



ALL CHILDREN GROW UP IN SAFE AND LOVING FAMILIES

STRATEGY 2021-2023



OUR VISION

All children grow up in safe and loving families.

OUR MISSION

To fight for every child's right to a family by transforming care systems around the world.

WHO WE ARE

Lumos exists to light a path to a brighter future for children. We fight to tackle the causes of family separation and transform systems of care that take children away from their families and communities.

We're committed to ending the institutionalisation of children, so every child enjoys the right to grow up in a loving family where they can thrive.

Named after the light-giving spell in Harry Potter, Lumos was founded by author J.K. Rowling in 2005.



80%

On average, 80% of children in orphanages have a living parent



300

300 global research studies show the long-term harm of institutions to children



5.4 MILLION

An estimated 5.4 million children are living in institutions worldwide

WHY WE'RE FIGHTING FOR EVERY CHILD

Around the world, millions of children continue to live in orphanages and other harmful institutions. Separated from their families and communities, these children are deprived of the love, attention and opportunities they need to thrive.

Despite clear evidence of the harms of institutionalisation, an estimated 5.4 million children worldwide continue to live in institutions. We've made important progress in closing harmful institutions and reuniting children with their families. And where children are unable to live with their birth families, we promote alternative family-based care, such as kinship care and high quality foster care. But we've never focused exclusively on individual institutions. It's not enough. We need to tackle the broader issues that drive children into institutions in the first place and inspire others to do what's needed on a bigger scale. Otherwise we're just treating the symptoms, not the cause.

To achieve the lasting transformation that children need, our strategy focuses on working with governments and local partners to reform and strengthen care systems so that all children can enjoy the right to grow up in safe and loving families. We've helped collect data and evidence to prove that no child belongs in an institution, and we're demonstrating what better solutions look like.

Thanks to our tireless efforts alongside many other champions of care reform, the harms of institutionalisation are now more widely understood. A global movement is underway and the UN, the EU and some large development agencies have joined individual countries in pledging to change how they care for vulnerable children. But progress has been too slow: too often, reform has been piecemeal and poorly implemented. A lack of know-how and accountability have hindered progress, and funds still flow into institutional care.

The COVID-19 pandemic compounds these problems, exposing dangerous weaknesses in systems of child protection, welfare and education, while placing an unprecedented strain on families. Millions of children will be affected, increasing vulnerability and the risk of family separation. More children will end up in institutions as a result.

With the spectre of COVID-19 casting a shadow that few of us could ever have imagined, we all look to our families as a vital safety net and source of comfort. As the global community seeks to rebuild and strengthen economies, services and communities, now is the time for a fundamental rethink about the kind of society we want to live in.

The children trapped in institutions are deprived of their basic rights, their liberty and the chance to reach their full potential. Every child taken away from their family and consigned to an institution tears the very fabric of a happy, healthy and resilient society.

We cannot afford to lose another generation of children to institutionalisation.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT.

This is a call to join forces to fight for every child's right to a family.

Find out more at wearelumos.org

TIME FOR CHANGE

Growing up in institutional care violates children's rights. Over 80 years of international research has demonstrated that it can severely harm children's physical and cognitive development and expose them to a heightened risk of abuse and neglect.

We've helped prove that institutions are not only harmful, but are also costly to maintain. These resources could be better invested in services that strengthen and support families, and tackle the causes of separation. By building the know-how and incentives to transform care systems around the world, many more children could safely return home with the right family and community support in place. For those who can't, there are still better alternatives – including living with relatives or a loving foster family.

Building on our heritage and direct experience of systems reform, our new strategy focuses on sharing learning with others to reach more children and amplify the impacts of our work on children's lives.

HOW WE'LL DELIVER FOR CHILDREN

We'll apply pressure to translate global commitments into local action, leading to lasting change for vulnerable children.

Over the next three years, we'll galvanise and support governments, civil society and other influential organisations to translate global policy intentions and commitments into action around the world. By sharing our learning and expertise, we'll support local efforts that lead to lasting change and safe, quality care for vulnerable children. We'll also create innovative programmes targeted at tackling the most complex barriers to change.

