

2024-2027 Strategic Plan

Christ Church International School | Dec 2023 revision



1. Summary

CCIS is more than a school - it is a community, with a beloved, Christ-centred culture that excels at nourishing its students spiritually and social/emotionally, and its alumni have excelled academically in other institutions. Members of this community want to see the school grow into a more spacious campus, establish a secondary school, grow its opportunities for early childhood education, invest in teachers, and provide the best inclusive education. This strategic plan is meant to be guidance toward that future. The Key Objectives details are in [Section 3](#) below.

In short, the document advises the school to focus on its strategic advantage by expanding early childhood education in the short term, strengthening existing systems in the medium term, and laying the foundation for future growth toward a new campus in the long term. This strategic plan covers 2024-2026

2. Introduction & Process

In late 2022, divergent dreams emerged regarding the future of CCIS. Some were pointing toward developing a secondary school section, others toward focusing on early childhood education. Some were looking toward growing the existing school grounds and others looked toward a new campus. The need for a strategic plan (SP), pulling together the dreams of the committed stakeholders into a common direction, became clear.

In my role as school board chairman, I was chosen to lead the development of a strategic plan. I designed a process that would be as inclusive and honest as possible. It sought to include a diverse cross-section of the CCIS community. The objectives of this process were to:

- Understand the conditions that created the best things about CCIS
- Identify the needs of the stakeholders and find ways to meet them
- Dream together
- Prioritise

A questionnaire was developed using the appreciative inquiry method and distributed to parents. It aimed to develop an assessment of the school. It was reinforced by key informant interviews with CCIS staff and management.

The first SP meeting, held on 14 January 2023, was open to members of the CCIS community. There were 22 in attendance including parents, representatives from the school owner (Anglican Church of Tanzania - Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro), CCIS staff and management, representatives of another school owned by DMK (St. Paul's), and the ward education officer. Results of the questionnaire were reviewed and the assessment was refined through group discussion. Two exercises were conducted: Resource mapping, led by the school principal, and SWOT, led by the school director.

The second SP meeting was held on 2 March 2023, also with 22 participants with a similar participant makeup. After prayer and a review of the first session, external facilitators were welcomed to teach Non Violent Communication as a tool for helping the group have a healthy way to communicate observations, feelings, needs, and requests. Needs were examined more deeply. A risk analysis exercise was conducted, followed by intense discussion on directions for growth.

Other information was collected from key informant interviews with some CCIS staff members, a meeting with the school owner, and conversations with students and parents.

Honest communication and an inclusive process are prerequisite to a useful strategic plan. Making an environment where participants feel free to share honestly was a priority. To that end, we practised how to communicate without expressing judgement, how to communicate needs, and how to keep our commonality - desire for the best education for our children - above the things that divide us.

The tools put in place during the two meetings and other smaller conversations produced a wealth of guidance, on which this strategic plan draft is based.

2a. Guiding principles

There are criticisms of strategic planning. Some say it is used as a crutch in place of intuition and creativity in leadership. Others argue that strategic plans are wastes of time because they often are unused documents, collecting dust on directors' bookshelves. I worked for one leader who said he preferred to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit rather than be beholden to a document.

Our operating principle is that God, when we are obedient to His guidance, becomes the central part of the plan when He is the central part of the process. We turn to the wisdom of Habakkuk 2:2-3.

The Lord gave me this answer: "Write down clearly on tablets what I reveal to you, so that it can be read at a glance. Put it in writing, because it is not yet time for it to come true. But the time is coming quickly, and what I show you will come true. It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place, and it will not be delayed. (GNT)

This was written in the context of a conversation between the prophet Habakkuk and God, as the end of the oppressive rule of the Chaldeans (Babylonians) was nearing. Here today, God still reveals to us His guidance. As we look toward the God-given potential that is in us and in CCIS, we must look to His guidance to move us from the oppression that limits us. We write it down. And we use it as a tool to organise us toward a common goal.

A strategic plan is a tool to hold ourselves accountable to our goals - one of many tools. It is more of an ingredient list than a recipe. The plan itself is a very useful tool, but it is just that. Its usefulness depends on its use. This strategic plan is a cumulative document of the CCIS community. Responsibility for implementation of the key objectives and strategic initiatives is resting in the capable hands of the school management. The management will need help in accomplishing this, and will reach out to the school community with requests. When we join hands, our dreams for our children's education are possible.

