Innovative Practice 2019 on Independent Living and Political Participation

# Changing a whole country´s approach on children´s institutions

# United Kingdom / Lumos Foundation

## Summary:

### The Lumos Foundation is a UK-based child-focussed non-profit organization that operates in several countries, including Moldova. Together with the Moldovan Government, Lumos has promoted an integrated policy and programme of deinstitutionalisation and Inclusive Education for children with disabilities. This allows children to leave residential care and to return to their families and communities while receiving education in mainstream schools. Since launching the programme in 2007, the number of children in institutions has dropped by 86 per cent; and since 2010, more than 6,000 children have been admitted to inclusive mainstream schools. Lumos is also involved in the national strategy on Inclusive Education.

## Problems Targeted:

### Moldovan children with disabilities often live in residential special schools, separated from other children and their families.

## Solution, Innovation, and Impact:

### The Lumos Foundation works with Moldovan local authorities to change safeguarding policies and to implement community-based social services, such as health and welfare services, thus making it possible for children with disabilities who are in institutions to go home to their families or to be placed in foster care. The programme also develops inclusive mainstream schools for these children to be educated alongside their peers.

### At the national level, the programme assisted the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education to implement a law that ensures that government funds that had been going to institutions to support children with disabilities are transferred to children in community social services and Inclusive Schools – for example, to provide additional support to teachers and make adaptations to buildings. Since the start of the programme in 2007, the number of children in institutions in Moldova has decreased from 11,554 to 1,972; and since 2010, over 6,000 children have been placed in inclusive mainstream schools. Due to the organization’s extensive advocacy, research, and training, Lumos was also able to take the lead on the development of a national strategy of Inclusive Education.

## Funding, Outlook, and Transferability:

### Lumos funds the creation of new social services that support families of children with disabilities, but from that point onwards the day-to-day costs of these services are funded by the Moldovan Government. In the long term, Lumos aims for government funds in all countries to be ring-fenced such that all funds previously spent on institutions are redirected towards community care services.

### Lumos applies a similar model in Bulgaria, Colombia, Czech Republic, Haiti, Kenya, and Ukraine, and going forward it plans to roll-out the programme in several additional regions of the world. In each region, the model is adapted to the context and needs of the respective country; and each project advances Lumos’s overall mission of ending the institutionalisation of children by 2050 worldwide.

## About the Practice at a Glance:

### NAME OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICE: Deinstitutionalization of children

### ORGANIZATION: Lumos Foundation

### COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION: Moldova

## Facts and Figures:

### The number of children with disabilities educated in inclusive mainstream schools increased from 1,253 in 2010 to 10,393 in 2016.

### The number of children in institutions has declined from 11,544 in 2007 to 1,972 by the end of 2017.

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### [Lumos Foundation Website](http://www.wearelumos.org/)

## Links and Further Reading:

### [Blog article](https://www.wearelumos.org/news-and-media/2015/06/19/lumos-wins-top-charity-award/)

### [News article](https://www.independent.ie/entertainment/sophie-ellisbextor-reveals-heartbreaking-visit-to-ukrainian-orphanage-36936936.html" \o "Link to the article)

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