OUR NEW STRATEGY HAS THREE PRIORITIES

Achieving a genuinely global impact will mean a greater emphasis on working with partners and finding effective ways to share the expertise we've built up over the years. Each of the three priorities will be delivered through a programme of focused initiatives.



BUILDING GLOBAL EXPERTISE

We'll use our knowledge and experience to support those responsible for reforming care systems in their own countries. This will include providing technical support, evidence and guidance to help design and run better care systems, as well as learning exchanges where they can share experiences and challenges. Importantly, we'll make sure that people with lived experience of institutionalisation are included throughout the process.



CATALYSING CHANGE

We know that ending institutionalisation benefits children and society – and we'll use this evidence to motivate and press governments to reform the way they care for children. This will involve leading targeted research and advocacy campaigns to identify and tackle the drivers of institutionalisation, promoting accountability by tracking and highlighting progress, and influencing international funding, programmes and policy.



DEMONSTRATING & INNOVATING

Building on our heritage of successful programmes showing how care systems can be reformed, we'll use what we've learnt in the past to support partners with their own reform efforts. Over the next two years, as we complete our current country demonstration work in Eastern Europe, we'll identify programmes in new regions – building expertise and evidence of what good care reform looks like in new and challenging contexts, particularly for those children that typically get left behind.

Systems design

Even where commitment and momentum towards national care reform is strong, success can falter without sound strategic planning and careful design. We'll support governments and partners to design effective care systems, using proven evidence-based approaches, and monitor progress so we can keep learning and improving.

Remote support and strategic partnerships

Building on the success of our remote programmes in Jordan, Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere, we'll provide targeted support to governments and other key stakeholders. We'll continue to cultivate local care reform champions, focusing on regionally influential countries, new contexts, and those with potential to make a major difference globally.

Learning exchange

Countries learn best from peers who share similar experiences and challenges. With partners, we'll build a community for people working in care reform, providing online tools, training resources, virtual study visits and other opportunities to share experiences and learn from each other.

Participation of people with lived experience

Children and young people don't just have a right to be included in decisions that affect their lives – they are the experts on their own lives, and care reform is more successful with their involvement. We'll continue to work with "self advocates" and youth networks – and guide governments and other partners to ensure children's voices are heard.

Global and national monitoring

We'll promote accountability among national governments by developing and supporting tools and resources to track progress and highlight inaction. And we'll work with intergovernmental organisations and donors to apply pressure on governments to deliver.

Influencing international funding and action

Building on past successes, we'll influence funding and action through targeted campaigns. With our partners, we'll press influential bodies like the EU to promote investment in family and community-based care for children and create opportunities for reform.

Mainstreaming care reform

Through research and advocacy, we'll make care reform a key issue for related sectors like health, education, early childhood development or those working to end violence against children. This will foster vital collaboration and holistic approaches, and channel new sources of funding towards care reform.

Innovative demonstration programmes

Some countries, systems and contexts are very different from those where care reform has taken place before. We'll establish innovative demonstration programmes in contexts where it's still necessary to show reform is possible and how it can be achieved, focusing on projects that we can learn the most from and with the potential to be replicated in other countries.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

OUR MISSION

To fight for every child's right to a family by transforming care systems around the world

TACKLING THE PROBLEM

CAPABILITY

Limited knowledge and expertise can inhibit adoption of quality care reform. We'll help governments and development organisations to transform how they protect and support vulnerable children.

MOTIVATION

Apathy, inaction and competing agendas can stall progress. We'll focus on building political pressure and creating incentives to catalyse change for children and families.

OPPORTUNITY

Barriers such as complex systems, lack of funding, and specialist needs can make reform difficult. We'll keep building evidence of what good reform looks like in diverse contexts – particularly for those children that get left behind.

HOW WE'LL DO IT

BUILDING GLOBAL EXPERTISE

Systems design and action planning
Remote support and strategic partnerships
Learning exchange
Participation of people with lived experience

CATALYSING CHANGE

Influencing global and national monitoring of progress
Research into drivers of institutionalisation
Advocacy to address the drivers, influence funding and mainstream care reform - and target countries of influence and late adopters.