2b. About the school

Vision: To see God worshipped, honoured, and glorified as each child pursues knowledge understanding, truth, beauty, faith, love, holiness, and reverence for God, one another, our community, and our world.

Mission: Serve the church and community in Arusha by endeavouring to provide affordable Christian education in a caring, secure, happy, fun, and harmonious environment where each child can learn and develop to his/her full and unique potential to the glory of God, to be the unique the person God gifted him to be and to provide him with a foundation in Christ for life.

Christ Church International School is a Christian pre-primary and primary school located at Kwa Iddi in Olosiva village, Oloirien ward, in Arusha District Council. It has a national registration number EM 17444 (2017), and is registered with the Association of Christian Schools International (2021).

The school started with five students in 2012, with a goal of having quality, affordable Christian education for missionary, international, and Tanzanian families. With steady growth, enrollment reached 129 students in 2022-23. The school follows the British National curriculum. It has a full slate of creative and athletic extracurricular activities. It is committed to remaining a Christ-centred institution.

The school facilities at Olosiva include an office block and three buildings with classrooms. It has a library, play area, music room, a small ground for sports. Annual revenue growth has been strong, averaging 45.6 percent per year from 2019-2022. During this period, school fees did not increase, but increased enrollment and improved collection practices buoyed the income.

More details are in the assessment in [Section 4](#).

3. Where do we want to go?

Key objectives & Strategic Initiatives

This section lists key objectives - the things CCIS wishes to accomplish. Each key objective is composed of strategic initiatives, which are the proposed activities that will enable the school to accomplish those key objectives. The means of verification for these will be a semi-annual report produced by school management. These are used to hold CCIS accountable to its implementation of the initiatives. When challenges prevent the implementation of initiatives, these will be documented by school management so that adequate support can be given, or priorities can be reassessed.

A guiding principle in this is to focus on the *health* of the school over the *growth* of the school. A healthy school will grow organically. The objectives are presented in table format in Appendix 1.

Key Objective 1:

Prepare to purchase land for the development of a new campus

Strategic Initiative 1.1: Improve facilities for the youngest students.

Rationale: Strong growth in student numbers has been seen in the Early Childhood Education classes (Dikdik, Impala). Maintaining growth in ECE even before moving to a new campus will strengthen one of the school's core drivers of growth.

Strategies to maximise existing space for better pre-school use include the following:

- Temporarily move most offices off site, renting a nearby house. Modify Linda House to accommodate either Dikdik or Impala.
- Installation of outdoor play facilities, such as mud kitchen, sand and water area, trike track.

SI 1.2: Improve cash position

Rationale: Prime land in Arusha will require significant cash reserves. The school's cash flow is more than adequate for normal operation of the school, but does not allow for saving toward large capital expenses. Analysis done by the school board in early 2023 showed no good options for significant reduction of expense, meaning that increased revenue is the only option. Targeted fundraising, perhaps from the global Anglican communion or existing contacts, and increasing school fees are two possibilities.

SI 1.3: Keep fee structure plan aligned with school's identity

Rationale: CCIS exists in between distinct categories of international schools in the Arusha market. On one hand are schools offering international curricula at the lower end of the price range. On the other hand are those that are more expensive - more than triple that of CCIS. CCIS sits in the middle. Part of CCIS's *raison d'être* from the beginning was to provide *affordable* quality Christian education. While increased revenues are needed to meet the potential of the school, care must be taken to avoid pricing out its target customers. A plan for school fees would determine the track that CCIS wishes to be on, then gradually increase (or not) the fees accordingly.

SI 1.4: Conduct mapping exercise during registration for 2023-24

Rationale: Knowing where students live can be factored into decision making for land purchase.

SI 1.5: Purchase land

Rationale: Such a large decision should be made strategically. A small committee will create criteria for the plot and research a price range for a plot that meets those criteria. Criteria could include size, access to a paved road, need for additional infrastructure investment (water, electric, etc), growth potential of the neighbourhood. The purchase should be agreed on by the school board, with the school owner making the final decision. A funding mechanism must be identified, potentially including a loan.

