

# Christalis

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## Uganda



# IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

August | 2023





# Overview of this Children's Home

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## Background & Mission

Christalis Home is a registered NGO that started in 2005 in Kasese and continues operation today. It is located in Kirembe Cell central division within the Kasese municipality of the Kasese District. The home provides shelter, food, clothes, education, healthcare, motivational tools, and a loving family atmosphere to children who have been orphaned, abandoned, abused, left to live on the street, or victims of other challenging circumstances.

This home also offers a child and family development programme to the community which provides tuition, uniforms, school fees, school bags, and school supplies to children in need. These children have a home to live in, but their guardians are unable to provide for all their needs. In addition to supporting education when funds allow, the programme offers food, mattresses, bedding, solar power lights, mosquito nets, medical care and hygienic household items to families in need. The programme also provides micro loans and income generating projects to the guardians of these children to help them become self-sufficient and care for their children themselves.

The mission of this home is to show love for children who are victims of various injustices by providing them with more than their basic needs. They aim to achieve this not only by providing food, shelter, clothes, education and health care, but also emotional support and opportunities to succeed. For children who have no immediate family, the home creates a family unit within the orphanage. For those who have a family unit, the home strengthens those family units.

The vision of Christalis Home is for children and families that they serve to become self-sufficient. It is their hope that once they are self-sufficient, they will give back to the communities and continue spreading love and hope to others.



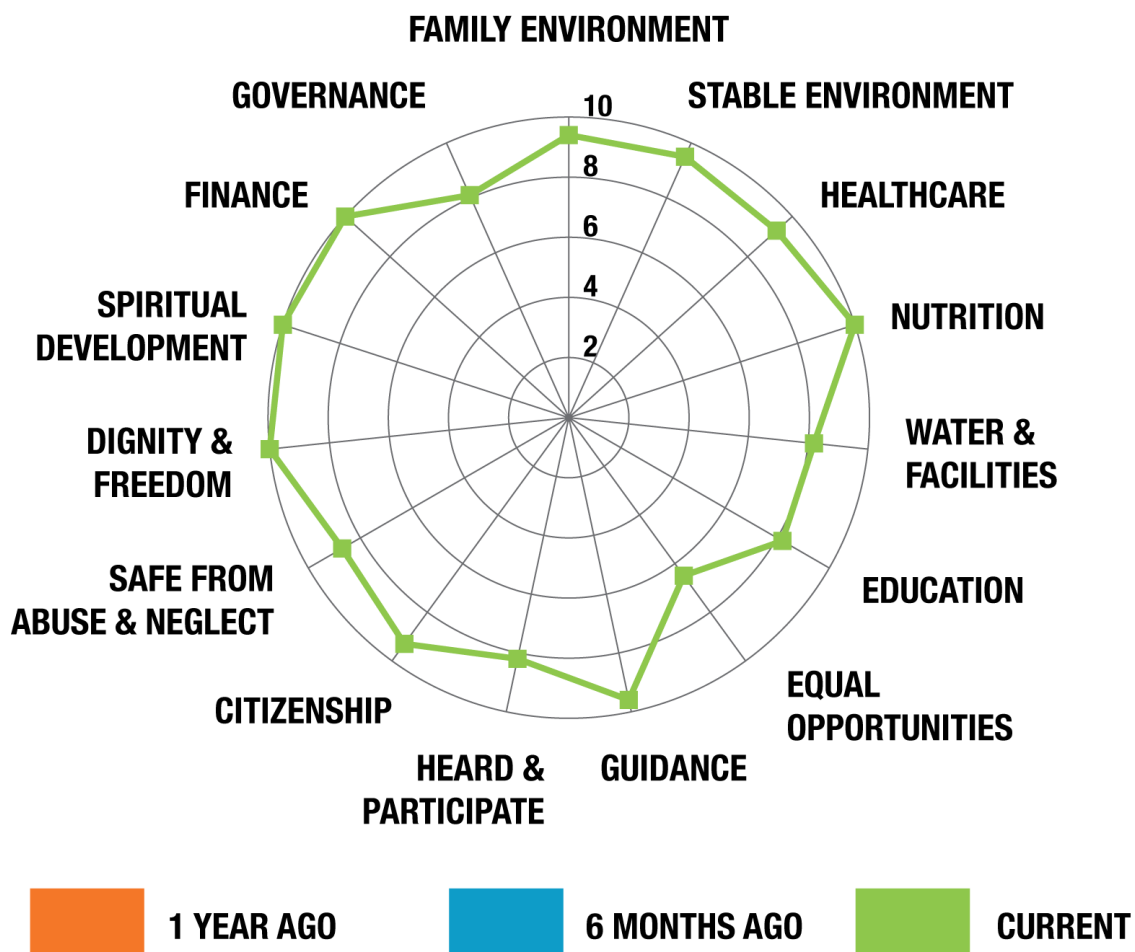
# The Thrive Assessment

## 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

## CONSTRUCT A BOREHOLE

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	The home does not have access to piped water due to its distance from the nearest town. Constructing a borehole at the home would help solve the problem of water shortage.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	5,000,000 Ugx \$1388 USD

