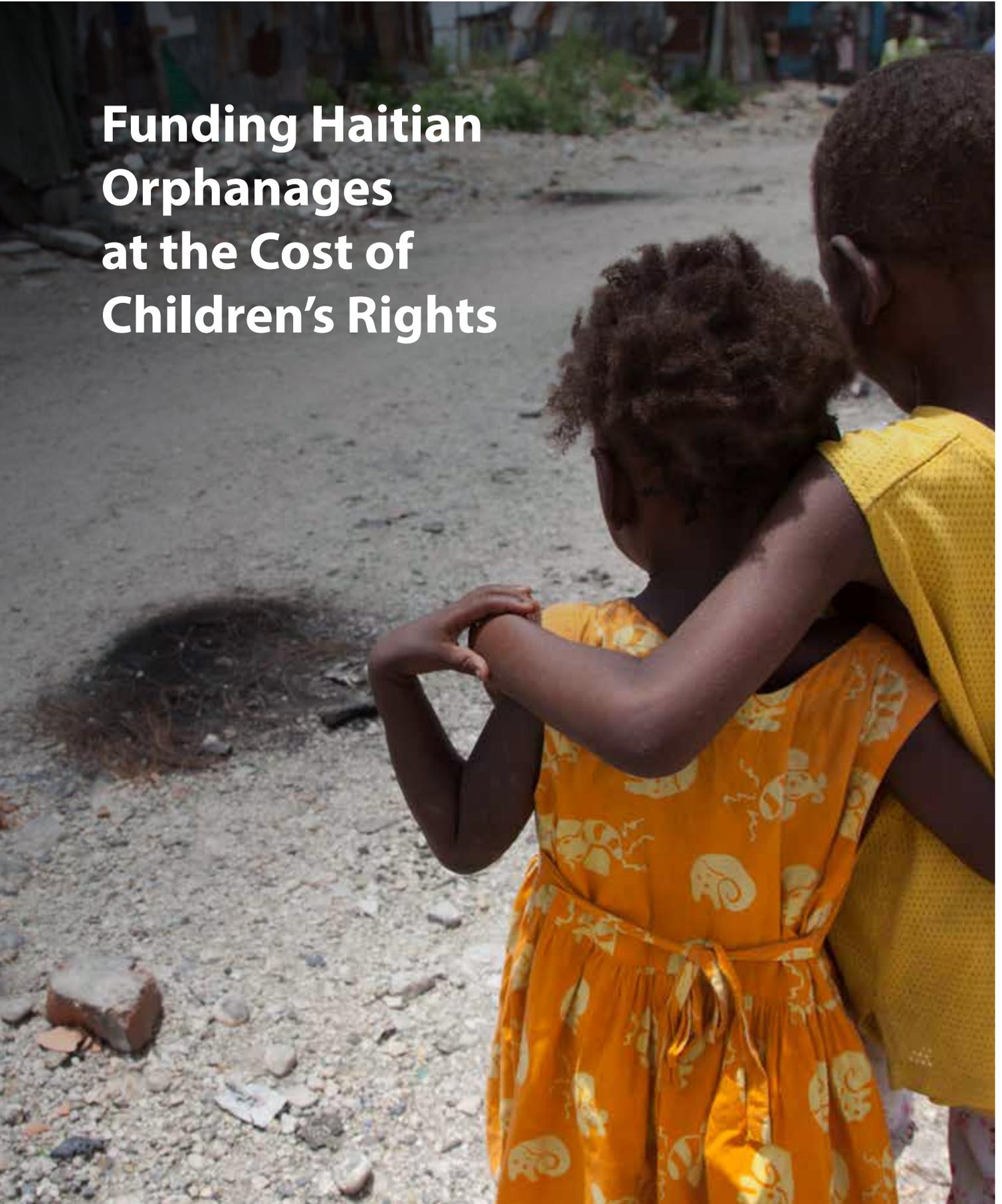


Funding Haitian Orphanages at the Cost of Children's Rights



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Executive Summary

An estimated 30,000 children live in approximately 750 mostly privately-run and financed orphanages in Haiti. The Government of Haiti estimates that 80 percent of children in orphanages have at least one living parent, and almost all have other family members. Poverty, lack of access to basic services, and the desire to provide an education drive parents and caregivers to place their children in orphanages. With adequate support, many children could return to family- and community-based care, and at-risk families could be strengthened to prevent separation in the first instance. More than 80 years of research demonstrates the physical, social, and psychological harm caused by raising children in orphanages and that family-based solutions reduce risk of abuse and result in better outcomes for children.

