

Love in Action

Jalisco

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

July | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

Love in Action (LiA) was founded by Anabel Frutos in 2003. The home started as a community center in a violent and impoverished area of Chapala, Mexico. In response to the huge need for a safe home in the area, the community center became a children's home. LiA's mission is to provide Christ-centered holistic care to abandoned, abused and orphan children. Their vision is to raise up children who will overcome their past to realize their potential, breaking the cycle of violence and positively impacting the nation for generations to come. As the home grows, their long term vision is to be financially stable and expand to one day host 60 - 100 children with an all christian staff trained in TBRI. Additionally, they hope to have a team of professionals that includes teachers, psychologists, social workers, administrative staff, and volunteers who can teach life skill workshops. LiA is creating a family-centered environment for the children. LiA would also like to become a government-certified training facility for foster and adoptive families. Being one of the only homes that works with a trauma-informed method called TBRI, their desire is to share this resource and train others.

Recent Accomplishments

- The home was able to complete a strategic initiative by paying a deposit on the outstanding water bill deposit. The bill was paid just in time so they did not lose access to water.
- Civil Protection training was completed at the home and both caregivers and children participated.



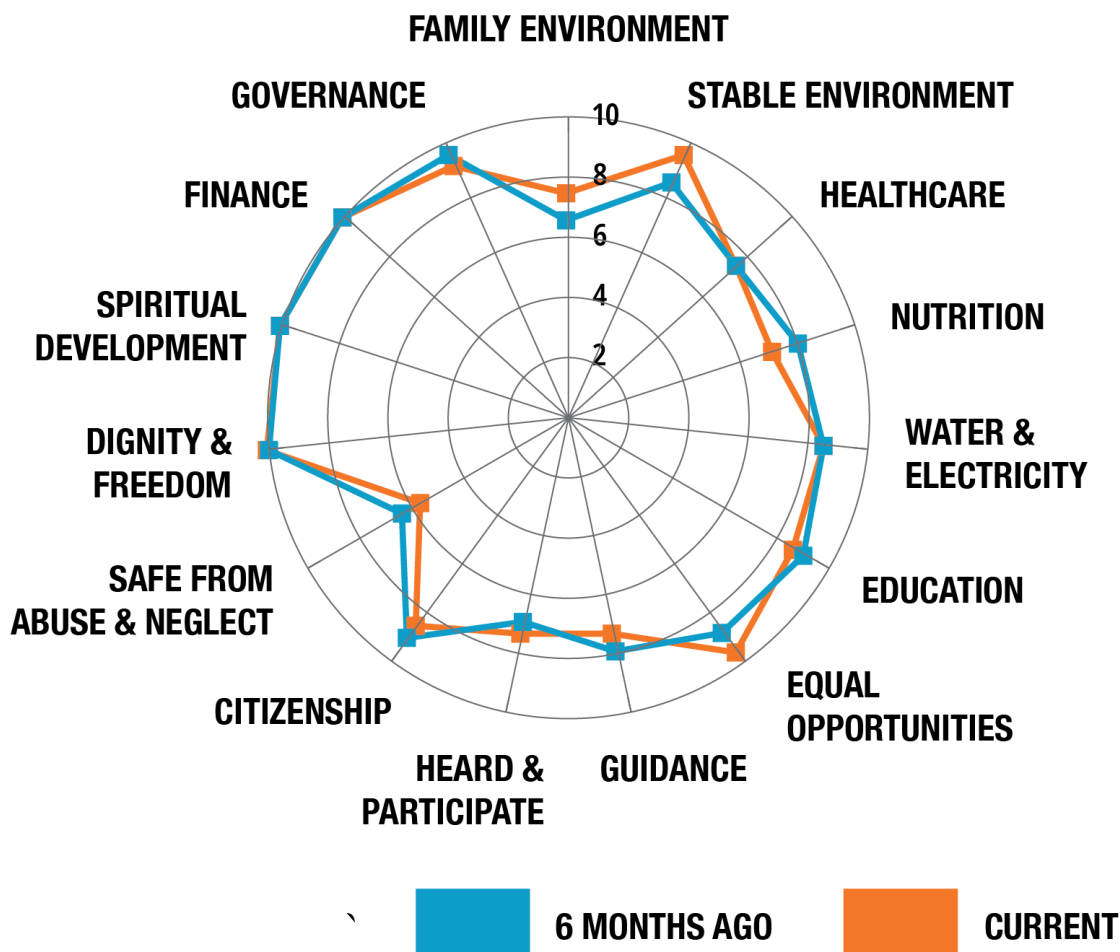
The Thrive Assessment

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

WATER BILL

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Love in Action would like to pay off the water bill debt that was caused by a massive underground water leak. The water company fixed the problem, but left them with the \$4,000 USD bill.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$4,050 USD

