

# Casa de la Esperanza

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Mexico

# IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

December | 2023



# Overview of this Children's Home

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## Background & Mission

Casa de la Esperanza was founded in the 1950's by Mrs. Maria Castro de Bringas. She, along with her husband, took in the children they found on the streets of Tijuana to offer them a home, food, clothing, education, and above all the love of a family. By the mid 80's only three of the founders of the Civil Association remained. Mrs. Bringas was forced to resign from the Association due to her health condition. As a result, a Binational Commission was formed to ensure the continued operation of Casa de la Esperanza, in accordance with the vision of "Mamá Bringas".

Over the years, the Casa Hogar had several directors who did a great job. It was until 1993 that professors Antonio Lara Cardenas and his wife Alejandra Judith Rivera Hernandez, took the position of directors. They began as employees in the administration of Jesús Arango. Under the administration of these directors they were able to highlight the value of education as one of the tools for the success of these children.

With the death of teacher Antonio Lara and the retirement of teacher Alejandra Rivera, the baton was passed to the current directors of the orphanage: Martin Hernandez and Sarahi Lara. Martin is one of the youngsters who grew up in the orphanage and Sarahi, Antonio Lara's biological daughter. Together with Alejandra Rivera, they have assumed the position with great responsibility and motivation to keep alive the mission and vision of the place, promoting day by day the main objective that the children can adapt to everyday life and with a great sense of belonging to a family where they can overcome the traumas of the past feeling in a protected and safe environment. In this way, the children can become individuals who bring a positive influence to those around them.

Its mission and vision is to provide children with a family environment home with Spiritual Education, House, Food, Clothing, Study, Mental Health and Physical Health. Stimulating themselves with exemplary role models, giving them the necessary tools for their integration into society.

# Recent Accomplishments

- Several reports for Civil Protection were carried out, such as: structural studies, mapping and preparation of plans. In addition, diagnostic studies of the electrical installations at Casa de la Esperanza were carried out. Thanks to these updates, Casa de la Esperanza has recently been ratified as a safe space for children. Therefore, its Internal Civil Protection Program Folder was approved.
- Fresh foods such as vegetables, fruits and meats were purchased for six months, which made it possible to complement and considerably vary the children's daily meals.



