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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@wearelumos.org>

**Sent:** lundi 11 juin 2018 18:37

**To:** [REDACTED] (CAB-MIMICA); [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
(DEVCO)

**Subject:** RE: Designed agenda

**Attachments:** No Child Left Behind\_conference publication.pdf

Dear [REDACTED],

Please see attached.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]@ec.europa.eu [mailto:[REDACTED]@ec.europa.eu]

**Sent:** 11 June 2018 18:30

**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@wearelumos.org>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@ec.europa.eu>

**Cc:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@wearelumos.org>

**Subject:** RE: Designed agenda

[This message is from an external source]

[REDACTED], do you have a final version of the brochure/publication? I would like to send over to [REDACTED].. thanks

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**From:** [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]@wearelumos.org]

**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2018 6:30 PM

**To:** [REDACTED] (CAB-MIMICA); [REDACTED] (DEVCO)

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Designed agenda

**Importance:** High

Dear [REDACTED], dear [REDACTED],

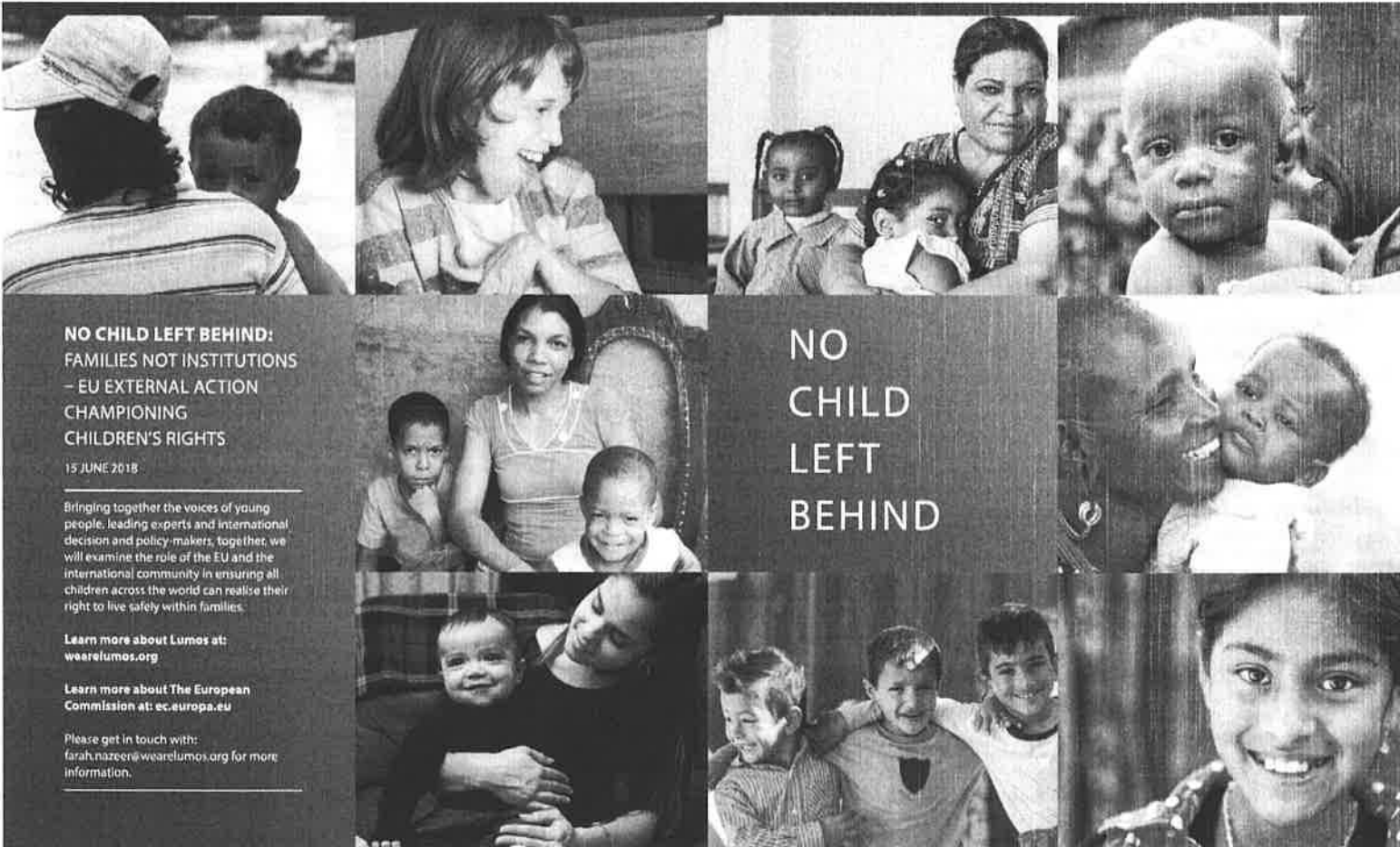
Please find attached the designed agenda.

I hope you are happy with it but, please, let me know if you have any concerns.

Have a good weekend,

[REDACTED]





**NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:  
FAMILIES NOT INSTITUTIONS  
– EU EXTERNAL ACTION  
CHAMPIONING  
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

15 JUNE 2018

Bringing together the voices of young people, leading experts and international decision and policy-makers, together, we will examine the role of the EU and the international community in ensuring all children across the world can realise their right to live safely within families.