DEMOLITION OF CONDEMNED BUILDING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The home has an old building that has been condemned. The home would like to tear it down to be able to build classrooms for trainings, mentoring and office space in the future. The estimated cost of demolishing is of \$3,000 USD
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$3,000 USD

WATERPROOF ROOFS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	As the rainy season arrives LiA is in need to seal the roofs with waterproof material. This is done every few years to ensure they don't have leaks this time of year. The home will need 12 buckets to fulfill this project. The estimated cost is \$755 USD.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$755 USD



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Love in Action (LiA) continues at the Sustaining Level. The girls live in one of three houses on the LiA campus. One house has 6 girls, another has 7 and the teen house has 11 girls. During the night, there is one caregiver per house and during the day, the girls are supervised by teachers and other staff. Night-time caregivers work one week on and one week off. Caregivers are long-term, usually staying for 2 years or more, which is the expectation when they take the position. LiA emphasizes creating a family atmosphere and the staff is encouraged and coached on that model at weekly staff meetings. The director of the home is looked upon as the mother of the facility. Staff is trained in Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) at least annually. Caregivers are not currently evaluated by a therapist, an expert in child care, or trained on standards of care. Although there is currently no official onboarding plan, there is an evaluation process for new hires. This process includes background checks as well as training and shadowing an experienced caregiver. LiA would like to be the standard for TBRI-informed care in Mexico. The need for improved facilities is clear and creating larger, more family-oriented living conditions are anticipated. Also, providing more evaluation and training of staff is planned. Finding a child care expert to continually support and train staff in TBRI-informed care is also desired. There are currently 4 sibling groups at LiA and continued bonding amongst family members is ongoing. The Director spends time with each of the sibling groups to encourage their attachment. All children at LiA are in the care of DIF and it is their responsibility to develop a reintegration/foster placement with families for these children.

- ☐ Find a child care expert to continually support and train staff in TBRI informed care.
- ☐ Create a caregiver plan for onboarding, training, and evaluating caregivers.
- ☐ Establish an evaluation for caregivers on a biannual basis to assess the care they are providing the girls.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA continues at the THRIVING level. The girls are aware of the house rules which include: Stick Together, No Hurts, and Have Fun. They are taught, through the process of TBRI informed care, what each of these rules means and how to practice them. Although all caregivers (and other staff) are trained in TBRI, it is not always applied successfully. Monthly staff meetings are held to discuss troublesome behavior and how to address them. Caregivers meet with a behavior specialist and TBRI practitioner at least weekly and frequently biweekly. One of the daytime caregivers is a certified TBRI practitioner and provides the expertise to inform the staff. Caregivers are trained to interact with the girls in a playful manner. The director takes them out for ice cream during the weekends as well as having movie nights,

church attendance and trips to the nearby public park. Children are never called demeaning nicknames as it violates the “No Hurts” rule. Birthdays are also celebrated once a month. Although the caregivers’ contracts does not include a commitment as to length of employment, the current caregivers have been with LiA for over five years. Thus, the turnover rate is very low.

- ☐ Establish more consistent support and training for caregivers to be more “parent-like” to the children using TBRI principles.
- ☐ Find ways for all caregivers to engage playfully with the girls.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home continues at the SUSTAINING Level in this category. The girls have dental checkups every year and receive treatment if there is a need. At the moment, there is no schedule for regular medical checkups. However, there is an identified doctor available if an emergency arises. All children are given a checkup upon intake. Half of the girls have their vaccination cards. This is something of an issue with DIF, as they often do not provide the necessary documentation when the girls come to the home. All children are under the care of DIF and DIF is responsible for providing the required documentation. Soap and water are available to all the girls, however, caregivers do not always remind them to wash their hands and/or brush their teeth. Education is provided to adolescents regarding their menstrual cycles and appropriate hygiene practices. Regular checks are done for lice and daily combing and treatment are provided as needed.

