

# Ghana Make a Difference

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Ghana



## IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

May | 2023



A Child’s Hope Foundation

families by providing a path to self-reliance through education, adult literacy, vocational training, social assistance, healthy living, and access to medical care. Many of the children sheltered at GMAD have been rescued from labor trafficking and have never attended school. In addition to the home, the GMAD Academy of Learning was created in 2017 to provide a powerful curriculum that is customized and flexible to better meet the needs of our children. Unique for Ghana, our children learn on tablets and laptops. The school is located onsite.

Long-term, GMAD hopes to double their capacity from 60 children to 120 as well as complete a new school to educate these children and others in the community who are unable to attend school. Ultimately, the goal of Ghana Make a Difference is to always be, pound for pound, the most impactful place you can put a dollar. They run their operations using sound business practices, operating on donations and volunteer efforts, so 100% of every dollar goes directly to the cause. Anyone can make a difference at GMAD.

Recent Accomplishments

Based on the last improvement roadmap, GMAD utilized funds from ACHF to complete significant renovations to the kitchen which included expanding the square footage and extending gas and water access to the area. The kitchen is now separate from areas of foot traffic which has increased safety, as well as created a better environment for kitchen staff.

Overview of this Children’s Home

Background & Mission

Cory and Stacey Hofman first traveled to Ghana in May of 2012. During their trip, they saw so many children that were hungry, abandoned and without shelter and became determined to help. Upon returning home, the Hofmans joined with others in Idaho to create Ghana Make a Difference (GMAD). GMAD was founded in July 2012 to protect vulnerable children and to preserve families in Ghana.

GMAD started on five acres of land donated by the local village chief. They have constructed and currently operate a main children’s home (8,200 sq ft), a smaller home for children with special needs, a school, a dental/medical clinic, and a volunteer house. The home employs 36 local, full-time Ghanaian and refugee workers as nannies, social workers, teachers, cooks, maintenance/grounds workers, and management. Each year the home receives about 200 volunteers that travel to Ghana (mostly from the USA) to help further the work and mission of GMAD.

Ghana Make a Difference was established on the belief that children have been endowed by their creator with the inalienable right to be reared in a family. GMAD seeks to make a difference in the lives of children who have been abandoned or rescued from forced child labor by providing them with a place they can call home. It is a temporary home that includes food and shelter as well as physical, mental, and emotional nurturing. Additionally, there’s an emphasis on trying to reintegrate children with their biological family or finding them a new adoptive family. The leaders at this home believe that families are central to God’s plan for His children’s eternal destiny, and the operations of GMAD reflect this belief. They preserve



