



Overview of this Children's Home

Mission & Vision

Sveti Mina is a family-type care center (FTCC) designed to provide a family-style living experience for up to eight residents (0 to 18 years old) who require constant medical supervision. It is part of a larger social complex located in Montana, Bulgaria. The entire complex is accessible for children and young people with disabilities.

Each child/young person has his or her own room with a single bed, a private bathroom, and personal space for belongings.

The kitchen is fully furnished for food storage and preparation, and the dining area has sufficient tables and chairs for all children.

There is a "family room" where all the children and young people can gather during the day.

The offices for staff are appropriately equipped and secure.

A secure storage unit is available.

There is an accessible outdoor playground with a lawn.

Currently, Sveti Mina is home to 8 children, from 3-18 years of age, all of whom have severe medical disabilities such as cerebral palsy and blindness caused by periventricular leukomalacia (PV), a type of brain damage often occurring in premature children.

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The director of the FTCC, Galina Ilieva, is an exemplary leader and effective manager. Sveti Mina has 6 permanent caregivers, 6 nurses, and 1 doctor on staff, who work in shifts to provide 24-hour care. Staff turnover has been very low, which provides continuity for the children.

Good connections and partnerships:

Sveti Mina has benefitted from American and Bulgarian partnerships. Since February 2022, they have partnered with One Heart Foundation. Several other Bulgarian organizations also donate food and diapers, and some provide funds to improve services for the children. This kind of support allows Sveti Mina to continue functioning smoothly and provide a normal, happy life for the young people in their care.

Mission and Vision

Sveti Mina's main goal is to provide continuous 24-hour medical and individualized care and support in an environment as close to a family home. Their vision includes:

Increasing available medical services and continuing to provide high quality, cutting-edge care for children with disabilities:

Researching the individual needs of the children and preparing care plans tailored to the needs of each child;

Providing up-to-date staff training, according to their legal rights, the current standard of care, and the best practices in the field.

Galya and her team members are dedicated to maintaining and improving the standard of living and care in a unique "family style" atmosphere that offers personalized care in conditions that are both attentive and supportive. The staff is committed to raising happy children by providing them with excellent housing, proper nutrition, healthcare, and education. To realize this mission, everyone at Sveti Mina treats the children with respect, models appropriate behavior, and provides support to help each child reach his or her full potential.

What makes this home so unique?

The management and team are a very important part of the family at Sveti Mina. Caregivers, nurses, and doctors are motivated and have chosen to remain at Sveti Mina to provide the children with security, continuity, and a real "family."

Because of the excellent conditions at home, including this sense of community, there has been no staff turnover over the past few years.

Long-Term Vision

Over the next ten years, Galya would like to improve the children's quality of life by doing renovation work on the buildings and grounds. She would also like to make developmentally appropriate activities and materials available to the children.

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

Over the next two to three years, Galya would like to improve the outdoor play areas to make them more accessible for children with disabilities.



The Thrive Assessment

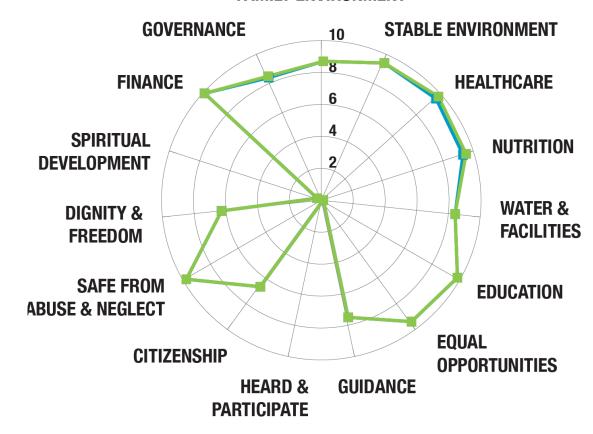
What is the Thrive Assessment?

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 and compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Current Thrive Scale

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT









CURRENT

Strategic Initiatives

SPECIAL PURCHASE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Purchase of diapers, wet wipes, and baby food.iiii
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$750

PLAYGROUND RENOVATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Sveti Mina would like to renovate the yard and playground area with adaptive playground equipment, benches, and green areas.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$5,000

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SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at a THRIVING level. Six caregivers ensure that the children and young people receive full-time care. Galya and her team have created an excellent family and home environment that creates a sense of stability for the children, even though the caregivers work shifts. The achievement is rare in Bulgaria.

Although many of the children living at Sveti Mina have biological families, only about 50% have regular contact with their parents. Galya tries to encourage visits when appropriate, but it is a complicated situation that depends on the family and the social services department.

No steps have been identified/required at this time.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at a THRIVING level. Galya and the medical personnel and caregivers interact with the children in a loving manner. The children and caregivers participate together in activities, during meals, and at playtime. All of the adults strive to have positive contact with the children daily. For example, they love celebrating birthdays, name days, and national holidays with the children. Because of the wonderful atmosphere that Galya encourages, there is very little staff turnover, which helps the children develop long-term, consistent relationships.

No steps have been identified/required at this time.

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level. Children have access to basic medical and dental care, and their caregivers help them learn good health and hygiene habits as their health situation allows. The home is clean and in excellent condition.

It is very important to the administration that good recordkeeping practices are followed. If a child arrives without all the necessary documents, documentation is immediately begun and maintained.

Although children have eye exams, this does not happen every year. Children also do not undergo orthodontic examinations because they are expensive and non-essential.

Over the past six months, special care has been focused at helping the children to brush their teeth.