- ☐ Identify a healthcare facility for routine healthcare needs
- ☐ Establish regular medical and dental checkups
- ☐ Provide OTC antiseptic and daily remedies on site and ensure caregivers are trained in their use



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA continues at the SUSTAINING Level. LiA serves vegetables at lunch and fruit twice a day to the children. The meals served are balanced and based on the Mexican food pyramid. There are 3 meals and 2 snacks provided daily. Disinfection and cleansing of all necessary food are carried out by kitchen staff in a designated area. Protein is served daily as a part of meals and snacks. This is supported by donations from local grocers and restaurants. While a professional cook is employed by LiA and understands basic nutrition needs, a professional nutritionist is not available to supervise. At this time, LiA does not have a nutritionist who can ensure the girls are receiving proper nutrition. The cook is excellent and responds to any special dietary needs of the girls.

- ☐ Locate a nutritionist to help train the cook and ensure the girls are receiving appropriate nutrients daily.
- ☐ Provide the cook with training on food hygiene, preparation and handling.



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA has achieved a THRIVING Level regarding this category. There are specialists from the government (Ciudad Ninez) who come regularly to inspect the facilities for adherence to government regulations. They give a report of their findings to LiA for their use in making any needed corrections. LiA's property is currently up to code with Ciudad Ninez. The water is tested daily for appropriate chemical levels and there is a water purification system in place. There are areas on the campus where water is available to the girls as needed. All of the areas are well lit at night except the school area. LiA would like to install automatic solar lighting for night use. Civil Protection has provided their inspection this year and annual training for fires, earthquakes, CPR and emergency measures has been completed by all of the staff as well. The facilities are old, but in good repair overall. The maintenance man is on-site daily and very proactive in making sure all is in working order. The girls have plenty of drinking water and staff assure that they drink sufficient water daily. LiA would like to have a backup generator in the event of power failures. Recently, LiA had a huge underground water leak that caused them to incur a \$3,000 USD water bill. The water company fixed the leak, but left them with the bill. The home is unable to pay but wishes to get rid of the debt. LiA would like to improve its facilities. A plan needs to be developed for regular assessment of needs and repairs. Ensuring that the facilities follow government codes should be included in this plan.

- ☐ Install water-saving shower heads and maintain them in good working order
- ☐ Purchase a power generator for use when electricity fails
- ☐ Create a maintenance plan



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home continues at the THRIVING Level in this area. It is noted that LiA does not receive children younger than school age. There is an off campus school for the girls at the primary levels. This school is approved by the Secretary of Education and provides more structure and attention to behavioral needs than what is available at the local public schools. While tutoring is available to help girls whose education levels need improvement, LiA would like to provide more tutoring in the future. Children aged 11 or older that do not read at a 3rd grade level have been identified and plans are being developed to correct that situation. In addition, plans are in place for making sure all girls age 7 and up know how to identify letters and sounds of the alphabet. Although books are available for age-appropriate reading, the library

does not have 75+ books. A psychologist has evaluated the girls, but it is unclear how that evaluation is being used in the school setting. Girls in middle school and high school have access to computers and age-appropriate art supplies are available. However, education funds for girls at the university level are not currently available. However, for those girls wishing to pursue higher education, sponsors are actively sought to support them.

Although meeting the educational needs of the girls is very good, there is room for improvement. An educational plan for each child should be in place including an assessment of their needs. Tutors need to be available to assess and address the needs of any who require additional learning opportunities or experience roadblocks to their learning. Additionally, special computer classes/teaching for the girls is being sought.

- ☐ Create educational plans for each child
- ☐ Find tutors for those who need additional learning opportunities
- ☐ Obtain books and computers for campus library

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, this home maintains the level of THRIVING. Every girl has their own locker for personal items as well as closet space for clothing. Each child is assisted in achieving their appropriate educational level. Most staff act as mentors and role models and all are familiar with the pillars of TBRI. There is no permanent plan in place for transitioning out of the home when the girls reach emancipation age. However, a transition plan is being developed for 2 teens that will turn 18 this year. The girls will be able to stay on campus until they feel ready to leave or pursue higher education. At the moment, there are no serious disabilities among the girls. However, any developmental, emotional, or physical needs are addressed and plans are put into place to meet them. LiA works with a behavior specialist who provides role modeling. There are extracurricular programs in place available for all in art, pottery, and English. Currently, there are no plans to accept girls with learning disabilities. LiA would like to have more tutors/mentors available to help the girls with personal goals. Teaching the girls how to address their own needs (have a voice) is part of the overall mission of LiA and more help in meeting this goal is needed.