DEMONSTRATING & INNOVATING

Innovative demonstration programmes in countries of influence
Documentation of learning from demonstration programmes

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Governments and major stakeholders have the appropriate tools, resources and understanding to create meaningful change. Governments are supported to design and implement systemic reform and apply technical advice in practice.

Systems are established to accurately track global reform and hold governments to account. New understanding of the drivers of institutionalisation is generated leading to actions to help more children through better prevention and family-based care.

Innovative demonstration programmes are established, generating learning, practice and evidence of what care reform looks like in new contexts. Original learning is created and shared to support adoption of successes in other countries.

INTERMEDIATE GOAL

More countries implement quality and sustainable care reform at national level.

OUR VISION

All children grow up in safe and loving families

OUR IMPACT FOR CHILDREN

Today, thanks to the efforts of Lumos and our partners, the harms of institutionalisation are more widely understood. Backed by better data and increasing evidence from the fields of neuroscience and early childhood development, there's growing consensus that **no child belongs in an institution.**

In diverse countries and contexts, we've proven change is possible. With careful planning and management, child protection systems can be transformed to ensure all children enjoy their right to grow up in a safe and loving family. Our new strategy builds on our rich heritage to ensure thousands more children and families can benefit from our work and that we achieve an impact greater than the sum of our parts.

Children and families will always be at the heart of everything we do.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

We're driven by the vision of a world in which all children grow up in safe and loving families. For the past 15 years, we've worked alongside governments, partners and communities to demonstrate how, together, we can make this a reality.

Through our five locally-led country demonstration programmes, we've helped develop services to strengthen families and address the drivers of separation, enabling thousands of children in institutions to safely return home and preventing more from entering care. We've supported governments and civil society partners in at least 50 countries with training and technical support to lead reform initiatives.

Importantly, we've put children and young people with lived experience of institutions at the heart of our work. From helping to secure high-level commitments from policymakers to training social workers, including and empowering these young people has been integral to many of our milestones.

OUR STORY SO FAR

Since Lumos was founded, we've achieved a lot for children – and we have much more to do.

2006 Transforming Moldova

As the poorest country in Europe, Moldova had high rates of institutionalisation when we began working there, with over 11,500 children living in 67 institutions. Today, thanks to our work with government and civil society partners, the number of children in institutions has fallen by 90%.

2008

Training Czech professionals

Since we began working in Czechia, the number of children in institutions has fallen by a quarter from 10,400 in 2008 to 7,900 in 2019. The biggest reductions have come in residential care homes for people with disabilities. We've helped to train more than 9,400 social workers and professionals in the Czech care system.

2015

HIV care in Colombia

We worked with Fundamor, a Colombian NGO caring for children living with HIV, to transition from operating an institution to supporting family-based care. Thanks to training, guidance and funding from Lumos, all 52 children were supported to safely leave the institution to live with their biological families, foster families or in specialist arrangements.

40,815

By 2018, we had trained 40,815 professionals in the skills needed to transform care.

2010

Reintegration in Bulgaria

We created innovative demonstration programmes in Dobrich and Varna to reintegrate babies and children with complex disabilities into family-based care. We supported and challenged the Bulgarian government to develop and implement a national action plan for reforming children's services.

2015

Shining a spotlight on Haiti's orphanages

We assessed all orphanages in Haiti, revealing that only one in four was licensed to operate and finding evidence of abusive practices in 93%. The government stopped the establishment of new orphanages and urged donors to direct their funds towards family and community-based care.

2017

Launching youth advisory boards in Europe

In 2017, we launched national youth advisory boards in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Moldova to provide opportunities for young people to contribute directly to our governance and strategic direction, and engage and influence national government.

2018

Disability rights in Jordan

We worked with the government in Jordan to shape national legislation on the rights of people with disabilities, jointly developing a pioneering 10-year strategy on deinstitutionalisation for people with disabilities – the first of its kind in the Middle East. The strategy will transform the lives of the 1,471 people with disabilities in institutions and many others who have entered institutional care.

