

Background to Lumos

Lumos' mission is to work with governments, international organisations, NGOs, community groups and individuals to bring an end to the use of large residential institutions to care for children. On the basis of sixty years of evidence in research and practice, Lumos is dedicated to minimizing the numbers of children who must be separated from their parents, by assisting in the development of holistic community-based health, education and social services for children and families. These services make it possible to reduce reliance on residential care.

At a policy level

We work with the European Commission and governments, providing expert advice on deinstitutionalisation programmes. We assist in the development of a vision of how it is possible for these institutions to be replaced with a child-centred, family-focused and community-based system of health, education and social services, which mean that most children can receive the care they need whilst remaining together with their families. Using our tried and tested approach, we ensure this change can be sustainable, even in a low-income country.

At a practical level

We are running pilot projects, partnering with local authorities and national governments, to demonstrate how the process should work in practice. We work with staff from the institutions, facilitating their understanding of the processes required. We provide support – online, on the phone and in person – to those on the ground who are working with children as they move out of institutions and into their new homes. And we demonstrate the value of family-based care, in terms of better outcomes for children, so we can help to change attitudes towards vulnerable children.

We do this because we believe that all children should be raised in a safe and caring family setting.

Where we work

Lumos runs major programmes in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Moldova. We also provide technical assistance in other countries to initiatives that are led by partner agencies. We provide a range of professional resources – a remote expert support service, toolkits, manuals – to practitioners to help them close down institutions and replace them with high quality care.

Expert advice and support

We provide expert advice at the highest level – for example at the UN and the European Commission. We chair the European expert group on the transfer from institutional to community based care, endorsed by the European Commission, and we facilitate peer-to-peer support, bringing together practitioners on the ground and in the UK to share experience in developing and transforming services.

We work with children so they have a voice and are involved in the deinstitutionalisation process. We raise awareness, in the UK, in Europe and across the globe, so that, one day, all children, irrespective of their background or the complexity of their needs, will be cared for in families and integrated into the community.