

Grace Villa

Uganda



Spirit
of
Ubuntu
fruit grow

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

March | 2024



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 compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Overview of this Children's Home

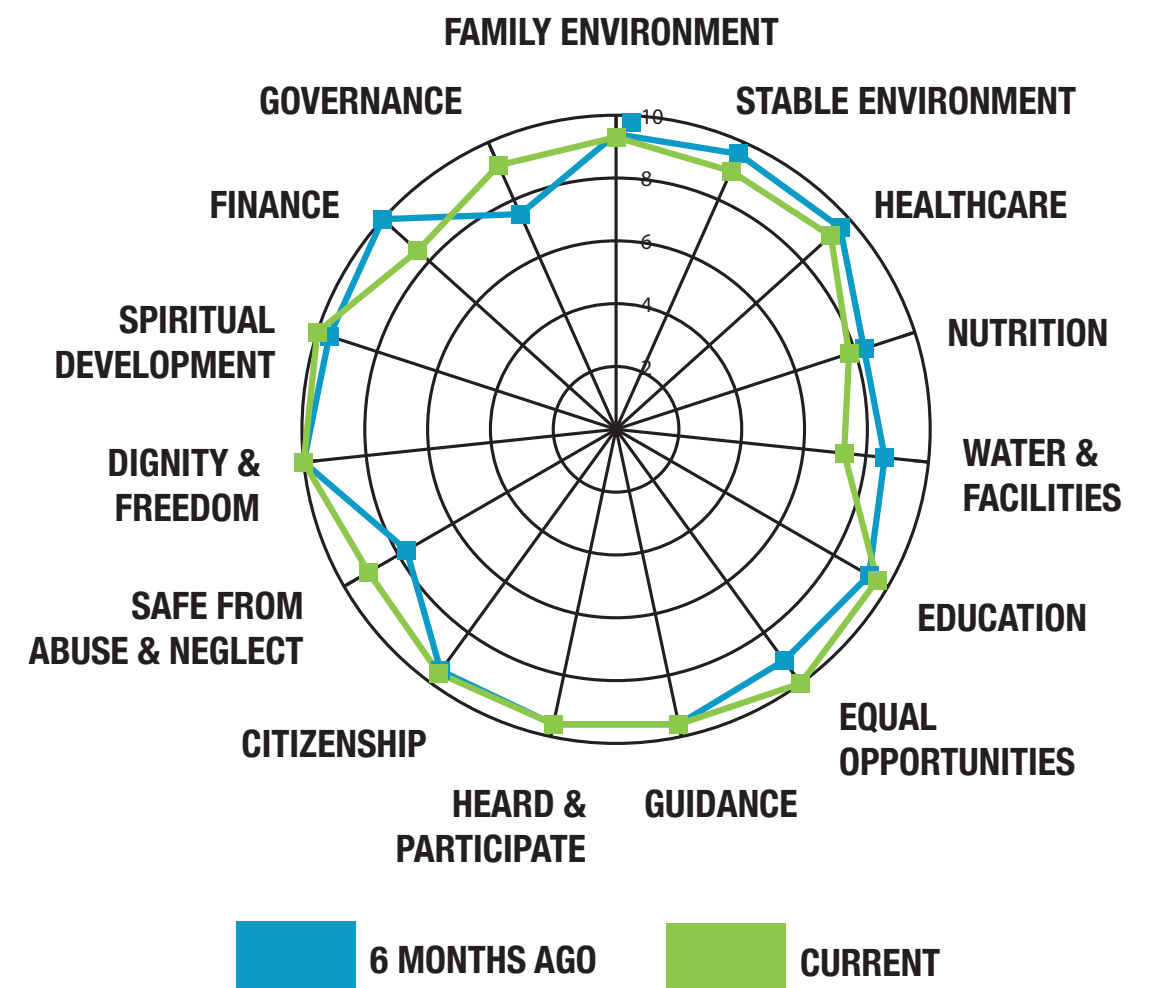
Background & Mission

Grace Villa was started in 2013 by Ms. Ruth Kendegye Ndyabahika. It is a fully registered home licensed to accommodate 30 children and located in Makanga Kabale District. The home started with 5 children in a rented house where they resided for seven years until they were requested to vacate because the owner wanted to use it. The home then looked for funds to relocate and in three months they managed to buy the beautiful home where it is located now. Currently, Grace Villa cares for about 30 children and over 400 children have gone through its care. The mission of Grace Villa is to build families for children in need, help them shape their own future and share in the development of the communities. Their vision is to see a world where all children are loved, enjoy equal opportunities and resources, and live happy lives free from discrimination, abuse or exploitation.

Recent Accomplishments

- The home established a garden of vegetables.
- The home now reviews discipline techniques with caregivers every staff meeting.
- Documentation of policies has improved (e.g. the visitor policy and child policy are shared and signed by all staff and caregivers).