Learn more about Lumos at:  
[wearelumos.org](http://wearelumos.org)

Learn more about The European Commission at: [ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu)

Please get in touch with:  
[farah.nazeem@wearelumos.org](mailto:farah.nazeem@wearelumos.org) for more information.

**NO  
CHILD  
LEFT  
BEHIND**



## FOREWORDS



### Foreword by Ruth, self-advocate from Kenya

*Life begins where a child BELONGS*

As the former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan put it: "A society that cuts itself off from the youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death".

Voices of young people must be taken on board in decision-making processes, policy and legislative formulation and programming. We are the best communicators of our own needs. Nothing should be done or decided for us without us.

In Kenya, institutional care is heavily relied upon for the care and protection of orphaned and vulnerable children. The global shift towards family-based care and strengthening families brings great hope for thousands of children in the care system.

It is important to understand the harms of institutional care through the lens of young adults like us who spent years in institutions.

I had the worst experience growing up in one; from living on a carrot a day, to no meals at all. We suffered from hunger, yet donations were being received. That's exploitation! It is a place where children remain at risk of abuse, neglect and developmental damage, among others. No-one ever asked me what I wanted when in care. My dreams and hopes never really mattered.

The one size-fits-all approach translated to lost identity and we lacked a sense of belonging. The longer we stayed in the institution, the more we lost ourselves. We left care physically strong but internally broken. Yes, I acquired an education, but what use is it when I have to spend my adulthood trying to find myself?

Children thrive best in families and the European Union has a great role to play in ensuring that those behind us are not deprived of this right. Funding orphanages is not the right way because no matter how well run an institution is, it can never replace a family.

Together, we can raise children who do not have to spend a lifetime forgetting their childhood.



### Foreword by Neven Mimica, European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development

I believe that all children should have the right to grow and reach their full potential in a safe environment, within families and communities. Sadly, this is not the case for eight million girls and boys around the world who are placed in institutions and orphanages.

Most of these children are in fact not orphans, but there are many reasons why they end up in closed institutions. This can be due to poverty and disability; humanitarian crises, migration or trafficking; or a lack of quality alternative care options and affordable treatment. The list is long.

Institutionalisation affects children's brain development at early ages. Institutions are too often characterised by a lack of privacy, invisibility and exclusion, violence and degrading treatment. And even when the basic intentions are good, institutionalisation can increase the risk of harmful practices, behaviours and outcomes, especially in situations of fragility, poverty and forced displacement. We cannot let this continue.

The European Commission is committed to supporting children's rights, protection and welfare, inside and outside the EU. This is not only enshrined in the EU's legal framework, it is also part of our collective responsibility and conscience. Our 2017 Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child recognise institutionalisation as one of the risks facing vulnerable children. They highlight the importance of appropriate alternative care, which allows children to participate in family and community life, in their best interest.

I am personally determined to ensure that these commitments are fully reflected in our external action and cooperation with international partners, aligning our practices across policies inside and outside the EU. This is a long journey, but we are decisively on our way. No child left behind means every child living in a safe environment with an equal choice and chance in life.



## Foreword by Georgette Mulheir, CEO Lumos

In the decade after the fall of Ceausescu, the European Union's PHARE programme channelled over €75 million into Romania's state-run orphanages.<sup>1</sup> The EU and other major donors, understandably thought improving the system of institutional care was the only answer to the humanitarian crisis in Romania's care system.

As Romania progressed towards EU accession, new research demonstrated the extent of devastating damage to child health and development caused by institutionalisation.<sup>2</sup> It became clear that only investment in families, not institutions, would enable vulnerable children to flourish. The EU insisted Romania transform its childcare system as a prerequisite for EU membership, a condition subsequently extended to Bulgaria.

These first instances of EU financial and policy power influencing nations to undertake 'deinstitutionalisation' programmes paved the way for a ground-breaking shift in policy and funding regulations that is transforming systems of care across the EU and beyond.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst the EU is now convinced of the harm of institutional care, in many countries extreme poverty, discrimination and orphanage-trafficking<sup>4</sup> fuel family separation and a proliferation of harmful institutions. Many international decision-makers and donors continue to fund orphanage systems, with the best of intentions, but with harmful consequences for children.

There is an opportunity, indeed a responsibility, to learn from the transformation of care systems in different countries and contexts and influence other global leaders and donors. Lumos is therefore delighted to co-host today's conference with the European Commission to explore how the EU can take a lead role in the global movement to transform systems of childcare and protection.

Together we can demonstrate it is both necessary and possible to move away from systems that cause serious harm, towards societies that empower all children to be raised in families and included in communities, to make choices and take the lead in transforming the world around them.

