

Wanalea Children's Home

Kenya

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

August | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

Wanalea Children's Home (WCH) is located in Ongata Rongai, Nairobi, and is home to 29 children with one more being supported from his home. The founder of the home is Laura Vasconcelos, a native of Portugal who has spent some time in Kenya. Soon after the 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 as well as 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 Department of Children 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 as Director and Carolina as Coordinator, both in full-time roles, along with Laura, who has an advisory role and supports fundraising. 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 (social worker) and Ms. Petronella (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 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, 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 admitted, 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, they want to contribute to the emergence of a new generation of Kenyans that are educated, 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

Recent Accomplishments

- Hired an additional caregiver
- Commenced monthly training of caregivers by Kutoa Project
- Improved hygienic disposal of sanitary products
- Hired a night guard



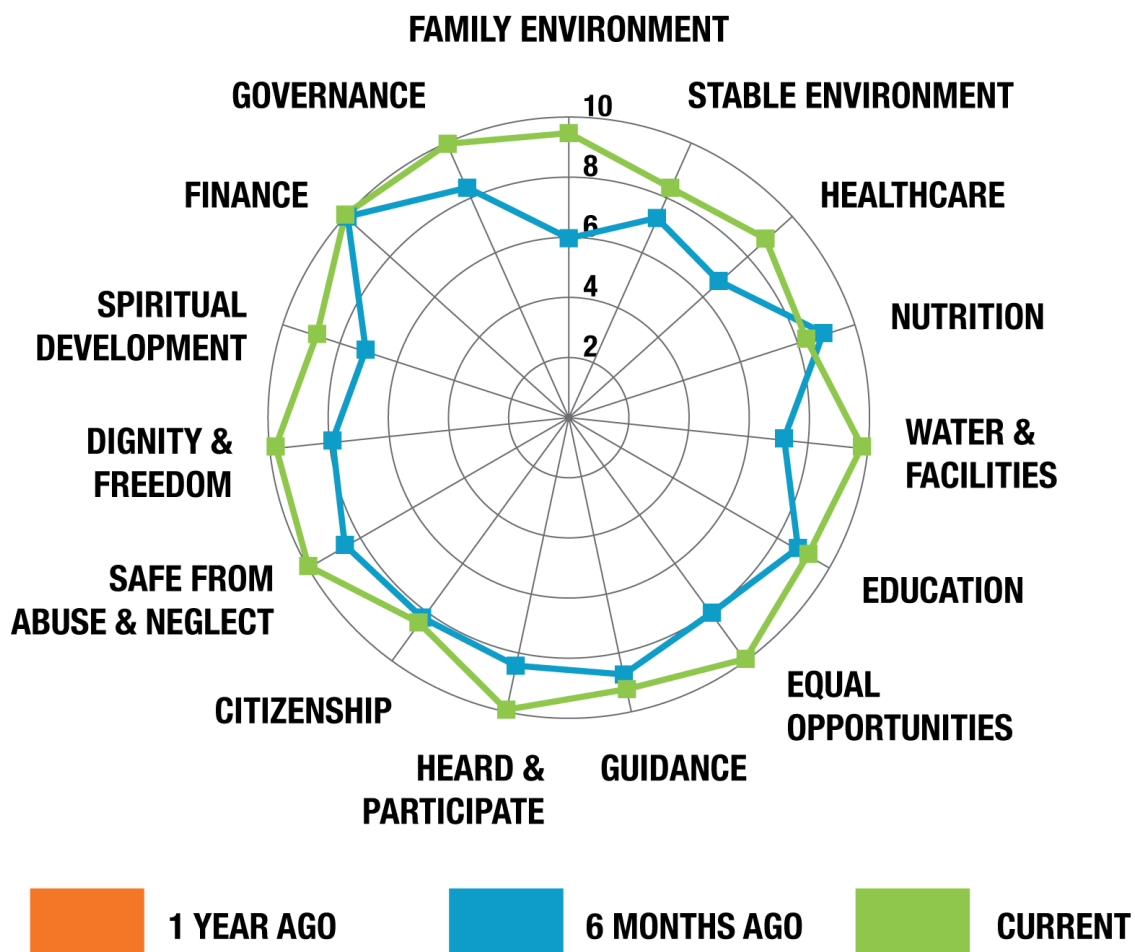
The Thrive Assessment

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

HIRE 2 ADDITIONAL CAREGIVERS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Additional caregivers are needed so that the manager and social worker can attend to their specific duties as they currently double as caregivers. Additional caregivers will also increase coverage during the night.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	KES 18,000/month \$120 USD/month

