

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is posing with her arms raised in front of a large mural of a monarch butterfly. The butterfly is painted on a light blue wall and has vibrant orange, black, and yellow wings. Behind the woman is a chain-link fence and a building with orange horizontal siding. The building has two windows with white frames and metal grates. Above the woman, the words "Casa Hogar Sion" are painted in blue on the building's facade. A red trash bin is visible behind the fence.

Casa Hogar Sion

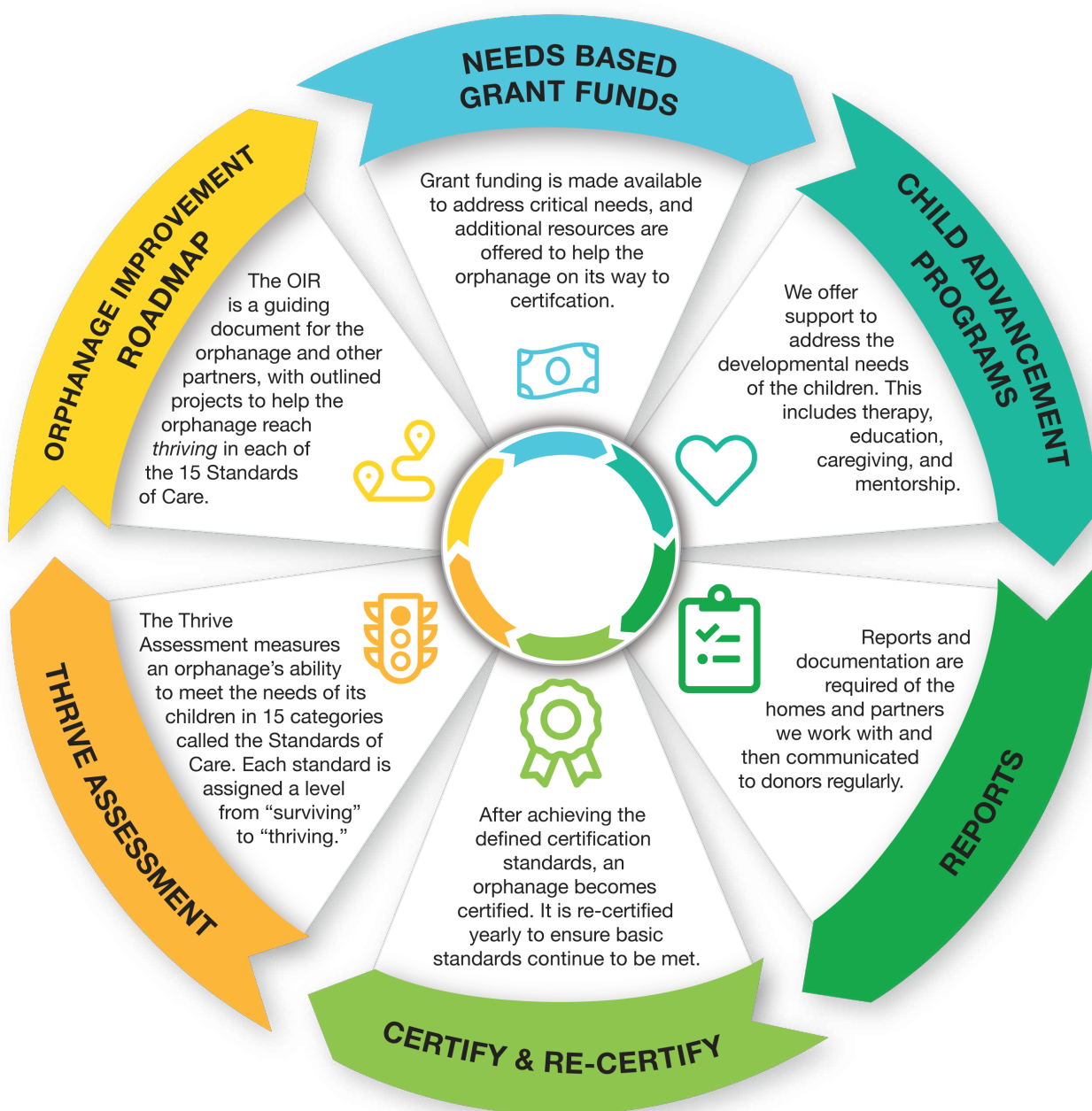
Tijuana

ORPHANAGE IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

November | 2021



The Thrive Plan





Thrive Plan Agreement

A Child's Hope Foundation (ACHF) has a unique approach to “Lift Orphans from Surviving to Thriving.” We are dedicated to programs that offer long-term success. Through vetted relationships and clear priorities, we help connect donors to programs that are already working.