SI 1.6: Communicate the vision

Rationale: The school community needs cohesion for fundraising to be effective. The land purchase committee will provide school management with architect drawings, master plan, site visits, and other opportunities to help the vision become tangible for members of the school community. Regular updates on fundraising and savings toward the financial goal will be important.

SI 1.7: Prioritise needs

Rationale: CCIS needs more space for several of its goals, including growth in facilities for the youngest students, play space, sports grounds, and growth into secondary school. A larger campus is needed. Purchase of land, however, does not settle the matter of building a secondary school. Focusing growth on the youngest students is advised to establish facilities and strengthen staff so that CCIS early childhood education is second to none in the region. A master plan for the new property could include space and drawings for a secondary school, but to be constructed as a later phase.

Key objective 2:

Ensure inclusive high quality education for all CCIS students

Strategic Initiative 2.1: Strengthen systems for learners with special needs.

Rationale: Students come with a range of needs and capacities for learning. All should be accommodated. This can be challenging for a small school, but opportunities remain to strengthen academic systems for these students. These include extra reading help, dyslexia training for teachers, ADHD training for teachers, support for gifted students, establishment of a pool of skilled aides who can support IEPs (at the school's or at parents' expense as appropriate). Include models of academic assessment that capture the full range of learners.

SI 2.2: Improve teacher retention and recruitment

Rationale: Strategies to maximise teacher retention and make the school attractive for recruitment of both international teachers and Tanzanian staff are critical to the provision of quality education. Professional development and motivational events are part of this. Management techniques to make staff feel valued and appreciated, increase salaries, and have peace in their workplace are important. Marketing efforts from SI 3.2 also will be helpful. Attention must also be paid to the needs of teacher assistants and support staff. All should feel that they have room to be creative, innovative, and thrive in their craft.

Specific considerations for staff include: Staff bus, staff housing, morning chai, school fees reimbursement for staff, and equal pay regardless of nationality.

SI 2.3: Maintain excellence in academic standards

Rationale: Academic excellence is important in fulfilling the core mission of the school, as well as getting and keeping students, especially at the higher classes where students' acceptance into secondary schools is a consideration. The recent creation of the position of academic mistress should be helpful in improving instructional competencies and following up on outcomes. High expectations, cooperation between students and parents, and availability of academic resources are factors. It is recommended for academic baselines to be taken early in the school year with milestones established and assessed for by the end of the year. Academic progress with individual students is a more valuable measure of excellence than standardised testing because it counts progress and recognises students as individuals.

Regarding curriculum, the British National curriculum seems to be meeting the immediate needs of the school. But as we look forward to growth and development of a secondary school, it will be valuable to investigate curricula that could be implemented in the future plans for secondary school. Ensure that it fits CCIS's culture and goals.

SI 2.4: Maintain and improve a supportive environment

Rationale: This is reported as a strength of CCIS, and it takes active attention to maintain. It includes management responsive to the needs of all, commitment to prayer and devotion, maintained emphasis on social and emotional learning.

SI 2.5: Institutional strengthening

Rationale: Strengthen institutional capacity through professional development. Review organogram. HR systems. This is especially critical as the school lays groundwork for growth. Institutional strengthening also includes assuring that support roles are filled by the right people, strict government compliance, timely payment of all statutory deductions and other benefits/taxes, maintenance of buildings and grounds, hygienic and tasty food preparation, safety standards in place, effective HR functions, provision of work permits, proper administrative and accounting practices, ensuring child safeguarding, and all of the other often unseen work that makes the core mission of educating children run smoothly.

Key Objective 3:

Have healthy, intentional communication

SI 3.1: Ensure healthy communications with parents - both individual and group

Rationale: Communications between the school and parents were identified as a source of confusion and created doubts in the past. It improved in 2023, and can continue to improve. This will do wonders in building trust and supporting people's needs. Specifically this includes:

- Having a point person on school management in charge of communications through the parents whatsapp group. Ensure this person understands the needs of parents and is equipped to communicate with them in a way most of them will receive as intended.
- Including as a recurring agenda item for teachers' meeting communication with individual parents (best practices, lessons learnt).
- Parent-Teachers meetings. These have been successful in the recent past, and are encouraged to continue.
- Parents Assemblies. These should be kept to a time limit, be conveniently timed for as many parents as possible, include Q&A time, and include some messaging that school management urgently wants parents to know. Recent successful examples of messaging aimed to clear misconceptions include sessions about academic assessments of students and

how older students are prepared for transitioning out of CCIS. Summaries and slides can be made available in the Whatsapp group for those unable to attend.