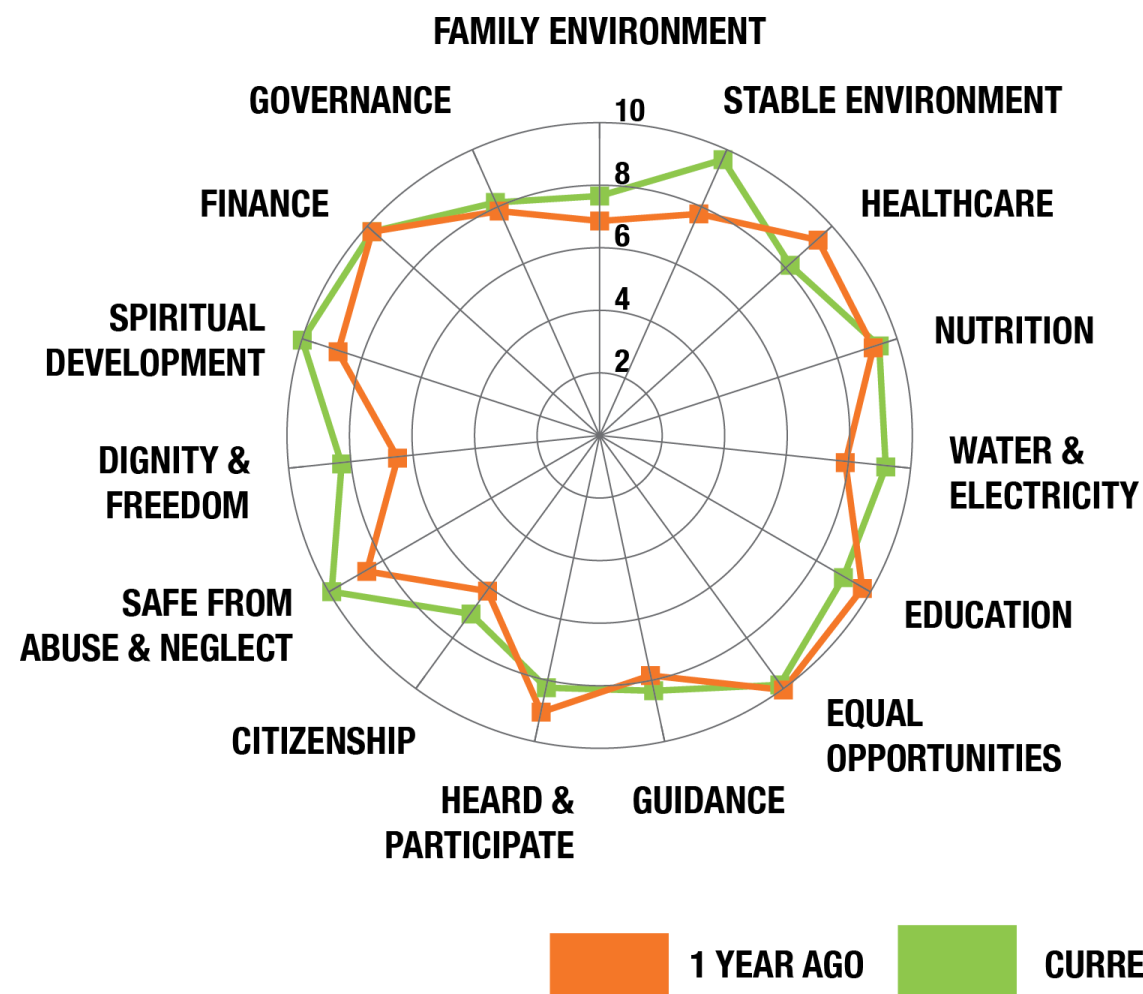
# The Thrive Assessment

## 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

### THERAPY SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | Hire a part-time clinical psychologist to give regular help to children that need extra help with trauma. \$1500 cedi/\$150 USD for a day of work; once or maybe twice a week. The cost would be 43,850 cedi for a visit once/week for 6 months. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING   | 43,850 CEDI<br>\$ 3,870 USD  |

### REPAIR HANDRAILS & KITCHEN ROOF

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|---------------------|--|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | Currently there are some safety concerns at the home like eroded handrails and rain water leakage over the kitchen. The home would like to hire a welder to come and repair these issues for a cost of roughly 4,000 cedi. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING   | 4,000 CEDI<br>\$ 350 USD   |

### EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE FUND

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | Obtain support to create an emergency fund of \$1,000 USD for future healthcare-related emergencies. This would allow the home to more quickly address urgent matters that inevitably arise. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING   | 11,350 CEDI<br>\$ 1000 USD   |

 Right to Live with Family

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Ghana Make a Difference has consistent caregivers that stay with the children full-time. However, there are some rooms that hold more than 12 children at this time, which they are working to address. A new building is currently being constructed to shelter some of the children who have proved more difficult to reunify. This home hires social workers who work with local authorities and the children to research reunification and/or adoption. Individual records for each child are kept and updated consistently by the social workers as well. Trauma training for caregivers is occasionally provided through a partner, International Justice Mission (IJM), but not consistently. Some of the trauma these children have experienced is significant and requires more specialization than what the current social workers can provide. Therefore, there’s a need to obtain funding for a licensed psychologist to visit on site and help children with their trauma. Caregivers also aren’t currently evaluated by a licensed specialist and could benefit from the support of a psychologist. Sibling groups are less common at this home, but there are some. While siblings have the chance to see each other, time together isn’t specifically encouraged by caregivers or leadership at the home.