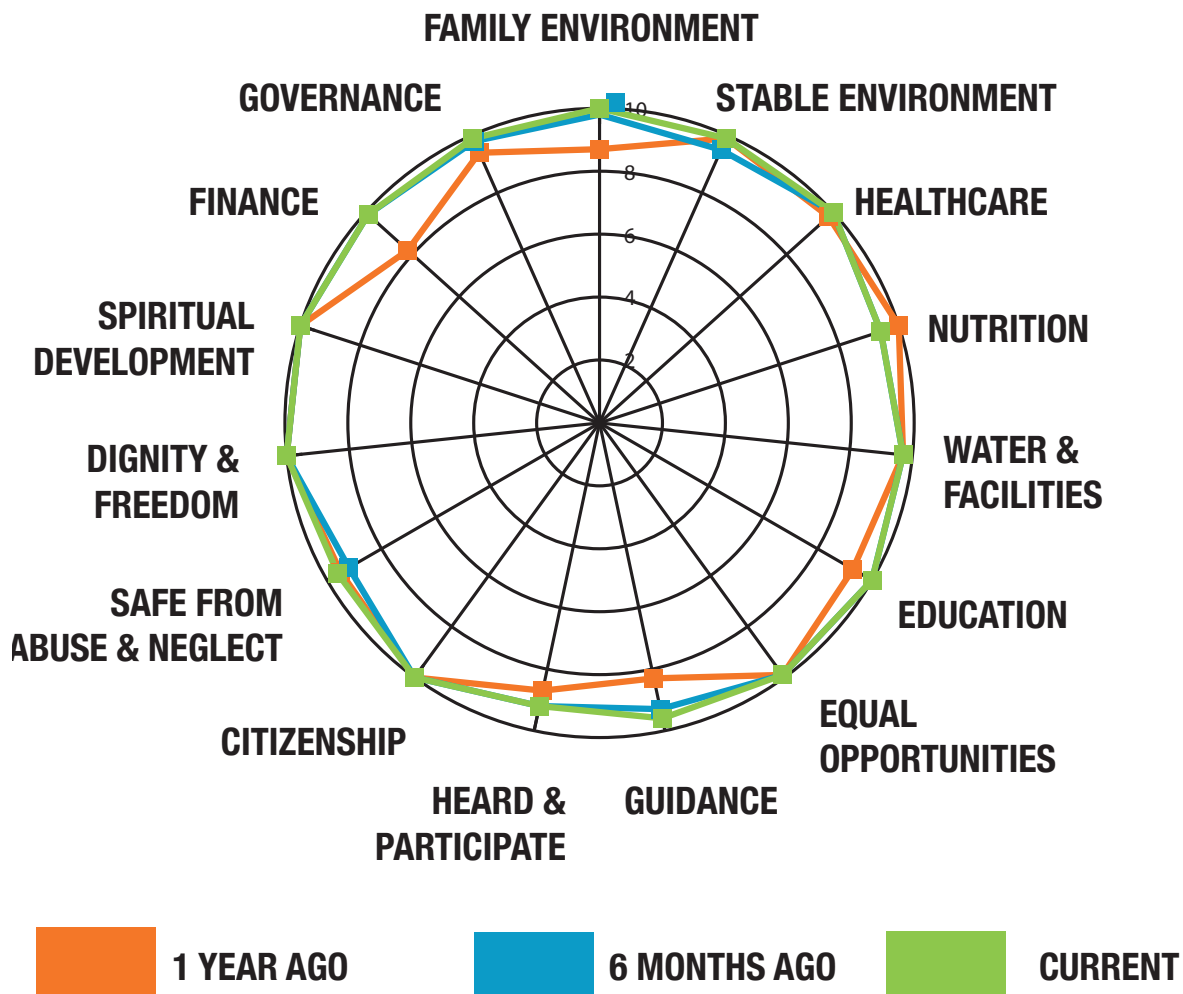


# The Thrive Assessment

## 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.

### Current Thrive Scale



# Strategic Initiatives

## VEHICLE REPAIRS

<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	In order to provide the greatest support to the children of this home and transport them to school, it is of great importance to make engine repairs to the two vehicles that are damaged. The repairs will contribute to a better organization of the transportation of the children to their corresponding schools.
<b>INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST</b>	\$19,464.00 MXN \$1,179.63 USD

## RENEW CAR INSURANCE

<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	In order for children to continue to have the right to equal opportunities and to receive the necessary services for their educational, recreational and health development in a safe manner, it is necessary that all vehicles in which children are transported to the various errands have a valid auto insurance that allows them to have a backup in case of any incident or vehicular accident.
<b>INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST</b>	\$37,939.61 MXN \$2,299.37 USD

## RENEW CAR REGISTRATIONS

<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	According to Mexican law, all cars in circulation in the country must annually revalidate their vehicle registration. Therefore, it is important that in this Casa Hogar the necessary procedures are carried out for all the cars in which the children are transported to the various errands in a safe and in order manner.
<b>INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST</b>	\$15,934.00 MXN \$965.69 USD



## Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa de la Esperanza is home to 41 children, who are placed in different houses according to their age and gender. In this Casa Hogar the DIF guidelines are respected, taking care and respecting that in each house there are a maximum of 12 children. Likewise, each house has the number of caregivers necessary to provide the best care with quality and warmth. Whenever a new child arrives at this Casa Hogar, the director is always attentive to ensure that he/she has an information sheet that specifies his/her family background, physical and mental health, schooling and origin.

The right to live as a family is of vital importance. That is why the coexistence of sibling groups is promoted. In addition, family visits are allowed every Sunday of the month, as long as they are authorized by DIF. Regarding the caregivers, they have been receiving training in various topics that have allowed them to strengthen their knowledge and skills to provide a better service to the children in their care. Casa de la Esperanza has a written plan for the incorporation, training and evaluation of the caregivers. They are supported by the psychologist who comes to the Casa Hogar to guide, evaluate and provide psychological therapy to the caregivers to verify that they are providing the best care to the children.

- Continue with the training of caregivers.





## Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In order to create a stable, loving and enriching environment, in each of the houses the children are encouraged to carry out common activities that strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and friendship. At Casa de la Esperanza there are general rules and regulations that contain clear rules that can be explained to each child according to his or her level of understanding and maturity. Respect is encouraged as one of the main rules. Children are encouraged to call each other by name and avoid nicknames. In case of infractions of the stipulated rules, positive discipline is applied to help them improve and recognize the infraction. On the other hand, whenever the children have free time, they are given the opportunity to choose the activity or game they wish to play, under the observation of their caregiver and respecting the rules.

At Casa de la Esperanza, the caregivers have been working steadily for more than 10 years. This has allowed for greater emotional stability and security for the children. This is reflected in a minimal staff turnover rate. A new caregiver has recently joined the program and has been very well integrated into the activities and has been very well received by the girls in her care. For their part, the directors have made an effort to provide the best possible care for the caregivers, trying to have frequent communication with them. In addition, constant training workshops with specialists are provided so that they receive guidance to support the children's behavior. They also encourage them to play and carry out recreational activities with the children on a daily basis.

- Define a guideline that allows new caregivers to commit to work for a certain period of time at the Casa Hogar.
- Continue to encourage caregivers to play and engage in recreational activities with the children on a daily basis.



## Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each of the children has a medical file that includes their growth measurements, incidents, medical treatments and all health related issues. All children receive routine medical check-ups and examinations on an annual basis. Either through partners such as Corazón de Vida or through follow-up with a health institution. In August, the RMU group conducted a general health check-up of all the children and gave health talks that were very useful for the children. On the other hand, the directors make sure that all the children receive health care according to their needs, be it dental, ophthalmological, psychological, psychiatric or other. Recently, IMSS nurses came to this Casa Hogar to update the vaccination schedules of all the children, and they vaccinated all of them against influenza. At Casa de la Esperanza they have a doctor who is part of the civil association and is available to attend to any of the children's health needs. When there is a need for emergency or major medical attention, they take the children to the Tijuana General Hospital.

Children are encouraged to follow hygienic habits such as brushing their teeth three times a day, washing their hands before eating and after going to the toilet. In addition, soap and antibacterial gel are provided in the kitchen, dining room and bathroom. Children are checked daily for head lice and the necessary measures are taken if they are found. Adolescent girls receive guidance on their menstrual cycles, what to expect, and how to dispose of feminine hygiene products from the caregivers and workshops. In addition, they have access to feminine hygiene products in sufficient quantities. They have a fund for medical emergencies from A Child's Hope Foundation. The staff has been trained in first aid and CPR, as well as ADHD to support children who require more specialized follow-up. They have four first aid kits, one of which is fully stocked.

- Continue to promote hygiene habits and annual health check-ups with children.





## Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Providing adequate and complete nutrition is a priority for the directors of Casa de la Esperanza. That is why they have tried to have a variety of fresh foods and non-perishable foods to meet the nutritional needs for optimal development of each of the children. The children consume a sufficient amount of calories daily. They receive delicious meals that contain protein and vegetables and are accompanied by two servings of fruit. Before leaving for school, all children eat breakfast. In addition, they bring their lunch and snacks to school so that they are always well nourished.

Food is prepared in a hygienic manner. The kitchen manager takes care to keep her hair up, wash her hands continuously and ensure that the food is well cooked. The kitchen area is tidy, clean and well ventilated. The kitchen, dining room, and food storage areas are fumigated on a monthly basis by an external supplier and are therefore free of pests. All toxic substances are safe and out of reach of children.

- Train kitchen staff in food safety and preparation.
- Retain the support of the nutritionist to ensure that children receive the necessary nutrients.
- Maintain the kitchen area in good condition, tidy and clean.



## Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa de la Esperanza has recently been inspected by Tijuana Fire Department and Baja California Civil Protection, the latter authorized the Internal Civil Protection Program which includes clear and understandable emergency plans in case of fire, earthquake or catastrophe. The facilities of this Casa Hogar comply with the requirements and codes of the local authorities. The various areas inside the Casa Hogar have fire extinguishers, folding doors, smoke detectors, and emergency lights. The staff is trained in various civil protection issues. An annual evacuation drill is held for all the residents of the home. The Casa Hogar is maintained by a person who performs the corresponding work. In case there is a need for more extensive work, they look for specialists to provide a solution to the maintenance problem. The faucets in the sinks, the shower heads, and the light bulbs in the bathrooms and living room are working at 100%. The drainage is safe and does not contaminate the drinking water. The exterior of the Casa Hogar is well lit. The electrical infrastructure is sufficient for the Casa Hogar's needs. The water is safe to drink and is accessible for the children to drink. In addition, they have made the staff and children aware of the importance of taking care of the water. They have a written annual plan that addresses the maintenance of the Casa Hogar and civil protection supplies.

- To have a generator in case of emergency.



## Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All school-age children attend school daily. There are children from preschool through high school. In January 2024, three young people will enter a private university in Tijuana. Both at school and within the Casa Hogar, children seven years of age and older are evaluated by the teacher or psychologist to identify that they can articulate each letter of the alphabet, that they are able to read and write, and that they can perform basic mathematical operations. In the event that a learning problem is detected in the evaluations, the directors provide the necessary support so that a specialist can provide the corresponding follow-up. Each time a child joins the Casa Hogar for the first time, the teacher is in charge of carrying out evaluations to identify the level of knowledge and school lag. After that, she makes a work plan to help them advance.

There are currently two children with behavioral or language disorders. These two children are receiving support from specialized therapists to achieve progress that will allow them to integrate into school. Meanwhile, at the Casa Hogar, the caregivers and teachers provide them with activities to improve their performance. The children have enough toys and materials for arts and crafts and homework. Both the director and the caregivers are in charge of analyzing the children's grades and channeling them to receive support in case they need to reinforce any subject. The children have been instructed on how to use the computer. An agreement was recently signed to implement the BLR program, which will increase the collection of books according to the children's tastes and interests and encourage the habit of reading. The directors of this Casa Hogar seek financing and support with housing for young people who want to continue their further education after completing their time at Casa de la Esperanza. One of the adverse situations that the Casa Hogar is going through is that two of the vehicles in which the children are transported to the schools have engine damage, which has complicated their transportation.

- Perform engine repairs on the two vehicles in which they transport children to school.
- To continue supporting and motivating children to continue studying at the corresponding educational levels.

# Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this home all the children receive the opportunity to attend school, to receive personalized counseling and to have the necessary materials and books to develop their education. They are also assigned a space in the closet to store their personal items. On the other hand, the children have weekly recreational, cultural or sports activities for them to acquire and develop different skills. Casa de la Esperanza provides all the necessary support to children with disabilities or behavioral or language disorders so that they can receive the appropriate therapy to help improve their quality of life. Children with visual impairment have been continuously supported so that they can be immediately fitted with the glasses they need.

The mentors and caregivers of this Casa Hogar act as role models and always guide the children to choose the right path. In relation to adolescents and young people who are about to reach adulthood. Every week they attend various workshops with the objective of acquiring different skills and tools for the moment when they have to leave the Casa Hogar. In addition, they are encouraged to continue their studies, whether it is a technical or university degree. They are also assigned tasks with greater responsibility in order to allow them to develop in accordance with current realities. To strengthen this right to equal opportunities and to ensure that children can attend extracurricular and recreational activities, as well as psychological, psychiatric and medical appointments in a safe manner, it is necessary to renew the vehicle registration cards and vehicle insurance of the various cars in which children are transported to the various activities.

- Develop a written plan for transition to adulthood.
- Renew the vehicle insurance of the various cars in which the children are transported to the different activities.
- To revalidate the vehicles used to transport children to school and other places.





## Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa de la Esperanza has a policy related to children's sexual behavior. This policy is aimed at preventing children from spending time alone in a room, keeping doors locked, accessing pornography, etc. To carry out this policy, caregivers are evaluated by a psychologist with the objective of orienting and guiding them to detect aspects related to children's sexual behavior, identify and address sexual behaviors. They also avoid children spending time alone in a room, observe interactions with other children or employees, and verify that they do not have access to pornography. It is worth mentioning that in the event that any risk behavior is manifested, directors are notified so that the necessary measures can be taken and the children can be supported in the best way possible. On the other hand, children, adolescents and young people are educated to take care of their bodies and set limits. In addition, the psychologists who attend the children talk with them so that they are aware of the changes related to puberty and adolescence. On a weekly basis, all children receive individual or group psychological care.