2013

Redirecting EU funds

Our advocacy helped change regulations governing European Structural and Investment Funds, leading to around €2.7 billion being allocated towards reforming care systems. The new conditions galvanised the transition away from institutions to family and community-based living, offering new opportunities to some of Europe's most marginalised children.

2020

Ground-breaking research in the Lancet

Three major papers shedding light on the situation of children living in institutions were published in The Lancet – the world's leading independent medical journal. We played a key role in co-authoring the reports and convening experts to support the research and the commission, which presents authoritative and comprehensive evidence of the scale of institutionalisation worldwide, and the harm it causes.

2019

A landmark in children's rights

The UN General Assembly adopted the landmark Resolution on the Rights of Children, focused on children without parental care. Reflecting years of advocacy and recommendations made by Lumos and our partners, it emphasises the importance of growing up in a family environment, stresses the rights of all children to a family life, and opposes unnecessary separation.



OUR VALUES

Children are at the heart of everything we do. Every child needs love and care in order to flourish – and we're proud that this is reflected in the values we hold within our organisation.

We want to see all children grow up in safe and loving families. Our core values drive us forward in our vision, underpin every aspect of our work and strategy, and are critical to helping us maintain a thriving and effective organisation.

By making sure every individual feels valued and empowered, we can bring about the very best outcomes for the children we serve.

HOW WE WORK

At Lumos we are fighting for a world without orphanages and other institutions. A world where families can stay together and children have the love they need and the futures they deserve.

To achieve this, we work collaboratively with governments, United Nations agencies, the European Union, civil society, communities, families, children and caregivers to transform outdated and ineffective systems that separate families.

We speak up passionately on behalf of the millions of children trapped in orphanages and other institutions worldwide. To transform care, we deliver innovative targeted country programmes, share expertise and provide technical assistance, carry out research and document best practices. Through powerful advocacy, we influence policies and practices to drive positive change for children.

We care about giving children access to vital health, education and social care. Because we know that with the right support every child can thrive in families and communities.



We embrace



COLLABORATION

We believe collaboration with partners around the world leads to positive outcomes for everyone. We thrive on trying out new ways of working together, because we seek to continuously learn and improve.

We nurture a spirit of curiosity and openness, always seeking out new ideas and diverse views and perspectives. **We are stronger together.**

We strive for



EXCELLENCE

We believe children and families deserve the very best we can give them. We take pride in our professionalism – we set the bar high, push ourselves to be better, and expect the same of others.

We want to make a big impact as a global centre of excellence. This means investing in our people, resources and processes. **We are quality champions.**

We show



RESPECT

We believe in respect, equality and inclusion for all. We value the experience and knowledge of others, seek to understand alternative opinions and celebrate our differences.

We want to do more to fight injustice and discrimination, because we want to give equal access to all. We will always try harder. **We are one Lumos family.**

We always



CARE

We believe caring deeply about the children and families we help means imagining walking in their shoes. We empathise with their experiences, we care about people's wellbeing, and we support each other.

We want to make a positive difference to people's lives and have a lasting impact on the communities we work with. **We are more effective, because we care.**

We are



PASSIONATE

We believe in being passionate about everything we do. We are motivated and determined to fight for every child's right to grow up in a safe and loving family.

We want to inspire others every day by working with fire in our hearts. We all feel part of a global movement. **We are restless to make change happen.**

“

ONLY WHEN WE TAKE THE TIME TO LISTEN TO THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE CAN WE CREATE SERVICES THAT GENUINELY SUPPORT THEM. ”

Nancy, Lumos youth coordinator

“

IMAGINE A WORLD WHERE EVERY CHILD
IS RAISED IN A LOVING FAMILY WITH THE
RESOURCES THEY NEED TO THRIVE. ”

Lumos founder J.K. Rowling



FIGHTING FOR EVERY CHILD'S
RIGHT TO A LOVING FAMILY

For more information visit wearelumos.org



@lumos.at.work



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