- ☐ Complete construction on the new Family Unit Building
- ☐ Obtain funding (\$150/day) for a licensed psychologist to address children with severe trauma & evaluate caregivers on at least a monthly basis
- ☐ Consider ways to encourage sibling groups to interact more (mealtimes, playtime, other activities)

 Right to a Stable Environment

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children in this home are grouped together by age and gender and spend time together consistently in groups. International Justice Mission also brings specialists in twice/year to meet with caregivers and staff to discuss care for the children. Caregivers also meet consistently to share ideas and strategies about how to create a family environment. New caregivers are given a trial employment period with orientation and onboarding that lasts for 3 months, after which point the home determines whether or not to offer a full-time position. However, a commitment period is not established upon hire. While the turnover rate is generally low, there is a higher turnover rate in the special needs home. Rules within the home are well-established, age-appropriate, and clearly understood by children and staff. Unstructured playtime does occur as well as some “family-like” traditions such as Friday night movie nights with popcorn, celebrating holidays like Christmas and Independence Day, and occasional beach visits with volunteer groups.

- ☐ Work on implementing a retirement plan for current caregivers to encourage longevity and commitment

 Right to Healthcare

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

This home receives support from various organizations and volunteers for healthcare-related needs. Dental mission trips happen about 1-2 times a year where all children have their teeth checked and urgent dental issues are addressed. Medical mission trips have happened in the past along with some wellness checkups and surgeries for broken limbs or physical defects, but there could be more consistency. The home has a good relationship with a local hospital 15 min away that is accessible for emergencies, but seeing a specific physician isn’t culturally practiced so they see whatever physician is available when necessary. Lice has not ever been a concern at the home. Soap and water are readily available, but efforts to remind children to wash hands could be improved. Currently, emergency funds are not always readily available (especially at the end of a month), but the home would like to establish a fund of \$1,000 USD. The home does have some children with special needs and psychological support is needed to help children work through trauma. Orthodontic treatment has never been needed, but if the need arose it would be difficult to gain access.

- ☐ Establish a strategy to ensure children receive annual wellness check-ups
- ☐ Obtain support to create an emergency fund of \$1,000 for future healthcare-related emergencies
- ☐ Put up signs in the cafeteria and other common areas to remind children to wash their hands regularly

 Right to Nutrition

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Several nutritionists over the years have visited the home and established good habits with staff of preparing and serving meals that are well-balanced. Cephas, one of the on-site directors, currently does all the shopping and ensures food and supplies are purchased in appropriate quantities with attention to quality. However, that does create higher costs for food at the home. The kitchen area is well ventilated thanks to improvements made over the past year. Cooks are trained upon hire, but do not receive on-going training on safe food preparation and some turnover has also been experienced with cooking staff. Additionally, since getting the new kitchen, the need for updated kitchenware and pots has been identified.

- ☐ Look for partnerships that could support the continued purchase of quality food for children
- ☐ Establish a schedule for cooks to receive annual training on food safety and preparation
- ☐ Replace cooking pots in the kitchen. Estimated cost \$500 USD.



## Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Facilities within the home have been inspected for safety and children have access consistently to safe and reliable drinking water. Lighting and water drainage has been deemed safe and functional within the property as well. While the home has participated in safety drills in the past, it is not happening consistently and documentation of the emergency plan could be improved as well. Reliable skilled maintenance support is available to address the needs of the home, but currently there is no written plan to address property maintenance and some safety concerns like handrails and rain water leakage should be addressed. The home does have alternative power services with gas-powered generators in case of outages, which can be used for limited periods.

- ☐ Improve documentation of the emergency plan as well as implement consistent safety drills in case of emergencies.
- ☐ Repair handrails with the support of a welder across campus. Cost \$350 USD or 4,000 cedi.
- ☐ Extend the roof over the oven in the kitchen to eliminate rain water leakage.



## Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Since there is a school on-site, all school-aged children have the opportunity and attend school. Additionally, children are assessed frequently to determine that they have achieved the appropriate milestones like knowing the alphabet, reading, writing, and basic mathematics. However, there are currently no assessments in place to identify learning disabilities. A closed network with fiber-optics through a company called CDN has recently been installed at the home that allows children to access educational materials uploaded to the network from Utah. Currently, no documented or consistent evaluations are being done to identify learning disabilities due to children already arriving severely behind in learning. The home does have library hours where children can read or receive tutor support, especially when volunteers are visiting the home, but it doesn’t always happen consistently. While the on-site school headmaster primarily oversees developmental progress and addresses extreme cases of kids behind academically, more attention and consistent one-on-one tutoring is needed. With the new fiber-optics network, tutor and mentor support virtually through Village Book Builders may be possible. Scholarship support is available for the few children who age out of the home, but it doesn’t happen frequently and is not well-known. Currently the home is supporting 4 youth who are pursuing higher education via boarding school and they visit the home during the holidays as well as help out. However, they’ve found that these students appear more disconnected spiritually and therefore hope to find a better solution for them. There are long-term plans to build an additional home for those pursuing higher education so that they’re better supported.