## THE CASE FOR CHANGE

### The scale and drivers of institutionalisation globally

Globally, an estimated eight million children live in institutions, often called 'orphanages'.<sup>5</sup> However, the majority of these children are not orphans. Around 80% have at least one living parent and, with a little additional support, most children could live with their birth or extended families.<sup>6</sup>

Children are placed in institutions because of poverty, war, natural disaster, disability and social exclusion.<sup>7</sup> There is a glaring and unjust relationship between disability and institutionalisation. Not only are children and young people with disabilities overrepresented in institutional systems, placement inside institutions can create otherwise preventable disabilities. Children with disabilities are often placed in institutions because their parents cannot afford or access rehabilitation or inclusive education.<sup>8</sup> The lack of services and support in the community often means parents are forced to place their child in an institution.<sup>9</sup>

There is a strong gender influence in the harm caused by institutionalisation. Girls in institutions are at a much higher risk of being trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation than their peers raised in families.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, research suggests that young women with disabilities in institutions have been routinely sterilised without their consent to control their fertility.<sup>11</sup> Many children placed in institutions are from single parent households,<sup>12</sup> predominantly single mothers, who are more likely to live in poverty.<sup>13</sup> Discrimination against single mothers also leads to their children being disproportionately represented in institutions.<sup>14</sup>

Many institutions put the economic interests of adults ahead of the best interests of the child. In some cases, children are actively 'recruited' into orphanages, often using false promises of education and food.<sup>15</sup> These 'orphanages' are profit-making ventures and exist to attract the lucrative international flows of volunteers, donations and other funding. This form of exploitation is increasingly being recognised as a form of child trafficking, namely 'orphanage trafficking'.<sup>16</sup>

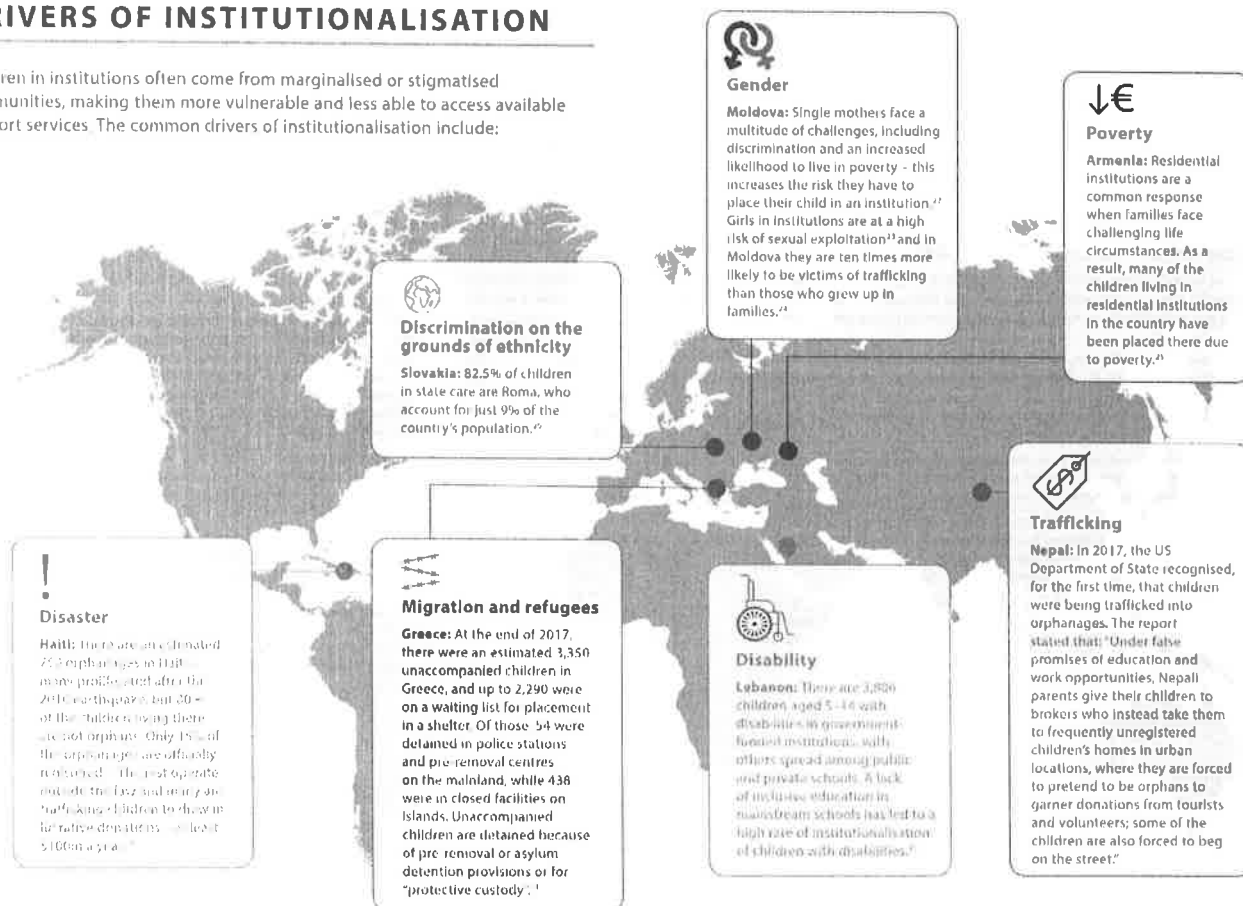
Despite the evidence, there is a lack of understanding of the harm of institutions. Many people think that institutions are a social good, or that better alternatives do not exist, so they continue to invest in and donate to these institutions. There is also resistance to change – institutions may be the biggest employer in a town, or an easy way to make profit. Changing these established systems and long-standing beliefs on care is complex. It takes a concerted effort and a great deal of expertise for stakeholders to see that alternatives to institutions are viable, and build child protection systems and universal access to education, healthcare and other services.