## PURCHASE A GENERATOR

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	The home uses solar power as its main source of power. Hydroelectric power is quite expensive to use, so the home prefers to use solar. However the home would love to purchase a generator as an alternative source of power since solar is not sufficient for all the home needs.
<b>ESTIMATED FUNDING</b>	3,000,000 Ugx \$833 USD



## Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a total of 15 children, 10 of which are babies. There are 3 caretakers for the babies, 1 caregiver for the older children, 1 volunteer, 3 staff for coverage and a chef. Children have consistent caregivers so the home functions as a family. Caregivers get one day off a week. Records per child are created and kept (birth certificates, family names and connections). There is a system availed by the ministry and a google spreadsheet that the home uses to keep track of records of children. Different files for school, medical and personal information per child are also kept. There are sibling groups within the home, but there could be more efforts to encourage their bonding together.

Currently, caregivers are trained on trauma informed care once a year, but it needs to be done on a quarterly basis since training has not been taken seriously. Caregivers do not currently receive evaluations from a therapist due to the fact that those are not common in this area. For recruitment, caregivers are interviewed and given 2 or more weeks for training. This training is done internally and progress tracking is done monthly.

- ☐ Caregivers need to be evaluated by a therapist on the care they provide to children on a bi-annual basis.
- ☐ Caregivers need to be trained quarterly on trauma-informed care.
- ☐ Find ways to support sibling bonding on a daily basis.



## Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There are house rules visibly displayed on the walls and appropriate consequences are given like washing utensils, no watching TV, no toys, etc. in relation to the ages of the children in case a child violates the rules. Children are called by their names and Caretakers are respectful in their communication with the children about their talks with the children. They all eat and play together as sisters and brothers. They have groups according to age and these are assigned to a particular mother. They do not meet with a specialist quarterly, but do so annually and when

there is need. 1-2 days off a week is given to the caregivers. They are also entitled to leave days and when they are sick, they receive days off. Contracts are established and renewed annually (but most of them have been in the home for several years). Caregivers participate in discussions to create a good environment and they are not limited by timelines. The caregivers are also active in playing with the kids, hiking, helping them study and sharing traditions together. Birthday celebrations are done monthly, depending on resources, and other activities like watching movies are also done together. Children have free time, but could use more so that they are engaged in unstructured play.

- ☐ Have caregivers meet with a specialist to discuss behavioral ideas to help effectively teach and discipline children within their care.
- ☐ Avail children with more free time so as to encourage unstructured play.



## Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children, upon being brought into the home, are subjected to medical checks. However, children should receive annual wellness, vision, and dental exams to ensure children are in consistent good health. Vaccinations are done periodically and as per government directives and each child has a medical file where all documents regarding their health are kept. Soap is readily available in the bathrooms and kitchen areas, and caregivers remind kids often to always wash their hands. They have a pediatric physician at Mubuku clinic in Kasese and to St. Paul's clinic in mbarara for emergencies. Children brush their teeth every after a meal, after 4 months, tooth brushes are changed. They are cleaned after soiling themselves. No annual vision exams are conducted; vision exams and dental exams are not done annually. They do not have any issues of lice except for some fungal infections on their head and are being treated using fungal creams prescribed by a doctor. They go to hospital each time they are sick and they have a medical fund. Orthodontic treatment is given, when necessary. Adolescent girls are taught about menstrual cycles and given the necessities.

- ☐ Provide children with annual wellness exams.
- ☐ Increase the health budget for annual dental and vision exams.



## Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

A menu which was designed by a nutritionist is followed. Food is cooked in a hygienic manner and handled in food flasks for those to whom food is delivered. Food items are kept clean, and the kitchen area is well-ventilated. Children receive appetizing foods and proteins are provided daily. Vegetables and a fruit are given per meal and also at breakfast. Specialized chefs are hired and are well trained. Additionally, a nutritionist trains them further on food safety and preparation.

Continue with the current practices.



## Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home was last inspected this March by a health inspector. They do not have a reliable water source at the facility and instead buy water from Kasese town which costs them at least UGX 200,000 monthly. There is no tap water in the area. Sometimes they fetch water from the river for cleaning purposes and have tanks in place for water collection. The bathroom and living areas have good lighting. The home has good disposal for water and rubbish. They have a fire extinguisher, but it is now expired and needs to be replaced. The home is not at risk for flooding as they are on a hill. They have access to solar energy since electricity is not connected, but it is not currently reliable. The home also has rechargeable solar lamps which they use frequently, but are also not reliable. Skilled maintenance support is available for preventive needs. Safety concerns have been addressed and the outdoor premises are well lit, but there are currently no smoke alarms. Sinks are functional, but they have challenges with water. They have an emergency plan in place. There is a written maintenance plan and some works that need to be addressed, but funds are limited to support this. Facilities are up to code with government requirements. A certificate of operating a children's home, certificate to operate as an NGO, and an MOU with the government have been attained.

- ☐ Find a reliable water source for the home.
- ☐ Find a reliable source of power for the home.
- ☐ Address needed repairs to the building.





## Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All school-aged children are going to school already and they can continue with their education through the university level. Most of the children can read and write, add and subtract, and know the letters of the alphabet. However, the home needs to assess children 9 and above to ensure that they can add, subtract and multiply and identify those with difficulties who need help. Assessments are also needed for primary-aged children to ensure they are able to read and write. Children who have challenges are being helped through coaching and do a lot of revision during holidays. Regular activities like drawing and writing take place, but no painting is done. Kids are given tests by teachers and caregivers who evaluate children. Books in their native language of Lukonjo are hard to find and more age-appropriate books are needed. Group studies do happen at the home regularly, but not one-on-one tutoring as that only happens when needed. The home has internet and computer access for staff, but kids are not allowed to access these resources on a daily basis. Although 8 computers were donated to the home previously, some of these have broken down and need to be repaired. Art supplies are also available in the home for older children.

- ☐ Repair or obtain more computers for children to access for educational purposes.
- ☐ Purchase more age-appropriate books for children in their own language.



## Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each child has a dedicated space to themselves. Letters, pictures and other items are kept on file or in personal bags with the help of their caregivers. They all receive the same educational opportunities. No child with disabilities is taken in by this home because they lack facilities to address these needs, and cases that come up are referred to other homes. However, there is one child with rectal prolapse that has dietary restrictions, and the home has a special menu in this case. The home provides an opportunity to all children for transition to adulthood. All adults act as role models through activities like giving advice and talking to the children. There are no children with serious learning disabilities, but those who perform poorly in class are being helped. The home currently has no resources set aside for physical or learning disabilities, but would like to improve in this area.

- ☐ Find resources to help identify and support children at the home with learning disabilities.
- ☐ Obtain resources so that children with disabilities can be accommodated in the home.





## Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a profile referred to when looking for new caregivers who model respectful behavior. Children are educated about their bodies. The home has simple, clear set guidelines that are communicated with children repeatedly so they understand expectations. Psychological healing and therapeutic resources are not given on a monthly basis, and access is dependent on individual children. Two children that were resettled at the home were previously using drugs, so special care had to be given to have them restored to order. Social workers always talk to children about puberty and its associated changes. Caregivers are trained on how to model, teach, and reinforce basic life skills. Children are taught how to sew clothes and make shoes. Children receive education on responsible sexual behavior. There is a policy in place to address child sexual behavior and caregivers try not to leave kids unattended, but additional training on how to approach this topic is needed. Psychological healing is given as the need arises, but no specific time is set. There are documented life-skills programs that include activities like soap making. They also plan on teaching them how to make cakes, but currently lack ovens. The home also continues providing items to young adults even after they have left the facility.

- ☐ Provide psychological healing and therapeutic resources to children on a monthly basis.
- ☐ Train caretakers on how to handle sexual behavior.



## Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children decide what they want to do in their free time, but they are kept under supervision. Acknowledgement of a child's particular need is dependent on the need itself, taking into account whether it is for their good and the cost. While children get to choose their outfits, they are guided on the dress code. Children and caregivers get information about healthcare procedures (circumcision, tooth extraction, injection). Children are not forced to do anything they do not want to do, but they are guided on what to do for their own well-being and development. Currently children do not participate in their menu planning and individual development plans have not been implemented for each child in the home.

- ☐ Allow children to participate in menu planning at least once a month.
- ☐ Implement individual development plans for each child that can be updated on a monthly basis.



## Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Although not all children have birth certificates, the home follows a process to request one for those that do not have one. However, the process is lengthy and better follow up from the home could be implemented. Caregivers are trained in the home to help children learn and practice responsibility. Chores like mopping, washing dishes, and chopping wood are given to children, in relation to their ages. They observe sabbath as their holiday and national holidays are celebrated. The home is free from litter. Children are taught about ethics and governance by the caretakers and social workers within the home so that they grow up with acceptable behavior in society. Children are mentored in life skills and have the opportunity to participate in activities that foster independence such as being sent to the market or bank with a caregiver. They are taught how to save and budget when given money. They go to church and preach, as well as help out in the community through activities like buying items to give back to community members. Current events are also taught to children (eg. politics, the Bwera incidence).

- ☐ Establish timelines to follow up on the production of birth certificates for the children.
- ☐ Raise funds to be allocated for securing birth certificates for the children.



## Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has security guards at the gate, and there is a fence which is adequate for security purposes. There are private facilities for bathing and sleeping. Staff are trained and there is a policy about punishments. Children are able to be out of their crib for a majority of daytime hours. Intake assessments are used by social workers and doctors to evaluate trauma and counseling needs. There is also no child exploitation permitted and one on one time between individuals and children is discouraged. The home implements a child protection program that ensures children are not abused. Caregivers evaluate children for signs of abuse and neglect regularly, but caregivers do not currently receive training every 6 months on recognizing and preventing abuse. Abuse and reporting methods are discussed with children 5+ years old annually. Staff accompany children on all off-campus outings. Visitors check in with the security guards prior to accessing the premises and are in the company of staff throughout their visit. The Local council and police do background checks on all frequent visitors.

- ☐ Establish a program to train caregivers every 6 months on how to recognize and prevent abuse.



## Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children bathe daily and proper safety precautions are taken for infants. The home encourages children to be kind to each other. Each child has their own bed as well as enough clothing and under-garments. Children care for themselves as much as they are able and speak their native language within the home. Consequences for infractions of rules are discussed with the children ahead of time. Children have proper bed linens that are cleaned often, their own toothbrush and 2 towels each. The home has a safe and adequate outdoor play area appropriate to all ages. Toys and art materials are available to all children as well. As for opportunities to earn money, older children participate in some activities such as making charcoal or breaking stones] and keep their earnings.

Continue with the current practices.



## Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home holds daily prayers both morning and evening and children are free to practice communal prayer daily. Christmas holidays are celebrated. Spiritual and religious materials and books are available and accessible. Children have the opportunity to practice their spiritual learnings. Children are allowed to participate in religious gatherings of their choice, and there is also a quiet place for prayer and meditation.

Continue with the current practices.





## Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There is a process for tracking all incomes and expenses within the home. Records are maintained and available for review. A cash request is filled before money is given out for use and accountability is provided after. There is a system to maintain records and receipts as well. They do monthly and annual filings like NSSF, PAYE, and income tax. An external accountant creates a financial statement monthly. There are controls in place that are followed to minimize opportunities for misuse of funds. The home runs on a budget and accounts are reconciled monthly. Quarterly financial reviews by the accountant, auditors, and supervisor take place. There is adequate segregation of financial duties for internal control. An internal and external review on all financials is done monthly and the home has a budget for all major expenses. A qualified accountant validates the books for the organization.

Continue with the current practices.



## Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home is currently working on getting a land title but currently operates based on an MOU with the Seventh Day Adventist church. The current lease can only be given for 45 years since the owners are foreigners, but the process is underway. Caregivers are trained on policies and are assigned to the more experienced caregivers for further learning. There is an organizational chart that outlines supervision and enables delegation. Contracts are signed by each staff member and records kept on file. The home is fully licensed. Meetings with staff are not held weekly, but do happen periodically when there are emergencies to address issues or improve processes. Internal training is given to caregivers on child development and there are plans to have caregivers visit other homes to gain experience. The board meets once or twice a year (locally and those that stay out of the country). Staff are entitled to 40 days of leave per year, which is taken in turn based on coverage by other staff. Trainings occurs when called for by government personnel, but as a home they do not send staff for training. Employee files are kept in a secure location and updated regularly with important information. Training is provided locally to staff on the importance and practical ways to facilitate child participation by the administrator, but additional training on attachment, child development, caring for sick children, and teaching good hygiene could be provided.

- ☐ Schedule for weekly meetings with caregivers.
- ☐ Provide more training on attachment, child development, caring for sick children, and teaching good hygiene.



# 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)