Each Orphanage Improvement Roadmap (OIR) is built with the orphanage leadership after reviewing the results from the Thrive Assessment. In order to provide children with better outcomes, orphanage leadership prioritizes initiatives and works with A Child's Hope Foundation (ACHF) to create a plan for the next six months and beyond. The result is a document that allows donors and other parties to clearly see how they can contribute to improving the environment that will allow orphaned children to thrive.

Achieving certification demonstrates the ability of the Orphanage Leadership to provide a place where children can thrive, heal, and be prepared for a joyful and productive life. For most orphanages, the certification process takes a year. ACHF is deeply committed to our orphanage partners, and we demonstrate that commitment through grants made to help achieve strategic initiatives, coordinating with a network of partners to help address needs, and building strong, ongoing relationships with orphanage leadership to provide support, coaching, expertise, and advocacy.

Orphanages will be recertified annually, using the Thrive Assessment and building a new OIR every six months, while providing regular reports back to ACHF. ACHF then reports back to donors, sharing the orphanage's progress towards their goals. A Child's Hope Foundation works as a partner with orphanage leadership to ensure that improvements are maintained and that children have the best opportunity to thrive.

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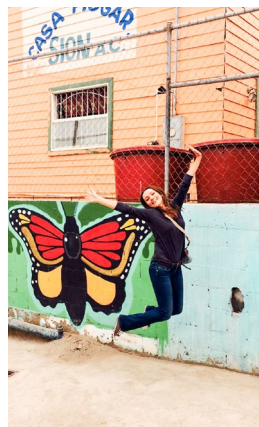
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Overview of Orphanage

Background

In 1999, Mamá Carmen and Papá Jorge Gonzales opened the doors of their own home to abandoned children living on the streets. Word spread in the community about what Jorge and Carmen were doing for these children and the community. Before long, relatives of more children who could not care for them were dropping them off in the middle of the night in the backyard of Jorge and Carmen's home to be cared for by them. Children even came to their doors who were frightened because of a history of abuse in their own homes.

Not having enough space in their own home, Mamá Carmen and Papá Jorge used their retirement funds to buy a small property 24 years ago in Tijuana. There, they built Casa Hogar Sion, an orphanage to be able to care for as many children as possible in their new space.

Within months of their courageous start, Jorge and Carmen were “parents” to more than 60 children. Food was often scarce in the early days and lights went out frequently. Meanwhile, the household struggled to make ends meet with very limited resources and sometimes even without.

Caring for one hundred children is not without its struggles, but with the love, devotion, and strength of Mamá Carmen, Papá Jorge, and the staff, the orphanage has flourished.

Thanks to the efforts of affiliated churches, independent groups, private and corporate donors, there are now 7 buildings on site. All the children go to school and some of the older children are in private schools or in technical careers.

There is a computer lab with 10 new networked computers and classes are held five days a week.

Mamá Carmen not only wants to protect and care for her children, but she also wants to give them the opportunity and hope that only education can provide. By focusing on education and leading by example, mom, dad, and staff care for their children and their children's children.

Casa Hogar Sion is part of a network of private orphanages in northern Baja California.

Casa Hogar Sion is located in Tijuana, very close to the U.S.-Mexico border, and is home to 35 children from 4 to 23 years of age.

Although some children are taken there for short stays of 1 to 2 years, most children will live there for 5 to 10 years or more.

The orphanage has a dedicated staff of 15 people, 10 of whom live and work there. Casa Hogar Sion is fully committed to providing a quality education for all of the children in their care. They pay for all children to attend private schools in middle and high school because of the higher quality education it provides. If the children successfully complete high school, they provide scholarships for higher education.

24 years after the founding of this home, 1,500 children have passed through Casa Hogar Sion. Some have been adopted, others have been reintegrated into their families and those who have remained have been supported to become professionals.