1. European Commission (2004), *Report of the Commission on the implementation of the PHARE programme in Romania*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2004.  
2. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
3. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
4. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
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6. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
7. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
8. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
9. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
10. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
11. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
12. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
13. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
14. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
15. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.  
16. Mulheir, G. (2010), *The EU's PHARE programme in Romania: A decade of institutionalisation*, Luxembourg: European Commission, 2010.

1. The number of children in institutions is estimated at 8 million globally, based on data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the European Commission. This figure is based on data from 2004, and is likely to be higher now.  
2. The majority of children in institutions are not orphans. Around 80% have at least one living parent and, with a little additional support, most children could live with their birth or extended families.  
3. Children are placed in institutions because of poverty, war, natural disaster, disability and social exclusion.  
4. There is a glaring and unjust relationship between disability and institutionalisation. Not only are children and young people with disabilities overrepresented in institutional systems, placement inside institutions can create otherwise preventable disabilities. Children with disabilities are often placed in institutions because their parents cannot afford or access rehabilitation or inclusive education.  
5. The lack of services and support in the community often means parents are forced to place their child in an institution.  
6. There is a strong gender influence in the harm caused by institutionalisation. Girls in institutions are at a much higher risk of being trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation than their peers raised in families.  
7. Furthermore, research suggests that young women with disabilities in institutions have been routinely sterilised without their consent to control their fertility.  
8. Many children placed in institutions are from single parent households, predominantly single mothers, who are more likely to live in poverty.  
9. Discrimination against single mothers also leads to their children being disproportionately represented in institutions.  
10. Many institutions put the economic interests of adults ahead of the best interests of the child. In some cases, children are actively 'recruited' into orphanages, often using false promises of education and food.  
11. These 'orphanages' are profit-making ventures and exist to attract the lucrative international flows of volunteers, donations and other funding. This form of exploitation is increasingly being recognised as a form of child trafficking, namely 'orphanage trafficking'.  
12. Despite the evidence, there is a lack of understanding of the harm of institutions. Many people think that institutions are a social good, or that better alternatives do not exist, so they continue to invest in and donate to these institutions. There is also resistance to change – institutions may be the biggest employer in a town, or an easy way to make profit. Changing these established systems and long-standing beliefs on care is complex. It takes a concerted effort and a great deal of expertise for stakeholders to see that alternatives to institutions are viable, and build child protection systems and universal access to education, healthcare and other services.

## DRIVERS OF INSTITUTIONALISATION

Children in institutions often come from marginalised or stigmatised communities, making them more vulnerable and less able to access available support services. The common drivers of institutionalisation include:



<sup>1</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/haiti/files/2014/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Haiti.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/haiti/files/2014/04/Orphanages_in_Haiti.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/slovakia/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Slovakia.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/slovakia/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Slovakia.pdf)  
<sup>3</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/greece/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Greece.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/greece/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Greece.pdf)  
<sup>4</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/moldova/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Moldova.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/moldova/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Moldova.pdf)  
<sup>5</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/armenia/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Armenia.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/armenia/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Armenia.pdf)  
<sup>6</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/nepal/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Nepal.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/nepal/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Nepal.pdf)  
<sup>7</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Lebanon.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Lebanon.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/nepal/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Nepal.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/nepal/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Nepal.pdf)  
<sup>9</sup> [http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/files/2017/04/Orphanages\\_in\\_Lebanon.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/files/2017/04/Orphanages_in_Lebanon.pdf)

Over 80 years of research from around the world has demonstrated that living in institutions can cause significant harm to children. They are deprived of loving parental care and can suffer lifelong physical and psychological harm as a consequence.<sup>16</sup> Babies in particular fail to develop as they should without one-to-one parental interaction, and research has demonstrated the severe impact of institutionalisation on early brain development.<sup>17</sup> Studies have shown that children who remain in institutions after the age of six months often face severe developmental delays.<sup>18</sup>

The image on the right shows an institutionalised child's brain, the image on the left shows the brain of a child who has been cared for by a family.

**Institutions can also severely limit the life chances of the children who grow up in them.**<sup>10</sup> A number of studies have shown that care leavers are more likely to be involved in criminal activity, that institutions are ineffective in preventing criminality,<sup>11</sup> and that young people leaving institutions are at increased risk of prostitution and suicide.<sup>12</sup> The risks of becoming homeless are approximately 50 times higher for those who have lived in institutions, compared with those who were placed in foster care.<sup>13</sup> Children placed in foster care are also more likely to attain higher levels of education and family stability, are less prone to substance abuse and are less likely to be arrested or convicted.<sup>14</sup>

Young adults leaving institutions are especially vulnerable to these risks because they have had fewer opportunities to develop the social skills and networks they need to live successfully and independently in the community.<sup>21</sup> These poor outcomes for children result in high potential social and economic costs to society.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, children in institutions in many countries experience various forms of neglect, abuse and maltreatment.<sup>37</sup> The prevalence of physical and sexual abuse in residential care is also higher than in other forms of care, even in countries where residential care is better resourced with smaller numbers of children per facility.<sup>38 39</sup>

irrespective of the intentions with which an institution is established, how it is managed, or its material conditions, it can never replace the love, support and stability that children need to form secure attachments.