In this Casa Hogar they try to provide the best education to all the children who live here, so that they acquire skills and abilities for when the time comes for them to leave the Casa Hogar. The teenagers and young adults are given the opportunity to broaden their professional and career interests. In addition, they have all the support and open communication from the directors to address any type of situation that may arise either within their technical or university career. In this Casa Hogar they have simple and clear rules that are communicated with the children so that they can understand what is expected of them. For their part, the caregivers offer a model of respectful and responsible behavior with the children and co-workers.

- Strengthen policy related to the sexual behavior of children.
- Develop a written life skills program.



## Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Encouraging children to participate in various activities, make decisions and express their opinion or needs is one of the priorities at Casa de la Esperanza. Each of the children is encouraged to increase their level of security by being listened to. They also strengthen the children's confidence by assigning them leadership activities, allowing them to decide what activity they want to do during their free time, and participating in menu planning on special occasions.

On the other hand, they are given the opportunity to choose the clothes they want to wear on a daily basis and to inform them about medical care procedures. They also have the opportunity to ask questions to avoid a possible traumatic situation.

- Implement individual development plans for each child and update them on a monthly basis.



## Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In order for the children at Casa de la Esperanza to become good citizens, they are assigned personal responsibilities and daily chores according to their age and level of understanding. In addition, they are provided with information, receive training and carry out activities both at school and at the Casa Hogar on topics related to ethics and democratic processes. With respect to adolescents over 15 years of age, the director strengthens their civic participation by teaching them activities that help them to live independently and make the transition to responsible adulthood. Likewise, all the children have their birth certificate that identifies them as Mexican citizens. Also, as a way of involving the children in the events of the Casa Hogar, they are informed in a timely manner of the main events. On the other hand, the caregivers receive training to help the children understand and practice the skill of respecting themselves, others and their daily activities.

At Casa de la Esperanza they celebrate national and local holidays, and every year they hold a kermesse to celebrate the "Mexican Revolution". In addition, they celebrate Mexican Independence Day, Christmas, among other festivities. The children of this Casa Hogar have the opportunity to participate in field trips, school activities and special events, considering the budget and the authorization of DIF. In this Casa Hogar the children are encouraged to participate in community activities and to provide service to others. They have distributed groceries with the surrounding neighbors, and they have arranged and loaded supplies to take to the El Hongo Readaptation Center in Tecate, B.C. Especially at Christmas time, they share candy with the children of the surrounding homes.

- Continue with training on citizenship, ethics and democracy.
- Continue to support adolescents in acquiring new skills for their adult life.



## Right to Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The Casa Hogar implements a child protection policy to prevent children from being physically, sexually, verbally, emotionally and psychologically abused by their caregivers. They also have policies related to the prevention of child exploitation, the prohibition of an adult and a child spending time alone, and another policy for visitors and volunteers. On the other hand, they ensure that caregivers who are in charge of children's care are trustworthy through an established process to check their backgrounds. To strengthen child protection, caregivers have been trained by DIF staff. The in-house psychologist also teaches positive discipline techniques and alternatives to corporal punishment, as well as ways to identify, prevent and avoid abuse. One of the relevant activities carried out at Casa de la Esperanza is that the cameras are checked frequently and the staff is attentive to the actions and behavior of the children. If any situation of abuse or neglect is perceived, appropriate measures are taken immediately, including notifying the DIF or the corresponding institution about the situation.

Children over 5 years of age have been provided with educational sessions on abuse through the ¡Ya Basta! program. They have been taught age-appropriate reporting methods. We try to make sure that all the children living in this home are very clear about actions related to abuse and neglect so that they have the confidence to express any situation that harms their integrity. Also, each time a new child enters the Casa Hogar, psychological evaluations are conducted to help them work through their traumas. The location of Casa de la Esperanza allows the people in the surrounding area to be aware of any event, and they frequently take care of and respect this open space. Inside the Casa Hogar there are separate dormitories for boys and girls, according to the appropriate age groups and government regulations. In addition, there are private facilities for the children to bathe, go to the bathroom and get dressed.