Mission

That children enjoy the security of a home, with the purpose that in the future they can build healthy relationships with others, succeed in their studies and work, be productive and be able to adapt to society.

What Makes Orphanage Unique?

We foster a community in harmony and love as a family, making children and adolescents see this place as their home and not as a boarding school.

Long-Term Vision

That the boys and girls we serve become successful professionals or entrepreneurs, who serve society by combining their family integrity with the social, moral, and spiritual values they receive at Casa Hogar Sion. They will be able to keep them all their lives and transmit them to others.

WHAT PIECES OF THE VISION DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT 2-3 YEARS?

To channel our youth and children with the right tools, so that when they leave, they can be good men and women in society.



The Thrive Assessment

What is the Thrive Assessment?

The United Nations (UN), an international organization, has worked tirelessly to find ways to promote a better quality of life so that basic needs are met. In 1959, the UN adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, and nutrition.

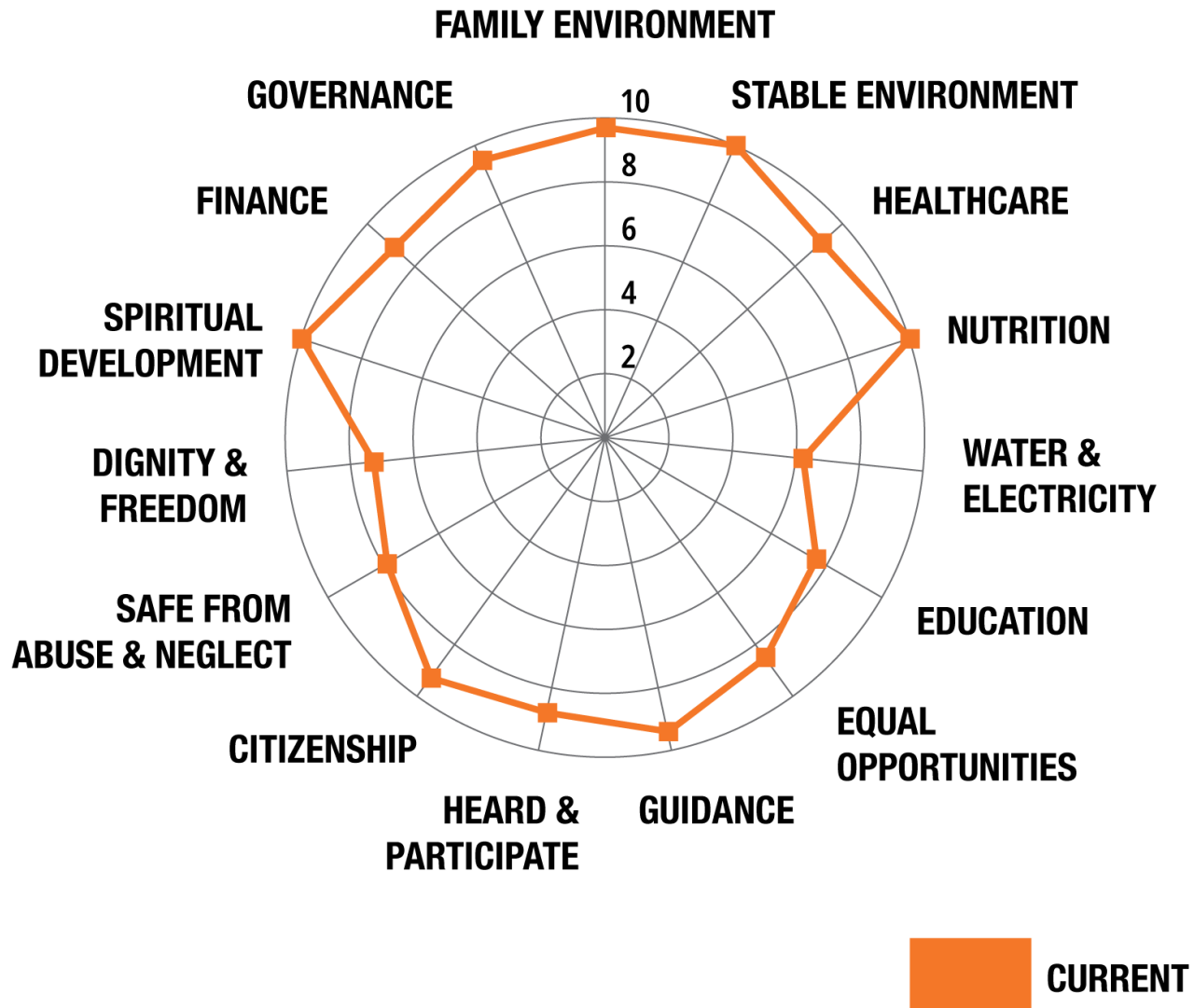
Based on the adopted declaration, The Miracle Foundation (miraclefoundation.org), a family-focused non-profit that provides resources to orphans mostly in India, codified the UN's Rights of the Child and developed a Thrive Scale, which measures how well child care facilities are able to obtain each of the rights to the children in their care. This Thrive Scale not only gives child care facility leaders a picture of how they're doing, but specific and practical steps to improve.