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## THE FINANCIAL CASE FOR CHANGE

Governments in many countries believe that providing care and protection to children through institutions is the most cost-effective option. However, research has shown that on average, institutional care is eight times more expensive than providing social services to parents and children; it is up to five times more expensive than foster care; and twice as expensive as community residential homes or small group homes.<sup>48</sup>

In the Kagera region of Tanzania, the World Bank reported that the cost of a child living in an institution was nearly six times higher than supporting a child to live in a foster family.<sup>49</sup> A case study in Eritrea showed that the annual cost per child in residential care was \$1,900 USD, while the cost for family integration was below \$100 USD.<sup>50</sup>

It is important that financial arguments do not override the necessity to support the needs, and realise the rights, of the child. Reforming systems of protecting and caring for children must never be viewed as a cost-cutting or money saving exercise. The reform process is an opportunity to analyse the needs of children and direct resources to create a system that meets them.

"When you live in a house with 100 children you are nobody, you exist in documents, there is no future for you, no freedom to express your abilities, you are not prepared for the outside world, and you go down the wrong path. So you are useless for others, for yourself, and I realised you are expensive for society."

Mihaela, Lumos Self-Advocate



## THE ALTERNATIVE

### Principles

Investment must be directed towards strengthening families and communities. A holistic childcare and protection system, social support for vulnerable families and inclusive universal services are needed to tackle the drivers that place families at risk of separation.

Political commitment, technical expertise, resource and the involvement of young people, communities and civil society must be in place to break the cycle of disadvantage and invest in children so they can reach their potential.

**Deinstitutionalisation** involves the transformation of services to ensure that children are able to live with their families, or in family-based or family-like services in the community. It typically involves:

- **Providing community services that prevent family separation, and give vulnerable children the opportunity to remain with their birth parents, or with other family.** Such services might include access to healthcare, inclusive education, or targeted services to help at-risk families who might need additional support in times of need.
- **Ensuring that appropriate alternatives are available when it is not possible for children to remain with their families.** Following a thorough assessment of a child's needs, there may be occasions when it is not in the best interests of the child to remain in his or her family. In these instances, it is vital that alternative forms of care, such as kinship care or foster care, are in place to ensure children continue to benefit from the love and support of a family and remain in their community.
- **Dismantling the institutional system.** This is a complex and sensitive process that involves moving children from institutions to families or family-based care, and eventually closing down institutions. Throughout this process it is vital to ensure that each child has a placement that best meets his or her needs.
- **Redirecting resources.** Institutions are expensive. The money and other resources currently invested in institutions should be redirected towards community-based health, education and social services that keep families together. In this way, the alternatives to institutionalisation become sustainable for the long term, providing assistance to many more children than the institution could.

**Fundamentally, it is about inclusion – making sure the right support services are in place to enable all children to live with families, in the community.**

Reform is complex and requires a well-planned approach. Deinstitutionalisation does not mean closing institutions overnight. Children can only leave institutions once the relevant support and alternatives are in place. The creation of new services is a critical component of the process.

48. *World Bank* (2010) *Children in Institutions: A Global Review of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/childcare>

49. *World Bank* (2010) *Children in Institutions: A Global Review of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/childcare>

50. *World Bank* (2010) *Children in Institutions: A Global Review of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://www.worldbank.org/childcare>

## EXAMPLES OF REFORM

Examples of reform from around the world: ensuring high-quality support for children, families and communities.

### Long-term integrated support for families and National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has been seriously affected by the AIDS and HIV crisis. In 2011, there were 72 registered child institutions in Zimbabwe – and according to UNICEF, between 1994 and 2004, 24 new private institutions were built and the number of children in residential care doubled.<sup>51</sup>

To tackle this issue, the EU is providing long-term support to the Government's National OVC Action Plan to enable children to remain with their families.<sup>52</sup> This programme aims to develop a sustainable child-sensitive National Social Protection Framework for Zimbabwe, strengthening and reforming existing national social protection strategies.<sup>53</sup>

In this context, evaluations have recognised the importance of complementary actions, including cash transfers, strengthened child and family care, and effective government social services.<sup>54</sup> The multi-donor, multi-sector model enables cooperation between government, donors and a variety of implementers, and has resulted in coordinated and transparent funding.

By March 2010, the programme had:

- provided school-related assistance to 249,314 children
- reunited 5,413 children with their families.<sup>55</sup>

### Reforming the care system for vulnerable children in Rwanda

Rwanda has made great strides in reforming its system of care for vulnerable children. Donors, including the EU, USAID, Displaced Children and Orphans Fund (DCOF) and Global Fund, have supported care reform, early childhood education, prevention and economic strengthening.<sup>56</sup>

Prior to 1994 there were 37 residential facilities housing 4,800 children, but by 1995 – in the wake of the 1994 genocide – the number of facilities rose to 77, housing 12,704 children. Work on family tracing and reunification, alongside an expansion of foster care for children who could not be reunified, meant that by April 2000, the 37 remaining centres housed fewer than 5,000 children.<sup>57</sup>