HIRE A TUTOR

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The children are lacking someone to assist them during homework and they also require 1:1 guidance for better academic results. Hiring a tutor will go a long way to ensure they are well guided.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	KES 18,000/month \$120 USD/month



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

There are plans to hire 2 additional caregivers so the manager and social worker can concentrate on their particular duties and the children will have consistent care and attention. There are records of where the children come from, which are well documented in each child's individual file. Trauma informed training for caregivers has started to provide a better understanding of care for vulnerable children as well as self-care. An organization known as Kutoa Project (<https://www.kutoaproject.org>) offered to train them at the end of every month, and so far they have had 2 sessions. This organization does this voluntarily and only gets transport facilitation from the home. The home has an established plan for onboarding caregivers. Siblings have not been discouraged from playing and spending time together. The home continues working with a social worker who focuses on identifying reunification possibilities and facilitating a child reunifying with family. Caregivers are being evaluated professionally by the Kutoa team on the care they are providing to children, as well as receiving therapeutic guidance. Family visitation is encouraged during weekends and holidays for parents and guardians.

- ☐ Complete the process of hiring 2 additional caregivers.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

House rules are well explained and pinned on the walls around the home for reference. Consequences for infractions of rules are practiced, such as extra chores or the denial of some privileges like watching TV. Children are called by their preferred names and not nicknames. During their free time children can draw, relax on the grass, play football, do board games, or plait each other's hair, depending on preference. Living groups are determined according to age and gender and usually play together. Caregivers are meeting quarterly with a specialist to discuss behavioral ideas to help effectively teach and discipline the children in their care. Staff meetings are currently happening every two weeks. Caregivers all receive 1-2 days' rest per week and commit to at least 2 years of service. The turnover rate is less than 20% since caregivers stay for a very long time in the home. The family groups do things together as traditions such as celebrating birthdays and special holidays within the home. However, the children rarely leave the home for trips or outings.

- ☐ Establish a plan of having the children get exposure through trips outside the home.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children do not receive annual wellness checks and exams, but they do benefit when random volunteer teams administer community checkups. Most of the children do not have their vaccination cards in their files since they are placed in the home post-vaccinations and documents are left with guardians. A total of 9/30 so far have their documents, while the other cases are awaiting follow up from their homes. Soap and water are available near all dining areas, toilet facilities and nursing areas. Children are reminded to always wash their hands. The home has identified a nearby private hospital, Wananchi Jamii, where children receive care in case of emergencies. Adolescents have access to feminine products in sufficient quantities and have started disposing them in a faraway place for weekly pick up. The adolescent girls are taught about menstrual cycles and hygienic menstrual care, in addition to talks with the KUTOA therapists. The children brush their teeth daily. Only children with noticed cases of concern receive visual or dental exams. The only problem encountered currently is ringworm, but cases are immediately treated and it only happens when there is a new child who joins the home with this condition. The home has two fully stocked first aid kits which are quickly accessible and children are able to access a doctor when needed. The home has finances available in case of emergency, though it is not specifically labeled as the medical emergency fund. Proper measures, training and treatment plans are done in-house. Children with extensive need receive orthodontic treatment and one case of braces, filling and cleaning has been done so far. The home has started emphasizing to children brushing twice a day, to which they are adapting.

- ☐ Consider having a plan for annual dental and visual check ups for the children.



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children eat enough calories each day to support growth. Food is prepared in a hygienic manner, kept in cool places if needed and cooked thoroughly. The kitchen, dining and food storage areas are free of toxic substances and pests. The kitchen area is kept clean and orderly, including promptly washed dishes and clean counters, and it is well ventilated with an adequate chimney. They receive tasty and appetizing foods. The main foods are rice, githeri (a mixture of maize and beans), ugali, beans, green grams and eggs. In reference to their main meals, they get to eat protein at least once daily. Everyday they also eat fruit and vegetables. There is no nutritionist to offer guidance, but in-house they ensure that children receive healthy meals. The directors also ensure the menu is followed. The cooks are certified annually by the government, which includes meeting the qualifications to handle food.

- ☐ Consider engaging the service of a nutritionist.