- ☐ Identify and recruit mentors
- ☐ Create a transition plan for the adolescents



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA maintains at the SUSTAINING level in this area. The home has a job description for onboarding caregivers and a process of interviews before hiring a new caregiver. Caregivers are coached in modeling respectful behavior. Additionally, they are taught respectful behavior through the practice of TBRI and daily devotionals with the director. The resident psychologist provides education to the girls regarding consent, bodily autonomy, boundaries, etc. She also discusses various age appropriate topics like responsible sexual behavior with the girls at least once a week. TBRI's nurture group rules are in place and provide a framework that is easy to follow and understand. Although not all caregivers are expected to be mentors to the girls, a plan is in place to have a mentoring program in the future. LiA has a biannual TBRI training for caregivers and staff. Girls are taught to be respectful through the practice of TBRI and daily devotionals with the director. Currently, there is no transition plan or career counseling for girls 15 years old and above. While the girls are taught life skills, the home has no written plan or program for the older girls.

To improve in this area, the home needs to focus on creating a plan or program for teens to help guide them in planning for transition outside the home. This program should include career counseling or mentorships on how to go about furthering their education or preparing for the future. Also, a regularly scheduled life skills program that is age appropriate needs to be incorporated.

- ☐ Mentorship program for girls 15 years old and older
- ☐ Life skills program for participation of all girls
- ☐ Training for caregivers on how to be mentors to the girls



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently LiA remains at the SUSTAINING level in this category. The girls have options during their free time and can choose what to do during that time. They also have their own clothes and are able to choose what to wear every day. The children do not participate in meal planning and there is no menu visible to the children on campus. While the girls have leadership opportunities in games and activities, there are no other formal opportunities. Staff ensure that the children are informed about doctor and dentist appointments as well as medical procedures at least a day in advance. The staff and caregivers are aware of the possibility of "retraumatization" and are prepared through their TBRI training to manage these emotions. The girls are also given the opportunity to ask questions about the process. Currently, there is no children's committee at LiA. The home is working on developmentally appropriate behavioral plans for each girl. Currently, there are also educational development plans at the school to meet educational needs. Moving forward, the home should create more opportunities for the girls to lead and help the children create a community where they are more involved in different decisions directly affecting their lives.

- ☐ Post a weekly menu for the children to view
- ☐ Create more opportunities for girls to take on leadership roles in the home
- ☐ Finish the individual behavioral plans



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, LiA remains at the level of THRIVING. The home has birth certificates for each girl in their individual files. When a child breaks something, they are taught how to make restitution for the wrong. The girls are taught to take care of their home, including age-appropriate chores to help maintain the houses in order. The home has a maintenance area where tools are kept that is closed off to the girls. The space of the home is kept clear of litter and dangerous objects. The girls are also taught the ethics of trash disposal. There is no formal age appropriate ethics course available. Important national holidays are celebrated at LiA and major current events are shared with the kids. LiA has participated in some community service with the girls in the past, but they haven't done so within the past year. Girls have the opportunity to go off campus for activities like camps, conferences, outings, and school events. Girls 15+ years old currently do not have a mentor to teach them how to budget or go grocery shopping. In order to move forward, the home should find mentors for the teens and find ways for the girls to participate in community service.

- ☐ Find a life skill mentor for 15+ girls
- ☐ Find ways for the girls to participate in the community via service or other activities



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA is currently at the SURVIVING level in this area. The home security is adequate based on the home's surrounding community and the girls are reassured of the safety of the home when they arrive. The home has separate showers and toilets with doors and the caregivers make sure girls have privacy when taking showers. LiA has 3 houses that are separated by age. All staff have received TBRI training which adheres to positive discipline techniques and this training happens at least once a year. The home has an operating manual for staff and caregivers on how to work with the children. The director supervises the caregivers to ensure that there is no abuse. The girls also have counseling sessions where they are able to speak freely and share how their caregivers care for them. The home's psychologist has sessions on abuse and how they are able to report incidents. When outings occur, the girls are always accompanied by caregivers and staff. LiA has a rule book for all external volunteers and visitors. When on-site, visitors wear a visitor's tag to identify themselves. Volunteers and new caregivers are also asked for a background check. LiA currently doesn't have intake assessments and evaluations by therapists, but the child is interviewed before they are

accepted into the home. In order to improve in this area, the home needs training for caregivers on how to recognize and prevent abuse. Additional sessions with the girls on abuse and reporting methods are also needed. Finally, the home should create a plan for intake assessments to evaluate each child's needs and help them work through trauma.