SI 3.2: Develop a marketing strategy and a communications policy

Rationale: The school has strengths that the wider world should know. A marketing strategy can be developed to project these strengths to CCIS's potential market. Some considerations include:

- Social media is one set of tools to accomplish this.
- Word of mouth is another (perhaps the best). Supporting members of the school community to be ambassadors for CCIS's strengths could go a long way in building an environment for growth.
- Purchase of school-owned vehicles would contribute to marketing.
- Another strategy is to showcase students' talents at events frequented by upper-class emigrants, such as Kili Fair and Karibu Fair.
- There is discontent from parents at other local international schools regarding student discipline and school culture. This can be interpreted as demand for good discipline and values. Marketing can exploit that demand.

Regarding a communications policy, having written direction will provide helpful guidance for proper communication, both internal and external. The external communications can be influencing the marketing, and vice versa.

SI 3.3: Have increased prominence in local community

Rationale: The school can take opportunities to play a more prominent role in the life of Olosiva, the village hosting CCIS. This includes collaboration with government primary schools and support of village initiatives. This should be budgeted for accordingly. Local perception of the failure of other international schools in Mateves (Kisongo) to uphold local commitments is [documented](#), and it is a pattern CCIS should not repeat.

4. Where are we now? An assessment

4a. Internal stakeholder perceptions

Perceptions were gathered as qualitative data from a questionnaire sent to parents in early 2023, observations from parent assemblies, and key informant interviews with school staff and management. Details [here](#).

- The questionnaire results indicated that CCIS is excelling most in the following areas:
 - The social & emotional learning at CCIS is strong
 - CCIS is excellent in building its students' Christian faith
 - People feel like they are part of the school community of CCIS
 - Children have a safe and conducive learning environment at CCIS
- Times when CCIS was at its best included events (fundraising, swimming gala, family days, Christmas performance, concerts, international lunch, etc) and morning devotions. There were overwhelmingly positive perceptions of CCIS teachers/staff.
- The most commonly mentioned phrases when describing the culture of CCIS were (in order): Christ-centred, warm/welcoming, family, social/community, nurturing/loving/supportive, and empowering.
- The most commonly mentioned phrases for areas to improve included (in order): regarding facilities/location/space, communication, staffing improvement (more staff, higher pay for Tanzanian teachers).
- The lowest scoring questionnaire response was to the statement that CCIS is academically competitive with other international schools, indicating this is an area of growth - especially for the highest grades/years. Parents reported not understanding how the curriculum is being taught.

4b. Market analysis

The Arusha area has several international schools and there is competition for students. The international schools are tiered by pricing. CCIS sits in the lower tier according to price. This gives many families the ability to access international-quality education at prices lower than half of the top tier. Some other observations:

- CCIS is smaller than most or all other options in the Arusha-area market.
- Some of the schools are owned by faith-based institutions, including UWC and St. Constantine, but they do not function as faith-based schools. CCIS is unique in this aspect.
- The options in the market tend to have highly developed facilities for classrooms and sports.
- Many offer pre-primary, primary, and secondary school, but some lack secondary school.
- There is a degree of racial sorting, with some schools predominantly Indian & Arab, white, or black, but all schools have some racial mixture.
- Academically, most or all schools in the market are using Cambridge curriculum and checkpoints.
- Most of the options in the market rely on word of mouth marketing. There is use of outdoor advertising, newsletters, social media presence, and engaging in international networks. Two allow use of their grounds for fairs (community events). Others allow use of their sports facilities, especially swimming pools, for events.

CCIS fills a niche in the market as a small Christian school with intentional focus on faith formation, strong social and emotional learning, and lower school fees than its competitors.

4c. Academic description

CCIS follows the British National Curriculum. This is identical in content to Cambridge, but lacks the checkpoint exams. The curriculum is augmented with subscription services for teachers to support assessment in maths (Abacus) and other subjects. Some of these online resources are also made available to parents. Class size varies, and efforts are made to keep them below 20. Each class has a teacher and a teacher's aide.

There is some consideration for students with special needs, but there are no dedicated special needs classes or teachers. Year 7/8 is combined as class sizes at the highest levels are very small in 2023-24. Academic oversight is provided by the academic teacher, with support from the principal.