With permission, A Child's Hope Foundation has revised The Thrive Scale to make it adaptable for orphanages. We have codified all 12 Rights, as well as a Finance, Governance, and Human Resource standard, resulting in a total of 15 ACHF 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 to chart the progress of each standard. It, along with the Orphanage Improvement Roadmap and individual Child's Hope Plans, will measure and help obtain these rights for each child.

Current Thrive Scale for Orphanage





Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level in this category. The children are grouped by gender and age. For the past few years, the groups of children are no larger than 12 children per casita in order to provide individualized care. The children have a married couple who take care of them and are committed to this mission, having been in this work for more than 5 years. Caregivers have completed all child care training and have been evaluated by a specialist in child care standards. Sibling groups have the opportunity to spend unstructured time together and engage in joint activities such as eating, playing together, and other activities within the home.

For Casa Hogar Sion, the training and evaluation of its care staff is one of its main goals, ensuring that the service and care to the children is always of quality and warmth. With this view on the standard of child care, Casa Hogar Sion does not represent a major challenge and it will not be difficult for them to maintain a prosperous score in this category.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **THRIVING** level in this category. The home has 5 areas of care divided by age and gender. The groups of children are being cared for by at least three married couples and two caregivers who have been working at the home for more than 5 and 10 years. The workers are informed about their duties according to their position and receive direct guidance from both Carmen and Cande on strategies on how to create a stable and loving family environment.

In addition, they have the support of a psychologist who visits them at least three times a week and also provides training on topics relevant to the family environment within the home. The couples in charge of the children are stable figures for the children and serve as role models. Currently, Director Carmen is conducting the pertinent and necessary evaluations on another couple to determine if they meet the necessary requirements to be added to her work team. If this couple passes all the necessary filters for their hiring, they will be assigned to care for elementary school boys between the ages of 6 and 10 years old.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to remain at this level, it is necessary to have an additional pair of house parents to care for the group of primary school boys.

- ☐ Having a house parent couple to care for elementary school children.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **THRIVING** level in this category. The children have received annual wellness exams, however, at least 5 children identified with this need still need to have vision screenings. All the children have received their vaccinations, however, although we have proof of the applications, a couple of vaccination booklets are still pending; they are working on it to have 100% of the documents for each child.

The children's home has a doctor and a hospital for emergencies, and they have close contact with a doctor who provides immediate attention if needed. The adolescents have personal hygiene products and have received instruction on their use and proper disposal. The home also has a nurse's office that is fully equipped with emergency and first aid kits. In addition, one of the young women who still lives in the home and is studying nursing is in charge of keeping the nurse's office tidy, ready, and equipped. She is also in charge of managing and controlling the medications for each of the children.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to maintain and advance a little further in this category, it is necessary to perform visual evaluations of the children identified with this need and to have a medical emergency fund of at least \$1,500 USD.

- ☐ Routine vision screening of children
- ☐ Have an emergency medical expense fund of \$1,500 USD.