There were several significant developments between 2010 and 2012, including the passing of a landmark law on the Rights and Protection of the Child; the establishment of the National Commission for Children (NCC); and successful pilot deinstitutionalisation projects. These initiatives demonstrated that – with a concrete strategy, well-trained social workers and available alternative care options such as formal foster care – deinstitutionalisation was possible in Rwanda.<sup>58</sup>

The reforms have strengthened the capacity of government bodies and professionals working with children and families, and family support services and social protection schemes are in place to address the drivers of family separation. A robust legal and policy framework that includes prevention of separation and provision of targeted support to families and increased availability of alternative care services such as foster care, have led to a reduction in the number of children living in institutions.<sup>59</sup>

### Protecting children who have been exploited or victims of violence in Senegal and Mali

A project in Senegal and Mali aims to protect 1,500 children who have either been exploited or have been victims of violence.<sup>60</sup> Some of these children have fled Koranic daara schools or the conflict in the north of Mali. They are often traumatised, isolated and vulnerable. The aim of the project is to tackle child exploitation in the region and build long-term stability.

The project, managed by the European Union Delegation in Senegal, aims to reintegrate children with their families if possible, or find other ways to protect them. The project supports the return of children to formal education and provides economic support for tutors and training in child rights. The project develops community knowledge and raises awareness on protection and participation to prevent further exploitation and provide protection for children.

The range of approaches aim to support children to find homes within families and prevent future exploitation, trafficking and forced labour.

### Tackling orphanage trafficking and voluntourism in Australia

The number of people volunteering in orphanages, and the amount of donations given internationally, has become so great that it has created a demand for more orphanages. 'Orphanage trafficking' is the active recruitment of children from vulnerable families into residential institutions for the purpose of exploitation.<sup>61</sup>

In 2017, the Australian government's parliamentary Inquiry Into establishing a Modern Slavery Act set a global precedent by recommending that 'orphanage trafficking' should be included in the definition of modern slavery.

In its final report, the Committee listed 11 recommendations on measures to fight orphanage trafficking.<sup>62</sup> Under the acknowledgement that orphanage tourism contributes to the demand for children to be trafficked into orphanages, the government launched a 'Smart Volunteering' campaign which explicitly discourages any short-term, unskilled volunteering in orphanages.<sup>63</sup> With mounting pressure, several travel agencies have since publicly withdrawn from offering orphanage trips.



#### Returning children to families in Moldova

*"I know what it means to be a child deprived of identity and family care, because I lived through this experience. I had a difficult period in my life: my father died when I was six months old, and when I was six years old my mother became a victim of a serious car accident, after which she needed medical treatment for a long time. Left without supervision, I was taken into an institution, and nobody asked for my opinion nor for my mother's."*

*It was very hard in the institution, we lived under strict rules. Nobody was interested in our opinions. They put the same clothes on us, cut our hair, and there was never any hope of getting out of there. We were punished just because we wanted to go home, and sometimes we didn't even have the right to tears. The things that happened there remained within those walls, and will be in my memory for the rest of my life.*

*After seven years spent in the institution, at the age of 14, my life changed – Lumos helped me to find a wonderful family. Only then did I understand what it means to have a family, brothers, sisters, and what's most important – love, which I was deprived of in my childhood.*

*I can't change my past anymore, I can only build my present and future, based on my decisions. Similarly, we can't change the past of millions of children left without parental care, but together we can build a better future for them by respecting their rights and offering support in a safe environment. These children exist and they need us. They still have a chance, since we are here today, and today is the first day towards improving the lives of children."*

- Olga



## 88%

There has been an 88% reduction in children in institutions, from 11,544 in 2007 to 1,429 in 2017.<sup>44</sup>



## 685%

685% increase of children with special-educational needs in mainstream schooling, from 1,253 at the beginning of the inclusive education programme in 2010 to 9,840 in 2017.<sup>45</sup>



<sup>44</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10. <sup>45</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10.



#### Reuniting children with their families in Haiti

Picked up by a policeman, wandering alone and separated from their family after the earthquake in 2010, Mirlande and her brother were taken to the only place he believed would look after them – an orphanage. Instead, the siblings were starved, abused and used to garner donations from well-meaning tourists and volunteers.

*"They took all the stuff and sold it. The white people would bring us sandals, and she [the Director] would not give them to us - all the kids would walk around barefoot. If something valuable was sent to a kid by their sponsor, she would take it and use it for herself."* In the six years that passed, Mirlande began to lose hope of ever returning home to her mother.

However, in 2016, when a team of government child protection workers, supported by Lumos, arrived to begin the process of closing the orphanage and returning the children to family care. A family tracer worked with Mirlande and her brother, and they told him every single detail they could remember about their family. Armed with all they told him, he travelled first to their home village, where he learned that their mother was now living in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. When he eventually found her, Mirlande's mother was elated. *"Even though my mom was searching for us, she did not know if we were still alive."*

Several visits and support sessions later, the family were officially reunited. Mirlande is now happy and safe, and the family continues to receive support to ensure that they stay together. *"What hurt me the most was the fact that I was not living with my parents. Your parents' love is stronger than anyone else's."*



• **Of the approximately 30,000 children in orphanages in Haiti, the Government of Haiti estimates that 80% have one or two living parents who could care for them at home or in another family setting, if properly supported.**<sup>46</sup> Since Lumos began working in Haiti, the team has worked closely with IBESR – the government department responsible for children – and supported the closure of eight institutions.<sup>47</sup> More than 75% of the children have been able to go home to their families with support.