- ☐ Consider activities to implement with children below school age to help them reach milestones & develop skills
- ☐ Find resources or partnerships to establish assessments or evaluations that can detect learning disabilities
- ☐ Establish partnership with Village Book Builders (or another partner) to provide more consistent one-on-one tutoring



## Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

As an organization, Ghana Make a Difference dedicates considerable efforts to the reunification of children with family. Children transitioning out of the home due to age is less common and therefore there is less of an established plan, although support has been offered in the past. There are currently minimal resources to help identify or support children with learning disabilities and many are behind academically when they arrive. For children who require glasses, there is a partnership with a service provider from Idaho who ships custom prescription glasses annually. Special needs children are able to interact with peers and are included in class time and playtime, when integration is deemed possible.

- ☐ Establish a more formalized plan for when older children are ready to transition out of the home
- ☐ Develop a strategy to help identify and support children with learning disabilities



## Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Two full-time social workers are available on-site and help address some children’s healing for trauma. However, more support is needed from a licensed psychologist in more extreme cases. The International Justice Mission provides evaluations and training for caregivers twice/year to ensure caregivers are quality mentors. Volunteer nurses, caregivers, and staff all participate in helping educate children on responsible sexual behavior. Staff also receive training on managing sexual behavior through IJM. Some children in this home come from labor trafficking so leadership will often focus on helping the child establish basic educational milestones and life skills. However, this intervention is not currently done in a documented format. For children who have left the home and live at boarding school, communication and support is provided semi-consistently from the leadership of the home.

- ☐ Obtain funding for a licensed psychologist to address children with severe trauma on at least a monthly basis. \$150/day or 1,500 cedi
- ☐ Utilize metrics from the newly installed network to determine plans for children behind academically
- ☐ Establish a documented plan to teach life skills to children over the age of 15

 Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

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| SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | THRIVING |
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Due to limitations with the number of caregivers, freedom during play time and the ability to address individual needs of children is limited. When school uniforms aren’t required, children have the ability to choose the clothing they wear and have access to a sufficient amount of clothing. Bedrooms are locked during the day, which limits the freedom of children to access personal items at times. Non-essential activities are optional for children. If medical procedures are deemed necessary, children are appropriately notified and given space to ask questions. Individualized development plans are kept by the social workers and updated consistently. Older children often help younger children get ready for the day as well as lead activities within the on-site school and during recreational periods.

- ☐ Complete new family unit building for caregivers to better address the individual needs of children

 Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

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| SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | THRIVING |
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Children often arrive to the home without birth certificates and there’s no cultural urgency for obtaining this documentation and it is not necessary for reunifying kids back with their families. GMAD provides their hired caregivers with 3 months of onboarding and training. IJM and other organizations in the area also provide sporadic training and coaching to caregivers throughout the year. Children are expected to do age appropriate chores like sweeping the house before breakfast, helping with meal preparation, and cleaning dishes. The older children are expected to wash their own clothing. Children also help assist when medical missions visit the area and serve in the community including translating, directing crowds, etc. Standard holidays like Christmas and Independence day are observed and celebrated within the home, but they are working on addressing time-off for staff on major holidays. The home has a donor who sponsors off-site activities like the beach or zoo about 3-4 times a year. A social worker at the home booked a private pool in the past to help kids play and overcome trauma with water, which has resulted in some kids learning water polo and they are now competing on teams. Some life skills are taught, but in an informal and undocumented format. GMAD is also looking at partnering with Village Book Builders which would help them improve in providing mentorship.