There is now an 'orphanage-crisis' not an 'orphan-crisis' in Haiti. The international definition of an 'orphan', used in development indicators globally, is a child who has lost one or both parents. Misunderstanding this nuance has led to the widespread belief that there are hundreds of thousands of children in Haiti without any parents or family who could care for them.

To understand why orphanages continue to flourish in Haiti and how they affect children, Lumos investigated patterns in funding as well as the ramifications of orphanage life for children raised within their walls. Lumos documented financial support to just over one-third of known Haitian orphanages and found that **at least US\$70 million dollars was donated to them annually**, predominantly from North American, Christian funders. This means that funding to the orphanage sector in Haiti is one of the most significant forms of any kind of international aid to Haiti, greater than most official development assistance to Haiti by donor countries. It also means that this is just the tip of the iceberg of financial and other forms of support to all the orphanages in the country. **A conservative estimate of the total funding to all Haitian orphanages ranges upwards of \$100 million per year.**

This extraordinary investment does not necessarily translate to quality care and the best interest of children. In fact, what is being done in the name of care

often comes at the high cost of the rights of children and their long-term prospects as independent, successful adults. Orphanages do not provide viable, long-term solutions for children. In the best-case scenarios, orphanage supporters do not understand the lifelong impact of orphanage care on child development, nor do they adequately prepare children to succeed once they leave care. In the worst cases, orphanages are rampant with human rights abuses. Only 15 percent of Haitian orphanages are officially registered with the government. At least 140 are believed to have extremely detrimental living conditions where children are at severe risk of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and avoidable death.

Children in Haiti are particularly vulnerable, accounting for half of the country's total population, and Haitian families face many challenges. In addition to natural disasters, the Haitian population has been affected by decades of political and economic instability, recurrent foreign interventions, and high rates of extreme poverty. Haitian women on average have five children, and, as primary caregivers, mothers often struggle to adequately provide for their families. A quarter of Haitian children do not live with their birth parents – some live with extended family, while others are placed outside family care, either in situations of child domestic labor or in orphanages.

While the humanitarian emergency and massive displacement following the 2010 earthquake had a huge impact on children, the initial response of private philanthropy was not to focus on sustainable solutions to strengthen families and communities. Instead, as the result of a perceived 'orphan' crisis as a result of the emergency, Haiti saw at least a 150 percent increase in the number of orphanages. They have since become the go-to international response to child vulnerability, undermining national-level efforts to create a broader child protection and social welfare system.

There is now effectively an 'orphanage-crisis' not an 'orphan-crisis' in Haiti. The international definition of an 'orphan', used in development indicators globally, is a child who has lost one or both parents. Misunderstanding this nuance has led to the widespread belief that there are hundreds of thousands of children in Haiti without any parents or family who could care for them. Lumos findings demonstrate that private donors continue to pour immense resources into Haitian orphanages, and that there is a 'market' for orphanages in Haiti through international interest

Lumos estimates that the total amount of support to Haitian orphanages exceeds \$100 million annually

 **\$100MILLION =**
770,000 children in school

770,000 Haitian children could be supported to go to school. One million children are at risk of being out of school in Haiti and many parents struggle to pay annual fees of \$130 to send their children to school.

= \$100MILLION 
130 x IBESR

More than **130 times** the reported Haitian child protection agency's annual budget.

= \$100MILLION 
5 x

Nearly 5 times the Haitian Ministry of Social Affairs' annual budget.