- Develop a written policy related to the prevention of child exploitation.
- Develop written rules and regulations for visitors and volunteers and post them for public viewing.
- Promote the control of the registration of people at the entrance of the Casa Hogar to increase the safety of the children and all those who live in the Casa Hogar.





# Right to Dignity and Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this home, dignity and freedom begin with the recognition of each child's great value as a human being, as well as the fact that he or she is unique and unrepeatable. That is why when they arrive here, they are provided with everything they need so that they can have a good stay in a family environment. They are taught to take care of themselves according to their level of maturity. Each child is provided with their own bed, towel, toothbrush, sufficient clothing, underwear, as well as toys and art materials. They are also provided with sufficient sheets and blankets, which are cleaned at least every 2 weeks or whenever they become soiled. The children who live here bathe daily. Through dialogue, workshops and psychological therapy, the children are motivated to be kind to each other and to avoid scorn, bullying and name-calling. The children are made aware of the consequences of breaking the rules.

The space in which Casa de la Esperanza is located is very large, which allows the children to carry out various activities. They have open spaces to play soccer or basketball, and the playground is currently being remodeled, thanks to donations received from donors. On the other hand, teenagers over the age of 17 have the opportunity to participate in community work and keep the money they earn. Likewise, all children in general are given the opportunity to do additional work to earn help or achieve some privilege.

- Continue with the workshops and psychological attention that the children receive in order to continue promoting good behaviors.



## Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Love for God and spirituality is one of the main axes that motivate the directors to guide the children on the path of goodness in accordance with their religious beliefs. They try that the children have diverse experiences and teachings that allow them to visualize a better path in their daily lives. That is why every Sunday of the year they congregate in a Christian church and allow them to be part of a spiritual community. Either on Thursdays or Fridays of each week, a group of people from a church visit this home to share devotionals with the children and reflect on the word of God. Within the Casa Hogar there are materials and religious books available for the children. In addition, each child has his or her own Bible. The children voluntarily participate in prayer before meals. They are free to decide whether or not they wish to participate in the daily prayers or rituals that are implemented within the Casa Hogar.

- Continue to promote the right to spirituality in children.



## Financial Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa de la Esperanza continuously records income and expenses through the Excel program. In addition, they add the image of the invoice or receipt to make these records transparent. The directors are in the best disposition to show these records, since they are available for any review. Also, with these receipts and invoices, they create a loss statement and minimize the misuse of funds. They have an internal review of their finances by the treasurer of the civil association. They are supported by a qualified accountant who validates the accounting records, reconciles the bank accounts and files the tax returns in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit. Within the Casa Hogar there is an adequate separation of financial functions among the Casa Hogar's directors, who are assigned to various activities.

- Develop an annual budget to visualize the amount that will be required for the entire year.



## Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Through the articles of incorporation, Casa de la Esperanza has ensured that the land and improvements made cannot be removed or sold for personal gain. Casa Hogar is audited and governance requirements. They are currently in the process of having their operating license renewed by DIF. They have an active board of directors that meets at least twice a year.

They have an organizational chart that describes the positions that make up the Casa Hogar staff, as well as a vacation and leave policy for the staff. In addition, each employee has a file that is kept in a secure space. According to the guidelines established for new caregivers, they will follow an experienced caregiver to learn the activities to be carried out, the dynamics and routines of each day. Meetings are held frequently with the caregivers to discuss issues of concern and how to improve processes. The caregivers have received training on attachment issues, child development, promoting child participation, ADHD, first aid and CPR, which has helped to prevent high-risk health situations in the children.

Follow up on government processes to renew DIF's operating license.





# Current Improvement Partners



## Books, Libraries, Reading (BLR)

BLR's aim is to help kids love to read and read often. We do this through getting them books that match their interests and books that may expand their interests and spark their curiosity. With these books and others, we create a well-organized, fun, and functional library. We also develop reading goals, activities and training for the kids and orphanage staff.



## Espere

Espere partners with ACHF in Baja California to provide caregiver support through trainings, workshops, and roundtables” on ways to support the mental health and wellbeing for the children in their care as well as their own self-care. Additionally, they offer support to therapists working in our partner orphanages.

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





A CHILD'S  
**HOPE**  
FOUNDATION