- ☐ Create a plan for intake assessments on each child arriving at the home
- ☐ Provide therapy sessions with the girls on abuse and reporting methods
- ☐ Provide training on how to recognize and prevent abuse for caregivers.



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

This home is at the THRIVING level in this category. At LiA, girls are provided with adequate clothing and undergarments. Each of them has their own bed, bedding, towel, and toothbrush. The girls shower every day and their bedding is washed once a week or when soiled. The girls are taught and encouraged to be kind to one another. TBRI teaches caregivers to help the child repair relationships when they have been broken. The consequences of the infraction of rules are not always clear and sometimes are not followed by everyone on the staff. LiA has a safe and adequate playground with swings and slides where the girls play during their free time. Art material is also provided when there is a planned activity during free time. The safety protocols in place are reviewed by Civil Protection every 6 months. The girls have the opportunity to do extra chores for an allowance and teens 16+ are allowed to have jobs in the community. LiA assesses each job opportunity to ensure it is in a safe environment and the teens are home at a reasonable hour. LiA uses work opportunities to help the teens save money, although they are able to spend some if they like. In order to maintain this level, LiA could establish clearer expectations with rules and consequences.

- ☐ Inform and align all staff of rules and consequences for infractions



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, the home is at the level of THRIVING. LiA is a Christian home. The girls go to church locally where they assist at least twice a week in church and youth groups. In addition, the director holds a daily, morning devotional with the girls during the week. The girls are encouraged to participate in camps and retreats and have access to books and materials for spiritual growth. The community room is used as a space for prayer and devotionals.

- ☐ Continue the current practices to maintain the spiritual development of the girls



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

LiA remains at the THRIVING level in this area. The home has a bank account, an external accountant, and an administrator who work together to track income and expenses. Records are maintained and kept in files that are available for review. Receipts are kept to create a profit or loss statement every month and are shown to the Servicio de Administración Tributaria (SAT; Mexican IRS) once a month. To minimize the misuse of funds, LiA has a bank account that requires 2 signatures on checks. An annual budget is created and reviewed by the board of directors. LiA reconciles the bank account monthly and does not spend more than they intake. The home has an external accountant who reviews and validates the books once a month. When the home has a major expense, a plan is created to make sure that allocated money is spent on the project at hand. Donations are tracked through LiA's website.

☐ Continue the current practices to maintain financial records appropriately



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, the home is at the level of THRIVING. LiA has an “Acta Constitutiva” to ensure the land and improvement cannot be sold for personal gain. When a new caregiver arrives at LiA, they shadow an experienced caregiver and receive support from the TBRI practitioner on campus. Caregivers know which water to use for cooking and drinking and also receive training on the importance of drinking water. They encourage children to drink water as well. LiA has its own purification system that is maintained and checked daily in order to ensure the water is clean. For the organization of the home, LiA has a written manual on how to run the organization. The director and administrative staff meet once a week to discuss issues and provide reports. Caregivers and directors meet once a month to address issues in the home and behavioral challenges with the girls. When a caregiver is hired, they are given documents that include a job description as well as the responsibilities that come with the position. The home has a board of directors that meets once a month. The home is fully licensed and keeps up with the yearly tax filing. Caregivers are trained in TBRI at least once a year where they learn about topics such as attachment and child development. All caregivers have attended medical and hygiene sessions. LiA abides by a vacation and leave policy for all staff members. During the staff meeting with caregivers, TBRI coaching is done and discussions are shared to help caregivers on ways to facilitate child participation. LiA works with a behavioral therapist who attends these meetings and provides behavioral information on the girls as well as further coaching on supporting them in improving behaviors. For LiA to improve in this area, training for caregivers on medical and hygiene practices and emergency measures should be offered more frequently.

☐ Provide more frequent training on medical and hygiene practices as well as emergency measures



Current Improvement Partners



Oak Life

Oak Life

Oak Life's mission is to educate and empower an international collective of orphanage caregivers, directors and advocates, who are prepared to sustainably and holistically care for abandoned children.

Loving children's homes often struggle, unable to grow and care for children to capacity. With insufficient staff who are trained and willing to dedicate their lives to orphan care, children stay on the streets. We intend to change this worldwide issue, and bring more children home. We are doing this in three simple ways: Train, Care, and Grow.

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



**A CHILD'S
HOPE**
FOUNDATION