 **\$100MILLION =**
Support for children outside family care

All of the 30,000 children currently in orphanages could be reunited with their families or supported in alternative care. Additionally more than half of the 207,000 children under age 15 living in unacceptable conditions of child domestic labor - restavek situations - could return home and be supported within their families.

= \$100MILLION 
1/2 of U.S. foreign aid to Haiti

Equivalent to nearly **1/2 of ALL U.S. foreign aid to Haiti** planned for 2017.

= \$100MILLION 
EU Budget

More than the EU earmarked annual budget for Haiti for 2014-2020, €420 million over six years, or €70 million per year.

in volunteering, mission trips, tourism, and other forms of fundraising and promotion. This orphanage business – where orphanages are established and recruit children to raise donations from foreigners – is becoming increasingly recognized globally as a form of trafficking.

The continued proliferation of and support to orphanages conflicts with the Government of Haiti's national plan to reduce reliance on orphanage care and tackle human trafficking, as well as international human rights conventions and standards designed to protect children. It also goes against domestic trends in donor countries – Australia, Canada, many European countries, and the United States moved away from orphanages domestically decades ago. Additionally, foreign policies from these countries have also moved away from orphanage support. The United States Government Action Plan on Children in Adversity promotes family-based care, not orphanages in its official international development assistance, and the European Union has committed to end institutional care in Europe.

The \$70 million in funding is only a piece of the traceable financial flow to orphanages. Other forms of support are not tracked in programmatic budgets and financial reporting. Many churches in the United States and Canada are not bound by law to report their finances, and private individuals, in-kind donations, cash, and other forms of support are not documented.

The availability of millions of dollars for Haitian orphanages, and the desire of well-intended people to help 'orphans', is driving the establishment of orphanages in Haiti, some purely for profit. This report demonstrates the lack of transparency of international financial support provided by individuals and organizations, and the high risk of mismanagement of funds on the ground. It shows a system that yields high donations that do not match the quality of care and best interests of children in Haiti. The lack of due diligence by some funders; subsequent inadequate monitoring of projects; and lack of professionalization of the workforce with an overreliance on volunteers do not ensure that resources reach children nor that children are safe while in care.

Lumos relied on desk-based data analysis of the most current tax information and public reporting of donors; research carried out in-country from October 2016 to February 2017, including interviews with key witnesses; and documentation of Lumos operations in Haiti, including the 2016 evaluation of 140 children in four orphanages alongside the government's child protection agency – the Institut du Bien-Etre Social et de Recherches (the Institute for Social Welfare and Research, IBESR).

This report presents an overview of: the pattern of foreign donor support to children in orphanages; the estimated flows in financial and other support from private, faith-based sources; and outcomes for children. Lumos documented the impact of orphanages on care leavers – children and young adults who were raised from infancy, or who were sent to live for a period, in orphanages. Using evidence from Lumos' work in Haiti, the Haitian government, partners, and care leavers themselves, the research dispels the myth that children in Haitian orphanages are orphans. It underlines how, in some instances, the quality of care in orphanages includes practices of physical and sexual abuse, severe neglect, and avoidable death. Additionally, case evidence suggests a trend of Haitian orphanages recruiting children away from their families. The report also demonstrates that children raised in orphanages struggle to survive as independent adults, no matter how good the quality of care in an orphanage.

Lumos' research concentrated on funding to Haitian orphanages to highlight the vast and, for the most part, well-intentioned drive to support children in need. Given a tradition of commitment to children's issues, there is a significant role for the faith community to play in the transformation of care. Already, some international and local Haitian faith-based NGOs have developed programs to ensure that children are raised in families. These programs include foster care within Haitian families; small therapeutic group homes for children with disabilities; programs for children coming out of situations of domestic child labor; maternal health programs; and vocational training for young adults leaving orphanages, among others. There is good potential for such alternatives, but coordinated and consistent funding is needed to scale up best practices.

Current support to orphanage-based care could be effectively transitioned to provide large-scale, cross-sectoral support to Haitian families. The impact of such a shift of the estimated \$100 million dollars away from orphanages could be immense and long-lasting. Faith-based actors have the potential to improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of vulnerable children in Haiti. Their investment and support requires understanding the needs of families and communities and respecting the rights of children.