No steps have been identified/required at this time.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level. The FTCC provides high-quality, nutritious, and tasty food, which is supplied by a catering company according to the ages and needs of the children. Over the past six months, Galya has ensured that the children's menu has included more fruit and vegetables. The menus are developed by a nutritionist. The children receive adequate protein intake, as meat (pureed) is served weekly. The FTCC also accepts donations of commercially available food, such as pureed baby food.

Even though Sveti Mina does not maintain a commercial kitchen, the staff would like to receive food handling and hygiene training.

☐ Provide staff training on food handling and hygiene.

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Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the SUSTAINING level. In general, the facilities are in excellent condition. Although the water is potable for all needs (drinking, washing, cooking, etc.), Sveti Mina would like bottled or spring water available since the water in the region is highly chlorinated and is dangerous for the children's health.

☐ Purchase two water dispensers. (\$200-400 USD)



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level. Even though all eight children have severe disabilities which require constant care, the director works to ensure that they receive educational opportunities appropriate for their abilities. The children have access to tablets for educational purposes, and a teacher works with them daily. Their educational progress is tracked by a special committee. One of the children, who is in 11th grade and studying computer science, receives tutoring from a teacher who works with him daily. Although the children cared for at Sveti Mina are severely disabled, the staff strives to provide educational opportunities as appropriate.

- ☐ Secure donations for their library, either through donations or by participating in a program that provides this kind of support.
- ☐ Identify volunteers to help with lessons and reading.

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level. Because the children are very severely disabled, it is difficult to identify ways to receive equal opportunities as typically-developing children. Galya and her team want to identify ways to offer the children more choices in their daily lives, if possible. Often, this is dependent on the capacity of each individual child.

No steps have been identified/required at this time.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the SUSTAINING level. Although it has been difficult to articulate ways in which the children at Sveti Mina can meaningfully participate in guidance situations, Galya and her team would like to investigate the possibility of providing therapeutic counseling as appropriate.

Provide monthly therapy options for the children.

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Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Although Sveti Mina was not scored in this section, they would like to begin developing individualized plans for each child, including (as far as possible) goals for the child's future.

☐ Develop individual plans for each child, outlining their future goals.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, Sveti Mina is at the SUSTAINING level. National and local holidays are celebrated, with the children participating as much as possible. The home and yard are kept in good condition. Caregivers model responsible citizenship and are currently identifying ways in which the children can participate in these aspects of social life.

No steps have been identified/required at this time No steps have been identified/required at this time.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level. The staff treats children respectfully and does not use corporal punishment, not only because it is prohibited by law but also because they do not believe in this method of interaction. There is an atmosphere of calmness and love for the children in the home, which the director and all other personnel strive to maintain. When there is a need for a psychologist, the FTCC requests one so the children can get support. The director and personnel also talk to the children about rules and boundaries, appropriate sexual and romantic behavior, self-esteem, and managing emotions, according to their mental and emotional level of understanding.

For Sveti Mina to continue at a thriving level, support is needed from therapists and psychologists both to work in the home with the children and to train the staff.

Secure additional support from psychologists and therapists. (\$600 USD per month)



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at a SURVIVING level. The staff ensures that the children are treated with dignity and respect. Each child has his or her own bed, and bedding and clothing are kept clean. Children are bathed when needed, and their teeth are brushed regularly. In addition, the staff receives training on safety protocols.

Although there are toys, games, and activities for the children, Sveti Mina would like to ensure that there are sufficient supplies for all of the children. They would also like to develop the outdoor play area to be more inclusive and accessible. To achieve this, Galya will get an offer from a contractor for how much it will cost and the amount of time the project will take. She has begun working on a schedule for this project.

Find donors to help with the renovation project.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the SURVIVING level. Because of the severity of disabilities that most children have, they do not participate in religious or spiritual opportunities. However, any child that wishes to may participate in religious holidays or any kind of spiritual guidance that would be appropriate. The next Thrive Assessment will have more applicable questions about the unique circumstances of this home.

☐ Provide appropriate spiritual and religious materials and facilitate religious opportunities for the children as appropriate, including visits to a local Orthodox church for religious holidays if they desire.



SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the THRIVING level.

The FTCC is very meticulous with tracking income and expenses, and all documents are maintained and available for review or audit. Tax returns are filed on time each year as required by the government. In addition, the home has documents for each child and strives to maintain correct data and documentation. The director and staff have a weekly meeting to discuss the most urgent situations in the home and propose solutions to their challenges.

For St. Mina to remain at a thriving level, the director must be trained to create a comprehensive annual budget in which everyone participates together, thus integrating all areas and services of the home into one budget with a comprehensive vision and understanding.

☐ Receive training on creating a comprehensive budget.

Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Sveti Mina is currently at the SUSTAINING level. The home meets all licensing, auditing, and management requirements. There are regular daily and weekly staff meetings at the home. The activities and duties of all staff are clearly defined, and they have all the legal documents supporting their activities in the home. Galya and her team have received sufficient training in their roles, and there is a plan for continuing education and training to ensure quality childcare. All staff members have a file that is continuously updated.

Over the past six months, the team has begun to meet more regularly, with a focus on identifying sources of support and education connected with their job descriptions and responsibilities.

To move to a thriving level, various learning initiatives could take place, including attachment, child development, increasing child-centered participation, and leadership meetings.

☐ Hold learning initiatives throughout the year.





Hope · Life · Future for Orphans One Heart Bulgaria

One Heart Bulgaria was founded in 2003 in order to improve the lives of children living in Bulgarian orphanages. Since that time, they have impacted thousands of children through their programs and initiatives. Visit www.oneheart-bg.org for more information!

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