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Water is not inspected at the home, but inspection is done from the source, which is the water company Arizona. There is consistent and reliable water that is safe for drinking at all times. Each bathroom and living room have at least one functioning light bulb. There is a safe disposal method for sewage and kitchen water, channeled to different directions. There are seven fire extinguishers, a generator, and a substitute water delivery company in case of loss of water. All these parts constitute the home's emergency plan. There is skilled maintenance support available for any needs that arise at the home. All shower heads are functioning, and there is proper lighting at the front and back of the house to enhance security. The children are aware of what to do in case of fire, but haven't had drills. The home does not have a smoke alarm, but there is documentation of an install plan. There is a plan in place for addressing property maintenance, although not written. Nevertheless, random checks are done to ensure adequate maintenance. Facilities are up to code according to local government requirements. The electrical infrastructure is sufficient for their needs and the home has an alternative source in case of outages. Training on the importance of water use is done in-house.

- ☐ Complete the plan in place of installing a smoke alarm.
- ☐ Establish a plan of conducting fire drills.



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Every child is enrolled and able to attend school. Those ages 7 and over are able to identify each letter of the alphabet and articulate their sounds. The children 11 years and older are able to read and write except for one case. There is an 11 year old girl who has difficulty reading and writing, but the home now has a letter from school assessing the situation so next measures can be taken. Children 9 and over are able to do simple additions, subtraction, multiplication and division. Regular activities like playing with toys, modeling and reading from charts are conducted with children below school age so they can reach developmental milestones and be prepared for school. Qualified evaluations are being done to identify children with learning disabilities. Younger children read using appropriate reading techniques weekly. Age appropriate books in their language are available for use multiple times a week. The home has internet and computer access available to the children. There is access to group tutoring for additional education support, but it is scarce, hence the home has plans to hire a professional tutor. There is a library fully stocked with books. Every child is assessed and able to write within first grade and a special plan in place for those having difficulties. Housing and funding is available to children in order to pursue additional education post-orphanage care. Also, the home offers business startup support for those who have finished school. Referrals are also done for those job hunting. Children below school age are able to engage in appropriate developmental play

multiple times a week with their caregivers. A mentor who is the social worker discusses the children's grades in coordination with their teachers in school. Children have frequent access to computers, but instruction on typing, word processing, and using programs like Excel have not been provided. Age appropriate art supplies are available and more have recently been added. There is no 1 on 1 tutoring currently available, but there are plans in place to engage a tutor who will coach and help the children with homework.

- ☐ Complete the plan in place for hiring a tutor.

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each child has a dedicated space for their own personal items. There are wardrobes with each child having their own shelves. All children have equal opportunities. There are no disability cases in the home. The home provides an opportunity for transition to independent living for all children. Both male and female mentors act as role models, and there is a team that visits every Saturday for mentorship. Resources are there for children with learning disabilities, such as the case of one of the children, who is taken to special schools.

- ☐ Continue with current practices.



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a profile and job description to use when looking for new caregivers. The caregivers model respectful behaviors. Children are educated about their bodies properly by caregivers, the social worker and manager. Guidelines and expectations are clearly stated and pinned in all rooms even for the staff. Therapeutic resources and psychological healing is done by the KUTOA team. Caregivers are evaluated to determine if they are quality mentors for children. The social worker discusses changes associated with puberty with the adolescents to prepare them in advance individually. Children over the age of 11 have received education on responsible sexual behavior and caregivers have been trained on how to model, teach and reinforce basic life skills and behaviors with children. There is a Child Protection Policy document in place which is followed when guiding the children. Caregivers are trained internally on sexual education. Psychological healing is done weekly virtually. Children 15+ are exposed to different work in order to expand their interests e.g. they are given cooking duties. A written plan on transition for post-orphanage life is in place. No documented life skills program is in action currently. Continuous communication and support to children in vocational training and universities is regularly provided.

- ☐ Continue with current practices.



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children can decide on what they want to do in their free time. They can play, read or take naps willingly. When children verbalize their needs, they are listened and attended to. Sometimes, they get to have a say in menu planning. They get to pick out what outfit they wear on a daily basis. Children and their caregivers are provided information about healthcare procedures prior to their administration and given opportunities to ask questions. Children also have liberty to opt out on non-essential activities. Individual development plans have been implemented and filed. Alternative household responsibilities are allocated instead of definite leadership roles.

☐ Continue with current practices.