Key Findings

- **US faith-based donors represent the largest funder of orphanages in Haiti.** Ninety-two percent of orphanage funders were from the United States, and ninety percent were faith-based.
- **Lumos identified at least \$70 million in reported annual project budgets of registered foreign NGOs going to only a third of Haitian orphanages. A conservative estimate of the total funding to all Haitian orphanages ranges upwards of \$100 million per year.** This also does not capture funding to Haitian orphanages from churches, congregations, cash, in-kind donations, and other forms of support.
- **Orphanage-based care is not in the best interest of children.** Even with the best quality care in an orphanage, young adults struggle to live independently upon leaving care, facing unemployment, lack of housing, and are often unable to afford to finish school.
- **Children can face a range of abuses in orphanages that violate their human rights.** These include violence and severe neglect; lack of access to health, sanitation, and nutrition; lack of access to education; and, in a few documented cases, sexual abuse, trafficking, and avoidable death in care.

Key Recommendations

To donors currently, or thinking of, funding orphanages:

- Ensure that partner orphanages are not involved in harmful or illegal practices, and that funding and other forms of support are not mismanaged by developing oversight mechanisms.
- Support the transition away from orphanages to the provision of community-based services to make it possible for children in the orphanages to live in families.
- Research the needs of local communities, talk to experts, and redirect funds to orphan prevention programs, including family preservation and community development programs.
- Promote within communities and churches understanding that children should be in families, not orphanages, and that funds could be better spent on preventing the separation of children from their families.

To volunteers and mission trips participants:

- Do not take part in short-term volunteering or mission trip visits to orphanages, which are harmful to child development.
- Research and find an ethical volunteering agency that provides opportunities in community development and family preservation programs.
- Consider ending a volunteer placement when concerned about harmful practices, and contact the relevant authorities or ask advice from organizations working locally on family preservation or community development.

To multilateral and bilateral government partners (including Canada, European Union, France, United Nations, and the United States):

- Support the Haitian government to strengthen child protection and address child trafficking, by: ensuring funds are not used to maintain or establish orphanages and encouraging other donors to do the same; investing in health, education, and community support services.
- Support the implementation of the strategy to close appropriately the orphanages with the worst conditions.
- Ensure that none of their personnel, including MINUSTAH peacekeepers and future operational staff, volunteer or invest in orphanages.

To the Government of Haiti:

- Develop an independent inspection system for orphanages and a system for tracking children in orphanages.
- Increase the number of social workers and foster families, and improve their training.
- Considerably expand the foster care program, including providing remuneration to foster carers to ensure the program can be brought to scale.
- Prioritize the provision of free education and health care for all children.
- Prioritize children trafficked in orphanages within the new Anti-Trafficking Strategy.