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level in this category. The children receive appetizing and tasty meals. The cook and kitchen staff have received support from a nutritionist to verify that the children receive the nutrients necessary for their healthy development. The director also ensures that there is always a variety of foods available in their kitchen to promote a varied, healthy, and sufficient diet for the children. The kitchen staff has received instruction and training in hygienic food handling, storage strategies, cleaning and disinfection of work areas in the kitchen. Their kitchen and stove areas are well ventilated and free of toxic substances and pests.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to remain at the Thriving level in this category, they must continue to train their staff on an annual basis so that they can continue to carry out their work as they have been doing up to now.



Right to Clean Water and Electricity

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **SURVIVING** level in this category. There are several important problems that need to be solved urgently in this category, as they may be a source of infection or disease for the children. The home does not have a safe drinking water system since the one it currently has is not adequate for human consumption. There are continual problems with bacteria in both the water cistern and its piping. This situation has caused health problems for some children in the past. Sewage from the neighborhood sewage system runs right under the house.

Although Director Carmen and Cande have gone on numerous occasions to report and request support from the local authorities to solve this problem, no solution has been found. As for the facilities in general, they are functional. However, they require an urgent corrective and preventive maintenance plan to address the priorities of the home. This includes replacing at least 80% of the showerheads, sink faucets, and toilet bowls, which are either missing or useless. As for lighting to ensure the safety of children, at least three outdoor lighting fixtures are needed to improve this aspect.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to advance in this category, it needs to have a detailed maintenance plan highlighting its priorities for immediate attention. This includes replacing and installing all missing or broken bathroom fixtures so that the children can use the showers, toilets, and sinks, installing at least three light fixtures to improve outdoor lighting in courtyards and common areas, and last but not least, completely replacing the drinking water system to ensure that the children have clean water to drink.

- ☐ Create and implement an annual maintenance plan
- ☐ Placing three light fixtures in external common courtyards
- ☐ Follow up with local authorities on the issue of wastewater running under the home.



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **SUSTAINING** level in this category. Most of the children of elementary school age are behind in their education, due to being behind in areas such as reading and mathematical operations since before arriving at the children's home. Some of the children have only been promoted to a higher grade because of their age and not for reaching the developmental milestones according to their age, a situation that puts them at a disadvantage in their school performance in the following years.

In addition, due to the current educational conditions brought on by pandemic issues, it has been very difficult for the children's home to maintain a tutor or teacher on staff to follow up on these needs. Another important factor affecting this category is that the home has internet service from two different companies, however, the internet connection is not of sufficient quality or support to serve the needs of the home and the children's online classes.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to move to the next level in this category, improvements need to be made to the internet network to ensure that all children can have access to the internet and therefore quality online education. In addition, they must have the support of at least one tutor or teacher on-site to attend to and follow up on the educational needs of the children. They must also have sufficient educational and art materials available to all children.

- ☐ Improvements to the Internet network
- ☐ Support from a tutor to regularize children's academic level
- ☐ Having sufficient school supplies, educational toys and art materials for all children



Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is at the **SUSTAINING** level in this category. The children have adults who serve as mentors or role models and are available to assist the children when they have questions or concerns. All children regardless of age, gender, disability, or family history receive equal opportunities for education and development. Necessary measures and adaptations have also been implemented to address children's physical disabilities.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to advance to the next level, they need to improve some spaces in the dormitories so that the children have a personal space where they can store their belongings.

In addition, they must have the necessary funds to pay for extracurricular activities such as soccer, dance, and music classes, including transportation.

- ☐ Improve some spaces in the dormitories so that children have a personal space to store their belongings.
- ☐ To have the necessary funds to pay for extracurricular activities such as soccer, dance and music classes.



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level in this category. In Casa Hogar Sion, the formation and values that are taught to the children are based on Christian education, therefore respect for others and for each other is one of the most important pillars in their formation. Mamá Carmen and Cande have been in charge of talking to the boys and girls about the changes related to puberty and have answered their doubts on this subject, however, they are not the only figures available.

The home has the support of a psychologist who provides individual attention to the children on a weekly basis. She comes to the home two days a week and attends to most of the children's situations. She is also assigned to provide training to the staff on topics relevant to the development and well-being of the children in the children's home. For their part, the caregivers have received ongoing training from other local support staff on topics such as self-esteem, positive parenting, adolescent sexual behavior, among other topics of interest and concern for the children's development. When the staff has needed guidance and psychological support, Mamá Carmen and Cande have found local resources to assist their staff and themselves, so that they can perform their duties more effectively and always with a focus on the care and protection of the children.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to advance in this category, the therapist/psychologist needs to work more hours in the home so that she can see the children more frequently and attend to situations that may generate risks or significant challenges among the children.