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

COMPLETE KITCHEN CONSTRUCTION

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| PROJECT SUMMARY | The home is in the process of constructing a kitchen that was partially constructed by another organisation. However, they are still seeking funding to complete the kitchen. |
| INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST | 5,000,000 UGX \$1,311 USD |

INSTALL SMART TANK FOR DRINKING WATER

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| PROJECT SUMMARY | The home would like to install a smart tank that can supply drinking water to over 200 children, including those that live outside the home and attend programmes at the home's premises. |
| INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST | 2,000,000 UGX \$525 USD |

CONSTRUCT SANITARY INCINERATOR

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| PROJECT SUMMARY | Construction of a sanitary incinerator is planned so that girls can dispose of sanitary pads and waste can be burnt down easily. |
| INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST | 2,000,000 UGX \$525 USD |



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has 30 children with 3 caregivers who stay through the night. The home keeps files for the children. However, there are some children whose homes have never been traced, so the home only know who brought them. New workers are trained and evaluated and also sign a code of conduct. Siblings are encouraged to spend time together to enable bonding. Professional social workers help with child reunification as well as tracing the origin of the children. The director and social workers evaluate the caretakers on the care they give to the children. The home fully encourages family visitation, especially for children who have relatives in the community. Currently children from two different homes visit their families each week.

- Continue with current practices.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

House rules which age appropriate are clearly explained e.g. young children are denied watching tv as punishment if they have not followed rules. Children are called by their names and they engage in unstructured play. Behavioral counseling is done by the director and a counselor visits the home once in while. Caregivers work full time and most of them have been employed for more than two years. Caregivers participate in discussions once a week on how to create a good environment and incorporate family values. Caregivers are involved in joint activities with the children once in a week. Birthdays are celebrated together, as well as activities such as watching t.v and Saturday walks.

- Give caretakers a day off once a week.

Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home hasn't done annual well checks this year, but there is an on going plan to achieve this. Young children are fully vaccinated. There is enough water and soap near toilets and dining areas. The home uses Medicus Medical Center for treatment and medical emergencies. Feminine hygiene products are fully available and girls are taught the basics of menstrual hygiene. There are no cases of soiling since most of the children are grown. Children receive vision checks and dental checks once a year and there are no cases of lice. The home has an emergency fund, but it is not limited to medical care. There are proper measures for children with special conditions and they receive orthodontic treatment when cases arise. Children brush their teeth everyday and each child has a medical file. First aid kits are available, though not fully stocked. Children receive medical treatment whenever they are sick.

- Ensure that children receive annual well checks.
- Fully stock the first aid kits.
- Mobilize funds to ensure that the home has a medical emergency fund.

Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children receive three meals a day with enough calories, and food is tasty with proteins and fruits served daily. Vegetables are inadequate lately as the gardens were washed away by strong rains, but more are being planted. The kitchen is kept clean and free from toxic substances and pests. The kitchen area is also orderly and properly ventilated and it is being expanded. The home doesn't have a nutritionist, but children receive a balanced diet since the director monitors the menu. Cooks are not trained annually on food safety and preparation, but general knowledge is given by the staff and the directors.

- Train cooks annually on food safety and nutrition.
- Involve a nutritionist to ensure that children receive appropriate nutrients daily.

Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home hasn't been inspected this year. Water is clean and free from chemicals, but pipes haven't been checked for decay. The bathrooms and living area have functioning light bulbs and sewage is properly disposed. The home has solar power in case of electricity loss. Fire extinguishers are available, but they are not functional. Skilled maintenance support is available with plumber and an electrician. Safety concerns have been addressed, but a few spaces are lacking e.g fire extinguishers. Water is adequate for those that sleep at the home, but not for those outside the home. Shower heads are mostly functional, except a few aren't functioning. The outdoors are adequately lit, but there are no smoke alarms due to costs. There is no documented emergency plan, but they have telephone numbers to call in case of an emergency. There is no documented plan for property maintenance, but children are cautioned. The home is fully registered and up to code with local government requirements and electrical infrastructure is sufficient.

- Purchase a smart tank for water.
- Fix shower heads.
- Document an emergency plan.

Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children attend school and children above 7 are assessed and are able to articulate sounds and identify letters of alphabet. All the children 11 and above are able to read and children 9 and above can add, subtract, and multiply. Those children with difficulties also have someone that helps take them through those exercises. Teachers at school evaluate the children with learning disabilities. There is a library with age appropriate books and children get time to read. Books are available and can be accessed multiple times a week, but they are not in their own languages. There is internet and computer access for both children and staff. Children above grade one can read and are guided by a caretakers. Funding and housing is available for children post orphanage, including funding for tuition as well as hostel fees. A tutor is available quarterly to discuss grades. Children have access to computers and have computer classes over the holidays. Art supplies and art classes are also available during holidays. While no one on one tutoring is done, children are helped in groups.

- Conduct one on one tutoring at least once a week.

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each child has their own wardrobe with space for personal items. All children go to school and the home emphasizes equality. Mentors act as role models and they are available for counsel. There are no children with physical disabilities in the home. All children receive equal opportunities regardless of gender or family history. Resources are available for children with learning disabilities, such as coaching during term breaks. Resources are available for children with physical disabilities, but the home doesn't currently have any situation like this except for vision impairments, which are being managed.

- Continue with current practices.

Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children decide what they want to do in their free time, provided they have completed their chores, and their needs are fully acknowledged. Children participate in menu planning and they are free to decide their outfits, but the home ensures that they are decently dressed. Healthcare procedures are clearly explained to both the children and caretakers. Children are free to opt out of non-essential activities. The home has individual child plans, but they are not updated on a monthly basis. Leadership roles like prefects and the Miss Grace Villa Pageant are available and children are fully involved in and encouraged to participate.

- Update child individual plans on a monthly basis.

Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a profile and a job description, but it's not documented. Caregivers model respectful behavior and children are educated about their bodies by their caretakers. The home also invites a doctor to discuss changes associated with puberty quarterly. There are rules and regulations, which are clearly explained to the children. Caregivers are evaluated by the director and other staff to determine if they provide quality care. Caregivers are also trained on how to model and reinforce basic skills. The home doesn't allow children to be in rooms or dark places alone, as stated in the rules and regulations. Psychological and therapeutic resources are available weekly. Children 15 and above are exposed to creative activities like writing and movie-making. The home has a plan for every child, which is documented. Support is given to children in terms of accommodation and tuition as well.

- Document a job description.
- Continue with current practices.

Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each child has a birth certificate and those without have birth notification cards. Caretakers are responsible and trained to nurture children through counseling and engaging them in different forms of work at the home. There is a time table for chores and work is distributed according to age. Both local and international holidays are observed e.g. Day of the African Child, Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, etc. The home is clean and free from litter and children are fully engaged in sports, swimming, and outings. There are no courses regarding ethics or governing, but children are taught how to behave as well as what behaviours are accepted and those that are not. Life skills such as making a grocery list, budgeting, and shopping are taught, but mostly for the older children. Children perform service in the community like cleaning the church every Thursday, and current events are shared with the children.

- Process care orders.
- Continue with current practices.

Right to Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home security is good but the surrounding area isn't very safe. The home serves only girls and they have safe sleeping places which are private and grouped according to their class levels. Caretakers and staff are trained in other ways to discipline children and corporal punishment is not allowed. The home has a no one-on-one policy and private meetings are not allowed for staff or visitors. The home follows the child protection policy to ensure that children are not abused and there is a policy on child exploitation. Caretakers are keen and observant to the behaviour of the children and if any issue of abuse arises, action is taken. Abuse and reporting methods are discussed regularly and children are accompanied off campus. There is a visitor policy in place, background checks are done for staff, and there are no frequent visitors. No babies reside at the home. Intake assessments are done by the directors and social workers, and children are given time to heal on their own by providing a loving environment.

- Improve security around the home through involving the local council and police.

Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children at the home attend church services, sunday school, and youth conferences. They have prayers everyday and participate in different programmes like Easter, Christmas, Holy Thursday etc. Religious books like bibles are available and accessible. Each child has an assigned day for leading prayers. There is no quiet place designated for prayer at the home, but children pray in the dining area or in the compound.

- Continue with current practices.

Right to Dignity and Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children shower daily and every child has access to their own bed. Children are kind to each other and belittling and bullying is not allowed. They have adequate clothes and undergarments, and they are taught to care for themselves. Children fully participate in house chores and other affairs of the home and consequences to infractions of rules are known. Proper bed linens, a toothbrush, and towels are provided for each child as well as art materials and toys. Children use their traditional language at the home and teenagers, especially those during vacation, are allowed to work in the community and keep what they earn.

- Continue with current practices.

Financial Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Income and expenses are tracked using quickbooks. Records are maintained and available for review, and the home files PAYE on a monthly basis. Receipts are filled out and profit/loss statements are captured in quickbooks. Requisitions are made and approved by a relevant authority and accountability is provided immediately after the procurement process. There is an annual budget, but it is not being fully followed. Bank accounts are not reconciled, but the home is in the process of working on it. Requisitions are made from the manager which the COO approves, and then the director authorises release of funds. The home uses internal auditors, but external auditors haven't been fully utilised. A qualified accountant comes in once a year to validate account books.

- Plan to follow a monthly budget.
- Start the process of reconciling bank accounts.

Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a land title and other relevant documents. New caregivers learn from the old caregivers before they start work. There is a written organisation chart that outlines responsibilities. Job descriptions are not in place, but in the process of being worked on. The home is fully registered and licenced. Weekly staff meetings are held and there is an active board of directors that meet annually. Caregivers are trained annually on how to effectively take care of the children and each caregiver receives leave and off-days annually. Employee files are available, but some reports are missing and files are not updated regularly. The home participates in a child well being committee meeting for CSO (Civil Society Organisations) where they are trained in practical ways to facilitate child participation.

- Document job descriptions for all staff.
- Update employee files with relevant information.



Current Improvement Partners



Both Ends Believing - Uganda

Both Ends Believing (BEB) is an organization with a global presence. They offer an incredible case management software (Children First Software) that helps governments create digital identities for vulnerable children, a pivotal step in placing kids in families. Our partnership with BEB Uganda looks like training members of their team in the Thrive Certification Program so they can enhance the support they give to the children's homes they work with. Learn more at www.bebglobal.org.

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