• Terre des Hommes and IBESR run a foster care programme in Les Cayes, Haiti, which is funded by the European Union, UNICEF and the Embassy of France.<sup>48</sup> The programme includes a formal certification process and in 2016 there were 20 families listed in the accredited foster family protection programme, with eight more families awaiting certification.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10. <sup>47</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10. <sup>48</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10. <sup>49</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, 'The European Union's Strategy for Children, 2011-2020', Luxembourg, 2011, p. 10.



## Transforming care systems in Bulgaria

Ivan spent several years in the Rudnik institution in Bulgaria. Cold, dark, with a large number of children with disabilities crammed into uncomfortably close conditions, with no toys or personal belongings, Rudnik did not come close to home for Ivan. "It was an awful place to live," he says. "The food and the conditions were terrible. Nothing was good about that place."

"No children's drawings on the walls, just children isolated in this closed building... we couldn't believe the conditions inside," remembers Iliia Iliev, Head of the Bulgarian Social Services Department, of his first visit to Rudnik. Thankfully, political commitment and the support of international organisations have brought incredible change to Bulgaria.

With the support of the European Commission and civil society, the Bulgarian government embarked on an ambitious programme to transform the system of caring for vulnerable children. In 2009, the Bulgarian government developed its Vision for Deinstitutionalisation of Children in Bulgaria. In recent years, large-scale homes for children with disabilities have been replaced by family support services, foster care and small group homes, which prioritise keeping children at home where possible.

For Ivan, who now lives in a small group home that supports his independence and aims to provide a family environment, this is welcome news. "I left Rudnik with one backpack that contained my entire life. No child should ever have to live in an institution. When I graduate from school, I would like to get a house, where me and my brother Ilko would live."



The Bulgarian government has demonstrated that when a system shifts away from a reliance on institutions, towards community-based services, many more children and families can be supported – with better outcomes – using a similar budget.

- In 2010, the highest proportion of state expenditure on vulnerable children went towards institutions. 15,278 children were supported with a budget of €52 million.
- By 2017, the emphasis had shifted towards providing community-based support, and the number of children living in institutions had reduced. 27,550 children are being supported with a budget of €55 million.<sup>4</sup>

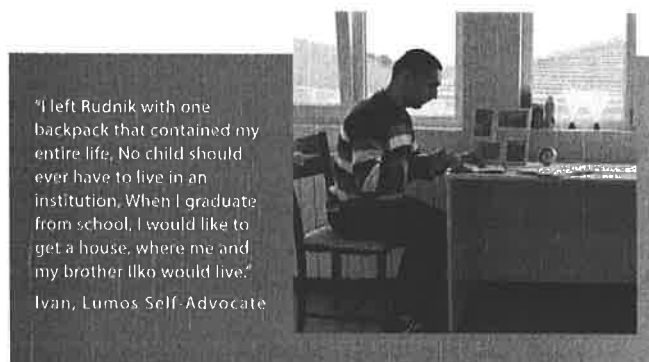
<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, "National Strategy for the Development of the Child Protection System in Bulgaria, 2015–2020," 2015, [http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy\\_bg.pdf](http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy_bg.pdf).  
<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, "National Strategy for the Development of the Child Protection System in Bulgaria, 2015–2020," 2015, [http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy\\_bg.pdf](http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy_bg.pdf).  
<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, "National Strategy for the Development of the Child Protection System in Bulgaria, 2015–2020," 2015, [http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy\\_bg.pdf](http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy_bg.pdf).  
<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, "National Strategy for the Development of the Child Protection System in Bulgaria, 2015–2020," 2015, [http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy\\_bg.pdf](http://www.medu.bg/images/stories/strategy/strategy_bg.pdf).



## Diverting money from institutions towards community-based services in Europe

The European Union is playing a pivotal role in supporting deinstitutionalisation across Europe. In 2013, the ex-ante conditionality 9.1 was introduced in the Regulations governing the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). The ex-ante conditionality states that Member States must have and implement a "national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion" that "includes measures for the shift from institutional to community-based care."<sup>25</sup> This means that Member States can no longer spend ESIF on building new institutions and have to prioritise community-based services.

The guidelines accompanying the ESIF explicitly state that "building or renovating long-stay residential institutions is excluded, regardless of their size" and emphasise that any new measures should allow for the possibility of inclusion in the community and high-quality care.<sup>26</sup> This landmark decision has resulted in hundreds of millions of Euros being directed towards reforming systems, shifting away from institutions to community-based care, making a positive impact on some of Europe's most socially excluded citizens.<sup>27</sup>



"I left Rudnik with one backpack that contained my entire life. No child should ever have to live in an institution. When I graduate from school, I would like to get a house, where me and my brother Ilko would live."

Ivan, Lumos Self-Advocate

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, "Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Structural and Investment Funds," 2013, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1303-20131217>.  
<sup>26</sup> European Commission, "Guidelines for the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds," 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/eu-struct-funds/en/guidelines>.  
<sup>27</sup> European Commission, "Guidelines for the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds," 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/eu-struct-funds/en/guidelines>.  
<sup>28</sup> European Commission, "Guidelines for the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds," 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/eu-struct-funds/en/guidelines>.