There is also a need to implement strategies for the creation of development plans or written Child Hope Plans for young people from the age of 15.

- ☐ To have the psychologist more hours during the week.
- ☐ Implement Child Hope Plans with youth over 15 years of age.



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **THRIVING** level in this category. At Casa Hogar Sion, the children have the opportunity to decide what to do in their free time, as long as this does not exceed the rules of coexistence and well-being of the home. They also have the opportunity to include their tastes in the food menus and decide the activities and menus for important dates for the home. The children have the opportunity to decide on their clothing every day. The home provides them with opportunities to exercise leadership activities and they are always informed about their medical and health situations and any procedures for their care.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to continue advancing in this category, it is necessary to implement the Child's Hope Plans and keep them updated on a monthly basis.

☐ Implementing Child Hope plans



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **THRIVING** level in this category. Each child has his or her identity documents. This task has been of great interest and a constant struggle for Carmen and Cande, who in the last few months have managed to achieve that all the children have their birth certificates and health cards. The children are assigned chores at home, which they have to perform on a daily basis and recognize the importance of their participation in the dynamics, order, cleanliness, and maintenance of the home. These tasks are assigned by the caregivers and by the director herself and are appropriate to their age and gender. These activities undoubtedly help to keep the house free of garbage and misplaced objects or toys that could endanger the safety of the children and adults in the home.

The home celebrates important events and participates in national celebrations or holidays. Its most important and favorite time is the Christmas season. In terms of life skills development activities, all the adults in the home play a very important role in this life education process. Each one contributes to this process from his or her experience and day-to-day activities, and the young people are encouraged to get involved in personal processes such as paying tuition, making bank deposits, delivery, and processing of documents, etc., in such a way that they know and participate in it for their personal growth.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to continue making progress in this category, it needs to implement and follow up on the Child's Hope Plans that help young people from the age of 13 to develop independent living skills.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is at the **SUSTAINING** level in this category. The home is well protected and safe from the surrounding community. Children's bedrooms are assigned by age and gender. The staff has been trained in positive parenting and discipline alternatives. The home has an abuse prevention policy that applies to all staff working onsite. This also includes visitors, with the firm intention of preventing the children from being victimized by any form of abuse or neglect.

The children have received instructions on how to report bullying, and staff training is held every three months on abuse prevention. Part of the policy for protection from abuse is that the home does not allow an adult to be alone with a child. Children's scheduled outings are always accompanied by an adult member of the home's staff. The background and references of its employees, as well as those of visitors, are checked by the director, and a copy of a letter stating that they have no criminal record or problems with the law is kept in the staff's file.

As for the children's files, since they are received upon admission, there is no psychological assessment of each child. This places them in important challenges about the real mental health conditions of the children and about any trauma situation before their arrival at the children's home since there is no clear and reliable background of the therapeutic needs of the children.

Two of the most important problems in the home are the bathrooms and shower facilities throughout the place. Their installments are in very poor condition or do not work, and they do not provide an adequate level of privacy when showering. There is also a deficiency in the lighting in the common areas of the home, which needs to be improved to ensure the safety of the children on the property.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to continue advancing in this category, it is necessary to improve bathroom and shower facilities to ensure the children's privacy, improve the lighting in common areas, and improve the quality of the children's playgrounds. They will also need to have psychological evaluations for all children.

- ☐ Improve bathroom and shower facilities to ensure children's privacy
- ☐ Improve lighting in common areas
- ☐ To have psychological evaluations for all children.



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, Casa Hogar Sion is at the **SUSTAINING** level. In accordance with the education and values that Casa Hogar Sion provides, the children are encouraged to be kind to each other. The children have access to their own bed and have the opportunity to bathe daily if water is available. The children have sufficient clothing and footwear, however, they are limited in terms of underwear and winter clothing.