4d. Governance & Leadership

The school owner is the Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro of the Anglican Church of Tanzania. It is personified by Bishop Stanley Hotay, who has led since the founding of the school. The owner has the final say on school governance matters. The school board is led by a chairperson, and the school director functions as the secretary. Board composition includes staff of DMK, teachers, local government, and parents. The board gives direction, approves the budget, and supports school management. Parents are welcome to join the Parents Council, whose leadership is elected. The Parents Council provides a channel for organising concerns of parents and bringing them to school management. It also supports school management as requested with specific projects, such as improvements to the playground equipment.

School management is led by a director. Other management includes the school principal, an academic mistress, an accountant, and an administrator.

The school's finances are overseen by the director and managed daily by an accountant. An external audit is completed annually and its report is submitted to the board. Financial planning is led by the school management, with the board giving approval to the annual budget.

4f. Risk analysis

A risk analysis exercise with stakeholders in March 2023 identified the following as the most pressing risks to the school. *Risk* here was defined mathematically as *Hazard x Vulnerability*.

Risk	Potential impacts	Mitigation strategies
1. Insufficient funds from school fees	Decline in availability or quality of services to students, inability to pay salaries, decline spiral.	Increase # students; increase school fees (could result in children leaving); improved budgeting
2. Insufficient funds from outside sources	Limited ability to grow	Communicate what costs are attached to which services; allow room for parents to provide support where need is; seek grants or external funds.
3. Teachers leaving	Instability; lower quality education	Acknowledge the unmet needs of teachers and meet them
4. Students leaving	Insufficient funds (Risk #1)	Show evidence of strong academics, social & emotional learning, and trustworthy leadership
4. Loss of reputation	Decreased enrollment (Risk #4)	This is a result of the other risks coming true. Preventing them prevents loss of reputation

5. Supporting documents

Strategic Plan [here](#).

Notes of Strategic Planning meeting #1 on 14/01/2023 [here](#).

Notes of Strategic Planning meeting #2 on 02/03/2021 [here](#).

CCIS Assessment questionnaire results from February 2023 [here](#).

CCIS Assessment questionnaire thematic tagging of results [here](#).

Objectives framework draft [here](#).

Summary slideshow [here](#).

Appendix 1: Key Objectives Framework

Key Objectives	Strategic initiatives	Means of verification	Timeline
KO1: Prepare to purchase land for the development of a new campus	SI1.1 Emphasise improvement of facilities for the youngest students	At least one of the advised steps is taken to improve the physical infrastructure for preschool	Work is budgeted in late 2023 and completed by August 2024
	SI1.2 Improve cash position	Surplus is integrated into the operational budget, add revenue streams	Budgeting for 2024-25 and annually thereafter
	SI1.3 Make fee structure aligned with school's identity	Fee structure rationale is communicated to parents in each term	Starting December 2023 with annual review
	SI1.4 Conduct mapping exercise	Exercise conducted y/n	August/September 2023.
	SI1.5 Purchase land	Land purchased y/n	Land purchase team to meet by Sept 2024. Purchase by mid-2025.
	SI1.6 Communicate the vision	Communication facing parents goes out	Within the same term as the first meeting of the land committee
	SI1.7 Prioritise needs	None	Ongoing
KO2: Ensure inclusive high-quality education for all CCIS students	SI2.1 Strengthen systems for learners with special needs	Strategies developed by school mgmt	Implementation of at least one of the recommendations is in place by early 2024, with steady growth annually.
	SI2.2 Teacher retention and recruitment	Annual progress report, staff bus purchase	Annual
	SI2.3 Excellence in academic standards	Annual progress report	Annual
	SI2.4 Maintain and improve a supportive environment		Ongoing
	SI2.5 Institutional strengthening	Annual progress report	Ongoing
KO3: Have healthy, intentional communication	SI3.1 Ensure healthy communication with parents, both individual and group	Parent-led activity has taken place	Ongoing
	SI3.2 Develop a marketing strategy and a communications policy	Strategy developed and implemented	First steps by early 2024, more robust strategy being executed by late 2024 and evaluated in late 2025.
	SI3.3 Have increased prominence in local community	Recognition from local government or govt school leadership	Annual review by September