- ☐ Establish a policy that staff living off-site are given time-off on public holidays and staff on-site work those days but are then compensated with other time-off
- ☐ Establish a partnership with Village Book Builders for more mentorship opportunities

 Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

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| SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | THRIVING |
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Children in this home are separated in different buildings according to age and gender. There are two separate large rooms with bunk beds for older boys and younger boys as well as a large room for the girls and a nursery for infants. A practice followed by GMAD staff is that each child is evaluated by a social worker when they first arrive at the home and a personal file is created and updated periodically. Both GMAD, along with their partner IJM, hold onboarding and training focused on positive discipline, especially because “caning” is a common cultural practice for discipline with children. GMAD is very proud to say they do not practice caning and train all caregivers in other methods of discipline. The locking of bedrooms during the day helps ensure potential risk with one-on-one time between children or adults and children is prevented. There was an incident last year where a caregiver was dismissed due to not following this policy. There’s also a policy in place to prevent children from being exploited for work. There is a written child protection policy in place and all staff are aware of the policy.

- ☐ Hire a part-time clinical psychologist to give regular help to children that need extra help with trauma. \$1500 cedi/\$150 USD for a day of work; once or maybe twice a week.

 Right to Dignity & Freedom

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| SURVIVING | SUSTAINING | THRIVING |
|-----------|------------|----------|

This home saw a dramatic improvement and decrease in bullying when special needs children were brought into the home a few years ago. Children are taught and encouraged to do things themselves, as far as they are able. Children often arrive speaking different dialects, but at least some staff have always been able to communicate with children. English is taught as the common language within the home as it’s also recognized as a national language. Older boys do currently earn a wage helping with construction and were given the choice to participate in that project. Some older children shadow tradesmen in the community and earn a little bit of money that they get to keep.

- ☐ No steps needed at this time



# Right to Spiritual Development

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home holds weekly religious ceremonies on-site. While the LDS faith is predominant at the home, there are staff members and children of different religions that are free to practice their faith within the home and the community. The home has religious books and materials that the kids have access to. Although quiet space is difficult to come by, there is ample space for children and staff to use if needed for religious practices.

- ☐ Continue current practices



# Finance Standard

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The format of tracking expenses is patterned after the LDS organization in allotting budget via monthly requests from the home leadership. Money spent is documented by receipts. Auditing happens locally with a 3rd party in Ghana as well as a board member and a US 3rd party auditor. Currently, the on-site director (Kofi) oversees finances in requesting and dispersing funds. Hard-copy receipts and documents are kept and organized on-site, and the local auditor reviews them on a monthly basis, thereby reducing the risk for the misuse of funds. Although an official annual budget is not used, there is a general idea of how much funds are needed to support the home on an annual basis with a month-by-month comparison. While Kofi oversees all financial duties, another staff member, Cephas, helps provide support for more internal control. The home is unique in that they use both a local and U.S. auditor on a monthly basis to review books.

- ☐ No next steps needed at this time



# Governance and Human Resource Standard

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The property is registered in the name of the home, but they’ve run into difficulty in expanding and purchasing new land as they have wanted to expand. With the help of a pledged donor, they currently plan to hire a lawyer to help address issues of purchasing land. Finances are passed to the home by transferring funds from the U.S. organization to the Ghana-established organization, both called GMAD. There is an organizational chart in place that includes schedules, responsibilities, and delegation. There is a 3-month trial period for new caregivers where they shadow experienced caregivers and are then offered employment long-term, based on the trial period. This gives each new hire and GMAD the opportunity to determine if it is a good fit for both parties. GMAD has a head nanny who oversees and supervises the details of caregiver duties on a day to day basis. The head nanny provides training and mentorship to new nannies to help them settle into the role. There are weekly staff meetings generally, but sometimes they can be postponed. The home is currently compliant with all licenses, auditing, and governance requirements. Their partner support, IJM, provides consistent annual training to caregivers on attachment and child development. Training on child participation does happen, but it is more of an informal process. There have been significant changes in the Board of Directors over the last 1-2 years and GMAD is working to ensure consistent meetings are happening, but there is room for improvement. GMAD keeps files both on-site as well as electronically via Google Drive.

- ☐ Hire a lawyer to address issues of purchasing land

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to [www.ACHF.org/Projects](http://www.ACHF.org/Projects)

