




OTEM COLLECTIVE

Strategic Plan

2025-2027



Otem Collective is on a mission to reshape the way the world cares for vulnerable children—by placing families at the heart of the solution rather than relying on the residential care model.

Around the world, there are an estimated **8 million children** living in orphanages or other forms of residential care. In Uganda, 80% of these children have at least one living parent, and 98% have living family. Poverty, not lack of family, is the main reason for family separation. Without the resources they need, families are forced to turn to orphanages to care for their children.

Over 80 years of research show that children thrive best within families. While governments around the world, including Uganda, have committed to moving towards family solutions for children, there is a lack of capacity and support to make this a reality, meaning children remain separated from their families. Otem Collective is dedicated to reshaping this landscape by strengthening families to care for their children and by helping orphanages move towards family-centered care.

Our Mission is to strengthen families and communities to care for vulnerable children.

Our Vision is to see a generation of Ugandan children raised in families, breaking the cycle of family separation and poverty.

If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. - Exodus 33:15

When we embarked on the strategic planning process in early 2024, I felt God speaking clearly to me, reminding me of a truth—Otem Collective is not mine, but His. It was a humbling realization that, while I play a role, the mission and direction are ultimately in God's hands. I tend to envision Otem Collective as a table, but so often, I place Jesus' chair in a corner, rather than at the head. God was saying to me, "No, you need to put me at the head of the table. This organization, this cause is mine."

This powerful reminder brought clarity that the work we are doing—working to get and keep children in families—is at the very core of God's heart. We are just a small part of His grand redemptive plan, and our role is to follow His lead and figure out the role that we play in it. The past few months have reinforced this truth, with Exodus 33:15 on repeat. Moses' words about not moving without God's presence have become a guiding principle for us.

This season of strategic planning has ultimately been a season of refinement. And in this season, we've been driven to our knees, seeking to ensure that every step we take—whether launching a new program or registering in Uganda—is aligned with what God wants. I've learned the importance of surrendering fully to God's guidance, trusting that He knows the best path forward for Otem Collective and the work we are doing. It's His work anyways, so why shouldn't we have Him direct each step?!

The Strategic Plan in the following pages is the result of this intentional season. I've never been more excited about the direction that Otem Collective is heading, and I am eager to see what will happen over the next few years.

As we look forward to the coming years, Psalm 27:13-14 echoes in my heart: "I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." I am confident that we will witness God's goodness through healed families, restored relationships, and transformed communities.

Thank you for joining us in the work of reshaping the way the world cares for orphaned and vulnerable children. Here's to more children growing up in safe, stable, and secure families!

With gratitude and optimism,



Kristen Marks
Executive Director





The Path Ahead: Strategic Priorities

By the end of 2027, Otem Collective aims to see:

200

children reunited with families

*Total Impact as of Sept. 2024: 69

1,500

parents and caregivers trained in Trust-Based Relational Intervention®

*Total Impact as of Sept. 2024: 694

500

families engaged in family strengthening initiatives

*Total Impact as of Sept. 2024: 90

In order to achieve this, Otem Collective will focus on three priority areas:



Education and Awareness

Otem Collective exists in many ways to activate a paradigm shift. We see our role as not just caring for children and families, but helping to reshape how vulnerable children are cared for globally.



Program Expansion

We aim to leverage the strong relationships and trust we've built to expand our programs, using the foundation we've laid to help even more children grow up in safe, stable, and secure families.



Ensure long-term impact

In order to ensure impact, we need to grow our team and financial capacity. Expanding our program offerings is essential to achieving our goals, and to do so, additional resources are needed—both personnel and funding.



Priority Area 1: Education and Awareness

At the heart of Otem Collective's mission is the belief that every child deserves to grow up in a loving family. However, in many parts of the world, the default model of care for vulnerable children remains residential, driven by substantial financial support—particularly from Western nations. Each year, \$3.3 billion is donated by U.S. Christians alone to support residential care, and 95% of funding for residential care in Africa comes from Western sources. To create lasting change, we must not only care for vulnerable children and families but also ignite a global paradigm shift in how these children are cared for.

Our first priority is to educate and empower champions—individuals and organizations committed to reshaping care for orphaned and vulnerable children. By partnering with churches, establishing thought leadership, and expanding our media presence, we aim to build a network of advocates who will help us lead a cultural transformation, redirect funding, and ultimately revolutionize how care is provided to vulnerable children.

- * **Grow Champions' Understanding**
Develop and implement programs to grow champions' understanding of and commitment to the cause of family-based care.
- * **Educate and Partner with Churches**
Partner with three new churches each year to promote family-based care and further the work of reshaping the way the world cares for orphaned and vulnerable children.
- * **Thought Leadership**
Position Otem Collective as a thought leader in family-based care through publications, speaking engagements, and collaboration with industry experts.
- * **Expand Digital and Media Presence**
Enhance Otem Collective's media presence to reach a wider audience through strategic content creation, engagement on social media platforms, and radio programming in Uganda.



Priority Area 2: Program Expansion

Research spanning over 80 years shows that children raised in families achieve better developmental and life outcomes than those in residential care. Recognizing this, Otem Collective is committed to broadening our work so that more children grow up in families.

Our desire in this next phase is to leverage the trust and relationships we've built in country, using the strong foundation we've laid to expand our programs and care for even more children and families. We want to take the work that we have been doing, in the communities that we have been working, and do more of it. This includes expanding the use of Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®), increasing the coaching provided to orphanages transitioning to family-based care, and launching programs that address critical needs like WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and sustainable income. By building on our existing work, we aim to empower families, keep children in safe and stable homes, and create a brighter future for children and families in East Africa.

