members of their team in the Thrive Certification Program so they can enhance the support they give to the children's homes they work with.

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to  
[www.ACHF.org/Projects](http://www.ACHF.org/Projects)