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children have birth certificates except for 4 children, but efforts to obtain them are ongoing. Caregivers are informed on how to help children learn and practice responsibility. Individual duties like age appropriate chores are given on a daily basis. The home observes national and local holidays. The home is kept clean and free from litter and no equipment is seen lying in the compound. Children participate in non-routine activities such as taking part in walks that are organized from school. They are taught about ethics and the governing process in an age-appropriate course. Children 15+ are given pocket money and are able to do shopping on their own. However, children do not perform service in the community.

☐ Encourage community service for the older children.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Security fencing is adequate as per standards in the community. There are private facilities for bathing, using the toilet and getting dressed. Boys and girls facilities are separate and are based on appropriate groups, but there is currently an overflow of 6 boys. The home can add more beds, but the space is limited. However, on the girls side there is enough space. Staff is trained in-house on positive discipline techniques. There is a policy that enforces no one on one time between individuals, especially for those with behavioral challenges. The home implements a child protection policy and caregivers do not abuse the children or each other verbally or

physically. Caregivers have commenced training on how to recognize and prevent abuse. Caregivers evaluate children for signs of abuse and neglect regularly and follow procedures to report the findings. Report methods are properly followed. Caregivers accompany children in off campus outings. There is a visitor policy in place. The home checks staff and visitors' backgrounds for safety. The caregivers avail police clearance certificates and referral checks in their CVs. Children are able to be out of the crib the majority of the time. Intake assessments are appropriately done with children before counseling begins.

☐ Continue with current practices.



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are bathed daily and proper precautions taken for infants. Being kind to each other is highly encouraged among the children and staff. Children have access to their own beddings but on the boys side, some share. While beds are available, due to lack of space, it is impossible for all boys to have their own bed currently. While there were earlier plans to convert one of the store rooms to a boy's space, it had to be stopped due to unworkable logistics. The children have adequate clothing and undergarments. They are taught how to care for themselves and how to depend on themselves. Consequences are well explained ahead of time. Proper bed linens are cleaned daily when soiled and weekly for the rest with alternating linens. Every child has their own toothbrush and each has a clean towel. There is a safe and adequate outdoor play area appropriate to all ages. There are appropriate toys and art materials available to all children. Children are allowed to speak in their native language even though they are used to speaking in Kiswahili and English. They have the opportunity to do extra work and earn money such as cutting grass around the home. Teenagers do not have the opportunity to work in the community to earn wages currently.

☐ Continue with current practices.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are allowed to be part of a spiritual community. They go to the nearest Nkoroi Catholic Church. They are free to participate in communal prayer daily. Religious holidays are celebrated and there are religious books and materials available. Children do not participate in the community church, but those willing could be allowed to participate. Most of them participate in-house since they are familiar with each other. There is no designated room for prayer, but they are well informed on how to find space to pray and meditate.

☐ Encourage children's participation in church service.

☐ Identify a quiet place for prayer and meditation within the home.



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

They have a form of tracking their income and expenses. Records are maintained and available for review. Receipts are kept for filling. Controls are in place to minimize opportunities for misuse of funds as they have a budget in which they operate on. Bank accounts are reconciled monthly. Both internal and external review is done on the financials quarterly. A qualified accountant keeps the books for the home, reconciles the profits and losses and also submits the income tax returns for the home. Validation of the books is also done by the accountant.

☐ Continue with current practices.



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home is on rented premises and therefore there's no risk for land disputes. Experienced caregivers shadow new caregivers prior to assuming responsibilities. A written organizational chart is used that outlines supervision and enables delegation. Staff meetings are held every two weeks to discuss different progress and improvements. Caregivers are given job descriptions and terms of work. The home complies with all licensing and government requirements. There is a board of directors that ensures smooth running of the home and meets regularly. The caregivers attend in-house training on caring for sick children. The organization has and abides by a vacation and leave policy. Employee's files are kept in a secure place and updated regularly.

☐ Continue with current practices.



Current Improvement Partners



Child in Family Focus

Child in Family Focus is driven by the need to bridge the advocacy and awareness gaps evident in the alternative care arena in Kenya. The organization is committed to raising awareness about disadvantaged children in need of permanent, safe and loving homes and eliminating the barriers that hinder them from realizing their basic need of a family. The organization engages, enlightens, and empowers children's institutions and families for life changing outcomes.



KUTOA
PROJECT

Kutoa Project

[The Kutoa Project](#) provides counseling services for children and youth ages 6 to 25 years old throughout Kenya. Their staff is equipped to help individuals through difficult times and provide a safe place to begin the road to hope, healing and restoration.

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



+

**A CHILD'S
HOPE**
FOUNDATION