- * **Broaden the use of TBRI® in Uganda**
Increase the number of TBRI® trainings and interventions (including increasing the number of Ugandan Practitioners and developing a Training of Trainers) to lead more children towards healing and strengthen child/caregiver relationships. TBRI® is an attachment based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children.
- * **Increase Orphanage Coaching**
Provide ongoing coaching and support to more orphanages as they transition towards family-based care models to reunite 200 children with families.
- * **Expand Family Strengthening Programs**
Launch and expand family strengthening initiatives that cater to the holistic, individualized needs of families, ensuring sustainable development, with a special focus on deepening our impact in Kole District, Northern Uganda.
- * **Launch Making Sense of Your Worth**
Begin MSOYW classes with caregivers to address root causes of trauma, build positive self-worth, and move towards secure attachment so they can better care for their children.



Priority Area 3: Ensure Long-term Impact

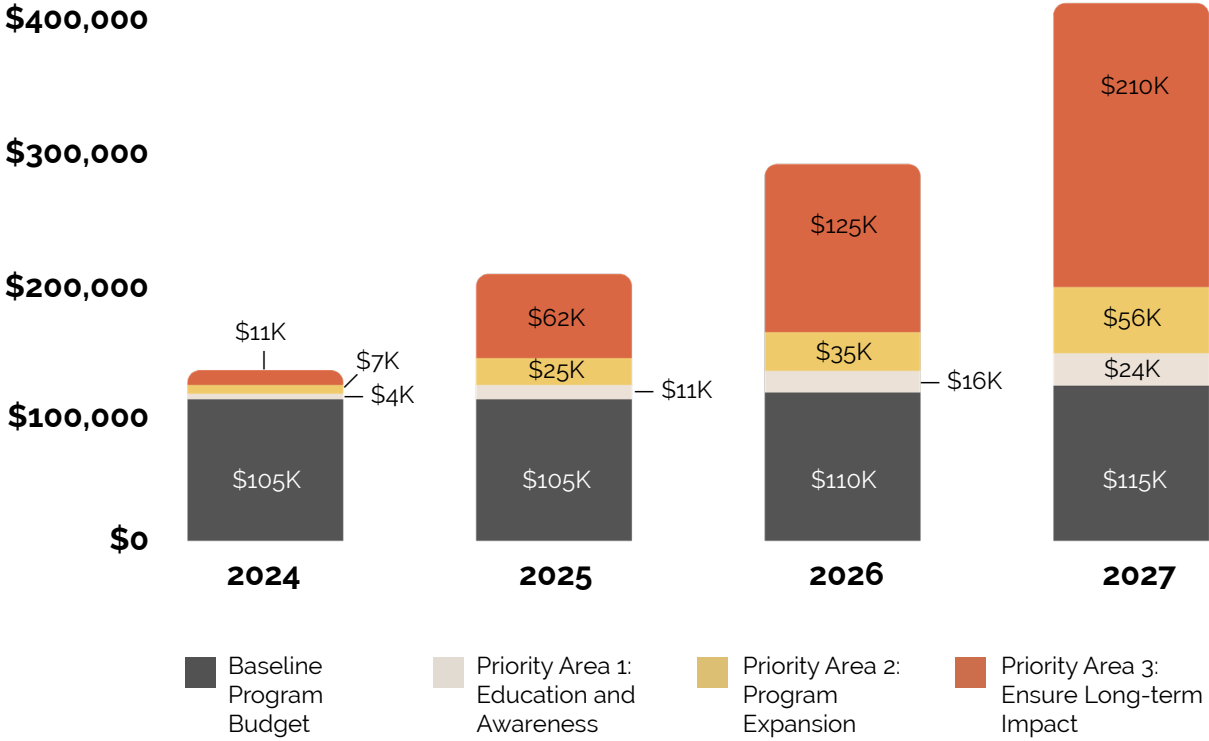
In order for Otem Collective to take the next step, accomplish what we have set out to do, and increase impact, we need to focus on building a sustainable and resilient organization. The programs and relationships are in place, but additional resources are needed—both personnel and funding—to accomplish our goals.

This priority area includes establishing an official presence in Uganda, building out staff teams, and increasing funding capacity through development efforts so that we can meet the needs of the children and families we serve. Overall, we aim to strengthen our organizational foundation, achieve operational success, and ensure that our work continues to reflect God's guidance and purpose.

- * **NGO Registration in Uganda**
To further our programmatic efforts, we need a more stable presence on the ground. Registering in Uganda allows us to break free from relying solely on external partners and increase our capacity to respond swiftly to the needs of the children, families, and communities we serve.
- * **Build Staff Team in Uganda**
To accomplish our program goals and serve more children and families, we need more people on the ground to make it happen. Establishing a dedicated team in Uganda enables us to manage local operations and programs effectively, thereby increasing our impact on vulnerable children and families.
- * **Expand U.S. Staff**
To support programming in Uganda and operate a sustainable development strategy, we will recruit selective additional staff.
- * **Financial Sustainability**
To ensure the financial health and sustainability of Otem Collective, we will broaden development efforts, including local fundraising in Uganda.

Financial Outlook

In order to achieve the objectives laid out in the strategic plan, the financial budget has an anticipated need of \$586,000 above our baseline program budget, as laid out in the chart below. The key areas that are driving the biggest need are family strengthening initiatives and expansion of Uganda and U.S. staff.



Here's how we're going to meet that financial need:



new champions giving at least \$10,000/year for three years



the number of people supporting Otem Collective financially



churches financially partnering with Otem Collective



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