The children's beds are provided with sheets that are washed weekly or earlier if necessary. However, they only have one sheet per bed, so it has to be washed and dried the same day so that it can be used again immediately. The staff and directors of the home have been trained in safety issues and what to do in case of an emergency. The children have the opportunity to do extra chores to earn some benefit and are also recognized for their achievements and progress. The home has a designated area for recreation and play, however, there is not enough safe and age-appropriate playground equipment.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to advance to the next level, they need to have at least 60 sets of sheets for all the children's beds and provide sufficient underwear and winter clothing for the children. They will also need to make improvements to the children's play area, and make sure that the play area is age-appropriate for all the children.

- ☐ At least 60 sets of bed linens for all children's beds
- ☐ Provide sufficient underwear and winter clothing for children.
- ☐ Improve the children's play area, and make it age-appropriate for all children.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level. One of the cornerstones of this home is the education and spiritual development of the children. Mamá Carmen and Papá Jorge, being Christian pastors, pay special attention to providing all the love, support, and teaching that the word of God provides. For this category, the children have the opportunity to participate in an active way and belong to a Christian community that has, directly and indirectly, supported the home since its creation. The children participate in community prayer, spiritual rituals, Bible study inside and outside the home, and participate in Sunday school. The youth have the support of a pastor assigned especially for them. As pastors, Carmen, Cande, and Jorge lead this process in which they are taught about God and religion. At home, they are taught about right and wrong and how to remedy or compensate for their wrongs. With the support of their spiritual community, they develop a bond with God and maintain their faith and be grateful for what God provides for their development and well-being.



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The home has the services of a professional accountant who is in charge of keeping the books of income and expenses of the home. Such records are available whenever they are requested for review or internal and external audits. The accountant is also responsible for filing annual tax returns in accordance with Mexican tax laws and validates the home's books and records. The home has administrative measures in place to minimize the misuse of resources and is committed to transparently showing its donors the use of the resources it receives.

The home operates with an annual budget, however, it is always in constant movement due to investments in construction, maintenance, and improvement of the facilities among other expenses due to the growth of the orphanage, the use of its facilities, pending infrastructure issues, services, civil protection guidelines and regulations, safety certifications and the population it serves.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to continue to advance in this category, it needs to develop a construction plan and budget for the year to address its needs for growth, maintenance, and priority projects.

- ☐ Develop a construction plan and budget for the year.
- ☐ Identify its most important projects and implement the plan.



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa Hogar Sion is currently at the **THRIVING** level. The house has the documentation proving that the property where the orphanage is located belongs to the institution and is intended only to provide housing for children and young people in orphanage situations. Therefore, any improvement made to the place is and will only be for the benefit of the children.

In terms of permits, the home has a current state operating license and has all its certifications in propane gas, electricity, infrastructure, civil protection plan, and firefighting. In addition, its staff and directors have been trained in emergency care measures, and with all of this, they are recognized as a safe place for the children they care for.

Regarding the members of the caregiver team, Carmen is in the process of hiring a new couple to be assigned to the care of the children who require more attention. This candidate couple is in the process of being evaluated for the position.

In order for Casa Hogar Sion to continue advancing in this category, it is necessary to complement staff training with the topic of children's rights and child participation in order to cover 100% of this category.

- ☐ Train staff on children's rights and child participation.

Strategic Initiatives

SAFE AND CLEAN DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	To have a drinking water purification system that guarantees the necessary health and hygiene standards for human consumption and that does not represent any risk for children. This system must have easily accessible facilities and a continuous maintenance plan as well as water quality tests for human consumption.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	<\$5,000

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF TOILETS AND SHOWERS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Implement repair and maintenance works of all the bathrooms, sinks and showers of the home. For this purpose, it will be necessary to change multiple bathroom accessories, toilets, faucets and perform remodeling and construction works inside the showers of the children's dorms. This project must guarantee the children's right to privacy and provide functional bathrooms with the necessary equipment for their proper operation.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$5,000 - \$10,000

AUTOMATIC WATER STORAGE SYSTEM WITH AUTOMATIC FILLING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	To have a water storage system to ensure that the home will always have water, even if there are water outages in the city, to meet all cleaning, hygiene and washing needs. This will then guarantee the right to health and the right to clean water for all the children and people living in the home. At the same time, they would also be preventing possible situations that cause diseases, contamination and risk of lack of personal hygiene or lack of hygiene in the facilities.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$10,000 - \$15,000