## THE WAY FORWARD

It is possible to end the harmful practice of institutionalisation. Every government, business, civil society organisation and individual has a part to play in achieving better outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

### Invest in children and families

- **Invest in children and prioritise funding that drives the transition from institutions to family and community-based services.** Funding should be directed towards services that support children to live in families and their communities. These include: family support, early childhood development, inclusive education, health and social services, high-quality alternative care and strengthening child protection systems.
- **Build systems that keep families together.** Creating a better life for children out of institutions doesn't just mean providing them with 'care' in the community. The full range of services a child and their family need must be planned – across government ministries, donors and communities – to ensure that children are included, safe and secure, can actively participate, and have access to more targeted support when they need it.

### Launch high-quality, inclusive and sustainable care system reform

- **Put children and young people at the centre of all reform plans.** Life begins when a child belongs. Children's views must be included when designing, monitoring and implementing projects that concern them.
- **Create a vision.** Set a shared vision of the goals of reform and ensure that key ministries, civil society, children and other partners – national and international – are committed and aligned. Outlining a common ambition for children, and the goals and timings, will help set the foundations to develop the strategy and detailed plans, and engage parties involved in reform.
- **Ensure the transition from institutions to family and community-based services is reflected in relevant laws and policies.** Develop regulations to ensure that funds are never used to build, renovate or support institutions and that staff responsible for administering programmes are trained and supported to deliver to these objectives.
- **Safely dismantle institutional systems and redirect money towards new services.** In parallel with developing family and community-based services, the institutional system must be scaled back, reducing its 'pull factor' for children and resources – and freeing up money to develop and fund new services.
- **Undertake financial analysis.** Mapping the system of care in a country and finding out how much money goes into institutions or other forms of care is key to ensuring money can be redirected towards better forms of care. This also alerts authorities to potential fraud, corruption and even 'orphanage trafficking'. Money is often an obstacle to change but can also provide a huge opportunity to facilitate change. These opportunities cannot be harnessed without information.
- **Fund demonstration programmes to expand the evidence base.** The legal framework states that institutions should be the last resort, and only on a temporary basis. Yet without investment in generating high-quality evidence of family-strengthening and alternative care in a range of cultures and contexts – especially in emergencies, following natural disasters, or in cases of mass migration – institutions will continue to be the default solution for vulnerable children. They are likely to compound harm and risk rather than protect children.

- **Ensure long-term investment and planning that leads to sustainable transformation.** Transforming the system of care in a country takes longer than typical five-year political terms. Formal political dialogue and coordinated, complementary support from a range of donors is vital to ensure consistency in the implementation of reform.
- **Strengthen capacity to undertake reform.** Once political will, funding, vision and plans are in place, one of the biggest obstacles to implementation is the understanding that reform will involve significant change across the system. The capacity of staff across all levels of the system will need to be built to ensure they are equipped with the right skills and support to deliver.
- **Create open and clear communications throughout the reform process.** Good communications can minimise resistance and, in the long run, save money. A communications strategy must have clear messaging aimed at changing the attitudes and behaviours of communities, institution directors and personnel, politicians, funders and individuals.

### Leave no child behind

- **A child is a child.** Regardless of their background, faith or migration status, all children are entitled to the same set of rights; those which we hold universal, even in uncertain and unpredictable times. The evidence and the rights framework is clear – children need families to thrive.
- **Prioritise the most vulnerable children.** Often, babies and children with disabilities are those who suffer greatest harm from institutionalisation. Their needs must be identified and prioritised at the beginning of the reform process.

### Participation, commitment and transparency

- **Everyone has a role.** A vast range of organisations and people fund, volunteer in, visit and support institutions, including multilaterals, governments, businesses, philanthropists and individuals. With limited resource, stakeholders must work together to ensure that resource, expertise and good intentions are redirected towards new services to support vulnerable children.
- **Seek out and embrace a range of perspectives in the reform process.** The knowledge and expertise of civil society, young people, communities and others should be built into the design, implementation and planning of the reform process.

### Invest in data

- **Ensure all children are counted.** If you do not know how many children there are and why they are in institutions, how can you solve the problem? Ensure that the post-2015 global monitoring framework includes all children, by taking measures to improve and expand data collection methodologies so that children living outside families are represented in disaggregated data.
- **Measure what matters by investing in rigorous monitoring and evaluation of reform processes.** Ensure that practice reflects the plans and policy intentions, that health, development and quality of life outcomes for children and young people are monitored, and that systems are put in place to assess the long-term impact. Ensure practice – good and bad – is documented and shared, so that others can learn from, and build on, what has worked and common issues faced in the process.

### Raise awareness of 'orphanage trafficking'

- **Tackle 'orphanage trafficking'.** Ensure all governments and donors are aware of this form of trafficking, where children are recruited to orphanages purely as a means of raising funds from unsuspecting donors and volunteers. Countries should consider prohibiting organisations from facilitating orphanage tourism abroad and support strengthening the rule of law in countries where orphanage trafficking is prolific.