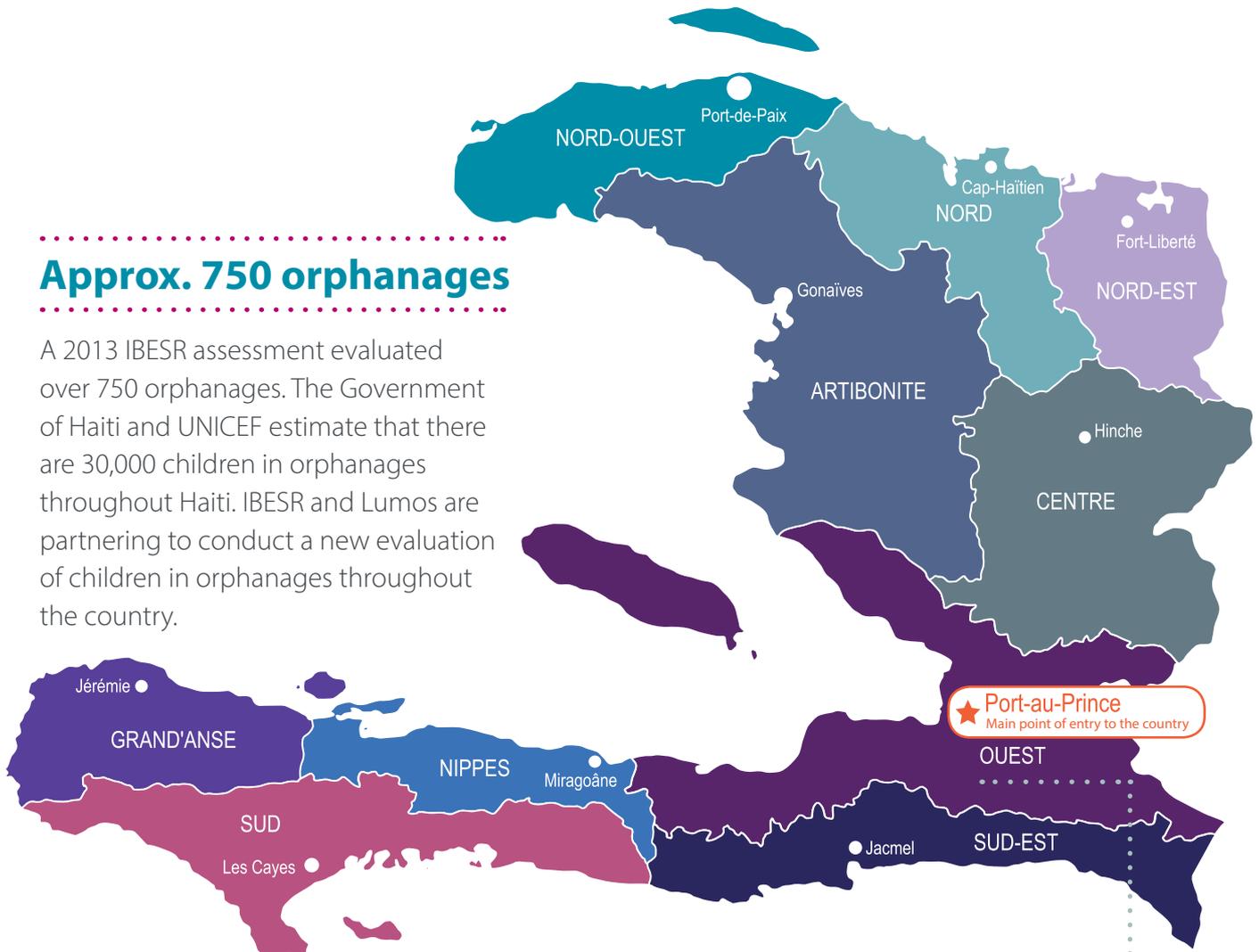
Number of Orphanages per Department

Each department is color coded and details the estimated number of orphanages.



Approx. 750 orphanages

A 2013 IBESR assessment evaluated over 750 orphanages. The Government of Haiti and UNICEF estimate that there are 30,000 children in orphanages throughout Haiti. IBESR and Lumos are partnering to conduct a new evaluation of children in orphanages throughout the country.



About Lumos

Lumos, an international non-profit organisation founded by J.K. Rowling, is dedicated to ending the institutionalisation of children – a practice that decades of research have shown is harmful to child development. We are working with many others and at all levels to ensure the right of every child to family life and transform the lives of eight million children currently living in institutions and orphanages. We help countries transform education, health and social care systems for children and their families, and help move children from institutions to family-based care.

By advocating at all levels, collaborating widely and running evidence-based demonstration projects that prove reform can work, we are able to achieve maximum impact from our funding to benefit some of the most vulnerable children in the world.

Lumos is founder member of the European Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community Based Care (EEG) and has been instrumental in the development of guidelines and toolkits in 13 European languages in order to guide national governments through the process of deinstitutionalisation and transitioning to community-based care services. For more information see: <http://deinstitutionalisationguide.eu>.

We are also a founding member of the Global Partnership for Children with Disabilities in Development, and member of the Leaders Council for the US-based Global Alliance for Children.

For more information visit our website wearelumos.org
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